

Approved 03/21/2024

**Thomaston Budget Committee
Meeting Minutes March 14, 2024**

Members Present: Doug Erickson (Chair), Susan Devlin (Secretary), Kathy Derene, Alan Blake, Alex Fayvil, Charlie Grover, Kara George (Town Manager), Jodell Benson (Finance Director)

Absent: Kimberly Matthews, Seth Silverson

Others Attending: Pete Lammert, Patricia Hubbard, Rene Door, Bob Snow (Thomaston Academy), Caroline Ward-Nesbit, Head Librarian), citizens representing the Library and Thomaston Academy.

Minutes

The meeting was called to order by Doug Erickson at 6:00 pm.

The meeting was opened for comments from the floor. Mostly it was praise for the Thomaston Public Library, noting it as a place to go, especially for seniors. Then open discussion was closed.

Doug noted that this meeting would focus on the budgets for the Library, Watts Block and Thomaston Academy, and combined Buildings Budget.

The committee approved the minutes from the last meeting 6-0.

General Discussion

Kara was asked to clarify the difference between the budget for Building Maintenance Supervisor and Building Maintenance that appears in separate building budgets. She clarified that the Supervisor was a new position for managing/coordinating all building maintenance. Routine maintenance for specific buildings is in their separate budgets.

Library

Head Librarian Caroline Ward-Nesbit noted that during Covid, the library has been down to a staff of 4 and is requesting a return to 5. She emphasized that they wanted to add a person who had proved excellent in expanding children's programs and brings an excellent background. When asked, she noted that they coordinate with the Recreation Department where appropriate but that many of their activities are not just recreational. She also noted they do not charge for programs, but do some fund raising.

Caroline noted that the library staff is below the norm, but they agree that the increases requested are more important. It was moved and seconded to approve the Library Operating Budget for \$88,000 as recommended. VOTE: 6-0.

Academy Building

Bib Snow reviewed the many repairs still needed for this very old building. Repairs/problems mentioned included exterior, foundation leakage, electrical, and security issues. He mentioned that they needed a go-to person for repairs reported, which the committee can't handle. When asked about increasing rents and expanding renters, concern was expressed that some conditions, for example electrical, would not meet code requirements if children were involved. There is a need to do a code check on the building.

Discussion focused on the need to do a full independent evaluation of the building and its expense and income potential, similar to what was done in 2019 for the Watts Block.

It was moved and seconded to approve the Academy Budget \$54,290, but with the condition that the Select Board appoint a committee to do a full financial evaluation with recommendations. VOTE: 6-0.

Watts Block Building

After a presentation by a representative of the Watts Block Trustees, it was moved and seconded to approve the budget of \$46,260 as recommended. VOTE: 5-0-1.

Municipal Building Budget

It was moved and seconded to approve the Municipal Budget for \$62,048 as recommended. VOTE: 6-0.

Building Management Supervisor

It was moved and seconded to approve the addition of a building Management Supervisor for \$93,484 as recommended. VOTE: 6-0.

Building Management – Total

It was moved and seconded to approve the full Building Management Budget for 256,081 as recommended, with the one condition noted earlier. VOTE: 5-0-1.

Meeting Plans

In closing, it was noted that next week (3/21) the budgets of following two departments will be reviewed with representatives present:

- Ambulance
- Cemetery

Closing

The meeting was adjourned at about 7:20 pm.