



Town of South Thomaston, Maine
125 Spruce Head Road
P.O. Box 147
South Thomaston, ME 04858-0147

Tel: 207-596-6584
Fax: 207-596-7529
E-mail: terri@souththomaston.me

Selectboard:
John Spear
Jeff Northgraves
Sue Snow

Selectboard Minutes

Date: February 12, 2024, 3:30 PM at the Municipal Building
Items Are Often Taken Out of Order to Accommodate Schedules

Rev 0

Note: A listing as present does not denote attendance for the entire meeting.

South Thomaston Selectboard Present: Jeff Northgraves, Sue Snow, via zoom: John Spear
Others Present: Terri-Lynn Baines, Hannah Moholland, Fire Chief David Elwell, Ambulance
Director Amy Drinkwater, Community Center Director Pennie Alley
Walter Reitz, Tom Sherrell

I. Call to Order

Northgraves called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm.

II. Adjustments to Agenda

There were no adjustments to the agenda.

III. Public Comment for Items not on the Agenda

There was no public comment.

IV. New Business

a. Budget Discussions with Department Heads

Ambulance, Ambulance Reserve

The Ambulance Service salaries and stipends went up 3.2%.

Ambulance Service wages went up significantly. Drinkwater increased the wages 3.2%, then rounded the wages up to an even dollar amount. Paramedics pay will increase to \$26 dollars an hour, Advanced EMTs to \$24 an hour, Basic EMTs to \$22 an hour and Drivers to \$18 an hour. Two nights a week she has budgeted to pay for a per diem to be here all night. Surrounding towns offer hourly pay for overnight so Drinkwater has budgeted overnights this way also. Drinkwater rounded the wages to be competitive with surrounding towns. Area services have increased their hourly wages by at least a dollar also.

The Wage line in the budget is up 18%. The Stabilization Grant Drinkwater applied for has been approved in the amount of \$41,784.32. \$20,000 of the Stabilization Grant will be used to offset wages.

The Selectboard reviewed the remaining sections of the budget.

Insurance premiums have increased.

The next tranche of funds from the Stabilization Grant will be used for equipment and the remaining saved for the next year.

Drinkwater and the Selectboard briefly discussed ambulance billing.

\$40,000 plus \$21,784.34 from the Stabilization Grant was put in the Ambulance Reserve Account towards the purchase of a new ambulance in 2029. There is a possibility that the box could be reused, and the town would only have to buy the chassis piece.

Fire Department, Fire Department Reserves

Salary and Stipend and wages were increased the 3.2% cola. Firefighting hours were increased increasing the wage line more than the 3.2 % cola.

Fire fighters that are also per diems and are at the station during the day often do some of the truck check work while they are there so it does not have to be done at night.

Fire hours are anything the department is toned for. Maintenance hours are truck checks that are done monthly.

The cost of pump tests has increased. The old pump truck may need to be retested if the new trucks do not come in before the pump is due to be tested.

Auto detailing is ceramic coating for Engine 53.

There is an increase in the Equipment line. Air packs and masks have increased in cost. Hand tools and mounts for the new trucks are in the budget along with new supply hose. 1000 feet of hose will replace the hose on one truck. Hose hasn't been purchased in years so the fire department has no spare hose. 5 inch will match the hose with the surrounding towns.

SCBA bottles, SCBA masks and turn out gear funds in the current budget will be spent within The next month.

Last year the Fire Department had 114 calls. The volume of calls is trending up. Spear asked Baines to get information on fire wages in the last couple of years. The Selectboard and Chief Elwell discussed the wage line in the budget. Elwell will revisit the budget numbers.

The new fire trucks will arrive in September at the earliest. Briefly discussed was a loan and when the first loan payment would be due.

There was a discussion on using fire equipment reserve for the hose and if there would need to be a special town meeting to use the reserve funds.

Chief Elwell asked how the Fire Department, or the Town Office could promote the use of number signs on houses. A notice letting the residents know that the signs are available at the town office can be sent out through the town email list and put on the town website.

The Selectboard and Chief Elwell discussed smoke detectors. Specifically, the lack of them in the building. Per diems sleep in the building overnight. There are no alarms that would wake them up in case of fire or carbon monoxide problems. Chief Elwell got a quote for Seacoast Security. The quote covered alarms, a control panel, and the system would be linked in with Seacoast. The cost would be \$19,000 for the system with a \$49 monthly service fee. The Selectboard discussed installing smoke detectors. Chief Elwell will find out what the minimum requirements for smoke/carbon monoxide detectors are.

Chief Elwell also thought the Town should be thinking of a replacement plan for the fire station/municipal building. More room is needed, there are no sleeping quarters, siding rotting out, chunks of cement laying on the ground. A lot of room was lost to the fire station through the renovation. The bay floor is maxed out. The ambulance crew room is small.

Chief Elwell also asked if town insurance covers personal vehicles if there is damage/or an accident while on call. Baines had checked with the insurance company and personal vehicles are not covered, but in some cases the deductible may be reimbursable. Chief Elwell wondered if there were riders or an umbrella that would cover the personal vehicles.

Library

Presented by Community Director Alley. Her budget remains the same as last year, except for the 3.2% cola for her stipend.

The van delivery service that is budgeted in this year's budget has not yet been started. The delivery service is restructuring so the library has not yet joined. Alley is hopeful it will start in the fall of 2024.

Alley has purchased led lights using the donation check book. She will also come before the board to purchase a garden shed.

There was discussion on the revenue that will be earned from renting the space at the community building.

Cemetery, Cemetery Reserve

Alley presented this budget also.

It is largely unchanged except for the 3.2% cola in stipends.

Alley and the Selectboard discussed fixing a dip in the new avenue. \$230 was added to the budget for this repair.

Social Service

This budget remains the same as last year. \$1500.

Debt Service

This budget consists of the street light loan and building renovation loan. There was a discussion on when the Town would need to borrow money for the purchase of the new fire trucks. It is thought that the fire truck loan would not be in the FY 24-25 budget.

Street Lights

Accepted as presented.

Planning Board

The budget was presented with no change.

CEO

Baines presented the budget. Insurance and iWorq were briefly discussed.

Assessor, Reval Reserve

The Selectboard discussed the cost of a revaluation and how much to put into the reserve account this budget season. There was a small increase due to the cola of 3.2% and the cost of binding the commitment book.

Recreation, Recreation Reserve

The Selectboard discussed the carry forward from last year and the Recreation Reserve account. The Selectboard budgeted \$1000 for Little League and \$500 for skateboard park repairs. The \$8,255 carried forward from last year will be moved into the reserve account.

XI. Adjourn

Without objection the Selectboard adjourned at 6:15 pm.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85954353322?pwd=YWFXRjhYQUdkdjVxUU9ldmFzbkpXQT09>

Meeting ID: 859 5435 3322

Passcode: 476908

Selectboard approved March 12, 2024