



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

## **Budget Committee Meeting** April 11, 2024

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### **Attendees:**

#### **Budget Committee**

Walter Reitz, Chair  
Sondra Wallace, Secretary  
Bob Baines  
Katie-Lyn Greene-Rackliff  
Linda Maltais  
Pennie Alley

#### **Select Board**

Jeff Northgraves, Chair  
John Spear  
Sue Snow

#### **Emergency Management**

Betty Thomas, Director

#### **Town Office**

Terri Baines, Town Administrator  
Hannah Moholland

Select Board meeting opened at 4:01 PM. Budget Committee Meeting opened at 4:04 PM.

### **Approval of prior meeting minutes**

L.Maltais moved to approve the minutes from April 9, as amended; S.Wallace seconded.

**Motion Passed 6 – 0.**

K.Greene-Rackliff moved to approve the minutes from April 10, as amended; L.Maltais seconded. **Motion Passed 6 – 0.**

### **BUDGET REVIEW**

#### **General Public Safety (590)** (\$81,914)

Emergency Management Director B.Thomas presented the budget.

Discussion: Emergency alert system: \$0 request: This was a 5-year pilot; if we don't use the allotted calls they're banked for future use. We have enough banked calls for several



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years. Over 100 residents have signed up for the alerts; Director Thomas wishes everyone would sign up. We haven't done much to publicize the availability, but could do so.

L.Maltais moved to preliminarily approve **\$81,914**; B.Baines seconded: **Motion passed 6-0.**

### **Emergency Disaster Reserve (line 1172) (\$0)**

Emergency Management Director B.Thomas presented the budget.

Discussion: EM Director Thomas proposed \$5K, reasoning that we're getting more frequent and severe weather events; also suggesting Reserve funds could be used to repair storm-damaged roads.

The Select Board proposes \$0. Their reasons: The \$26,943 Reserve balance already exceeds the original \$20K funding target and has not been used. and increasing the Reserve will raise taxes. This Reserve wouldn't begin to cover the costs of road repair, raising bridges, or other climate change/disaster preparedness/response; they queried the appropriateness of using this account for that purpose. For major disasters/damage, funds would be available from surplus and from Federal and State (FEMA and other) relief grants.

R.Baines moved to preliminarily approve **\$0**; W.Reitz seconded: **Motion passed 6-0.**

### **Conservation Commission (535)** (\$618)

S. Wallace recused herself from the Budget Committee to present the budget. L.Maltais\_ moved to preliminarily approve **\$618**. K.Greene-Rackliff seconded: **Motion passed 5-0.**

### **Forest Preserve Reserve (line 1174)** (\$20,000)

S. Wallace recused herself from the Budget Committee to present the budget.

Discussion: Last year, with Town Meeting approval, the Select Board bought 129 acres for a Forest Preserve for about a quarter of the land's value. We are applying for a Land for Maine's Future (LMF) grant for the entire \$67,000 purchase price, and we have also secured a 0-match grant for the entire cost of the survey. In short, up to this point, the Town has not demonstrated willingness to invest any of its own resources in the Preserve – a necessity to qualify for the LMF and other grants, and for the Preserve's success. Before receiving LMF grant funds, we'll need to pay for an appraisal, title insurance, an environmental hazards assessment, etc. To maintain the Preserve, funds will be needed for a forester's assessment, access road repair, trail building etc. The \$20,000 proposed would be available for these costs, together with funds from grants and donations.

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K.Greene-Rackliff moved to preliminarily approve **\$20,000**. L.Maltais seconded: **Motion Passed 5-0.**

### **Solid Waste Disposal (630)** (\$330,840)

J.Spear presented the budget.

Discussion: DM&J Waste presented updated price information after SB's budget decisions, including increases for roll-off, container rental, and disposal fees. SB voted to increase its recommendations for roll-off by \$5K to \$40K, and for container rental by \$10K to \$30K, increasing its recommendation to **\$345,840.**

Brush: The Town will do a trial run of removing brush in containers i.o. burning. Downsides of burning: Every load of ash (now including for brush) has to be tested; the neighbors object; and Fire Dept. personnel must be present the entire time it's burning. Other advantages of container removal: In addition to being more environmentally friendly, it could cost less, as the contractor will grind the brush and sell the residue.

OHSTT Transfer Station: Sticker prices are going up to \$45.

A recent unannounced DEP inspection found numerous deficiencies/violations, including that they had not done an annual report in 10 years.

Issues with the engineer and contractor performing the site upgrades (finally about done, late and over budget): J. Northgraves, since joining the Board, has found many errors, omissions, overcharges, etc.

K.Greene-Rackliff moved to preliminarily approve **\$345,840**; L.Maltais seconded: **Motion passed 6-0.**

### **Library (650)** (\$5,079)

P. Alley recused herself from the Budget Committee to present the budget.

She reported that the Library is still hoping to join the Minerva statewide interlibrary loan system. They are still trying to work out how to include small libraries. (For comparison, our library would get one delivery/pickup per week; Rockland gets 5.)

S.Wallace moved to preliminarily approve **\$5,079**. L.Maltais seconded: **Motion passed 5-0.**



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### **Recreation (680)** (\$1,600)

Discussion: P.Alley noted that the budet does not include funds for 2 loads of mulch, that will be needed for the playground, at \$180 each. The SB added this item and increased its recommendation for Recreation to \$1,960.

L.Maltais moved to preliminarily approve **\$1,960**; K.Greene-Rackliff seconded: **Motion passed 6-0.**

### **Recreation Reserve (line 1173)** (\$5,000)

B.Baines moved to preliminarily approve **\$5,000**; K.Greene-Rackliff seconded: **Motion passed 6-0.**

### **Cemetery/Geo. River Shellfish/Veterans (695)** (\$29,968)

P. Alley recused herself from the Budget Committee to present the Cemetery budget.

Discussion: Mowing: Wilson Construction canceled mid-contract; the only bid to replace them was higher. The SB increased its recommendation for mowing to \$22.5K, and its total recommendation for the account to \$34,468.

K.Greene-Rackliff moved to preliminarily approve **\$34,468**. B.Baines seconded: **Motion passed 5-0.**

### **Cemetery Reserve (Line 1228)** (\$1,000)

K.Greene-Rackliff moved to preliminarily approve **\$1,000**. L.Maltais seconded: **Motion passed 5-0.**

### **Debt Service (670)** (\$32,661)

S.Wallace moved to preliminarily approve **\$32,661**; P.Alley seconded: **Motion passed 6-0.**

### **Social Services (640)** (\$1,500)

L.Maltais moved to preliminarily approve **\$1,500**; P.Alley seconded: **Motion passed 6-0.**

Chair W. Reitz, without objection, adjourned the Budget Committee meeting at 6:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Sondra Wallace.

*These minutes were approved by the Budget Committee on 4/15/2024.*