



**Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 8th, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.
Bristol Town Office**

Committee Members Present: Alfred Ajami, Alex Beaudet, Rob Davidson, Paul DiMauro, Charles Hanson, Kelly Harvell, Paul Leeman III, Mary Piasecki and Patricia Porter.

Apologies for absence: Sandra Guibord, Terry Lowd, Karl McLetchie

Also present: Select Board members Chad Hanna (Chair), Kristine Poland and Paul Yates; Christopher Hall (Town Administrator); John Riley (Treasurer); Darin Carlucci (Chair) and J.W. Oliver (Bristol School Board); Jennifer Ribeiro (Principal); Craig Jorgensen (Superintendent); John Carroll (Facilities Manager, AOS); Clyde Pendleton (Chair), Sandra Lane and Laurie Mahan (Parks Commissioners); Lara Decker; Charles Farrell; Paul Leeman Jr.

Quorum present: 9 members out of 12.

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Charles Hanson at 7:00 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The acting Chair granted a request from Select Board Chair Chad Hanna to speak, out of order, on a point raised the previous night.

Hanna distributed a worksheet showing the expenditures and sources of funds for the fish ladder project. He said he felt it to be important to set to rest some of the concerns raised in the Committee regarding the costs of the project. While it had not proved possible to build it at a cost of \$15,000 per pool, as had been done at Damariscotta Mills, we had done this in two years instead of ten by using contractors instead of volunteer labor. The total cost of the project, including the final stage of work currently under way for completion by May 2022, was approximately \$716,000 for construction and \$38,000 for surveying, design and soil testing, for a total of \$754,000. Of this, \$382,000 (51%) had been covered by grants and donations, while \$372,000 (49%) came from local tax dollars including \$71,000 accumulated in the fish ladder capital account prior to 2018. He hoped that with these numbers the mis- or dis-information being circulated about the project would end.

Minutes:

Acceptance of the Minutes of December 21st was proposed by DiMauro, seconded by Ajami. Motion passed, 9 – 0.

Acceptance of the Minutes of January 11th was proposed by Ajami, seconded by Leeman. Motion passed, 9 – 0.

Piasecki noted that in the Minutes of February 7th, Harvell and not herself had requested review of the Minutes of December 21st. Harvell, agreeing, moved that the Minutes of February 7th be approved with that amendment. Davidson seconded the motion which was passed by 9 – 0.

Bristol School Department:

The Chair of the School Board, Darin Carlucci, introduced the Principal of Bristol Consolidated School, Jennifer Ribeiro; the AOS 93 Superintendent, Craig Jorgensen; and the Facilities Manager, John Carroll. School Board member J.W. Oliver joined the group for the presentation.

Superintendent Jorgensen asked for permission to make an announcement. The AOS Board had this day voted to appoint Lynsey Johnson, the Assistant Superintendent and Business Manager, as the new Superintendent effective on Jorgensen's retirement on July 1st. there was general acclamation at the announcement.

Introducing the Budget, Carlucci and Jorgensen noted the increase in operating costs of 7.31% forecast for the 2022-23 fiscal year. This will be offset by the decision to use \$400,061 of unallocated reserves to cover the increase in operating costs, thus avoiding any additional claim on taxation. These reserves have been built up through a combination of expenses that were not incurred due to Covid, and additional Covid funding made available from state and federal sources. He noted that auditors W.H. Brewer & Co. recommended that a reserve be maintained equal to 3% of the annual budget; keeping this amount aside, the additional sum of \$115,223.69 was available. The School Board had agreed to add this to the \$109,665.95 currently in the Reserve Fund for Unexpected Costs, and together create a Facilities and Operations Reserve Fund of \$224,889.64. The expected use of this money in 2022-23 would be for engineering studies, surveying and architectural work to develop a design, budget and timeline for renovations and building extensions at the School. This is reflected in Article 43.

Proceeding Article by Article, the Chair had a series of questions on Article 33, Regular Instruction. This included the largest single cost increase, for tuition of secondary students to Lincoln Academy. Hanson questioned the methodology and the numbers presented on this budget line. Jorgenson responded that the numbers of students enrolled fluctuates from month to month, as students move in or out of Bristol, and as students move in and out of home schooling. Beaudet asked questions that clarified that this is a 'living' number; a 'cushion' equivalent to two additional students is in line 43 of the budget, but the student tuition sums in line 41 represent 'real' named students as of December 2021, though this number may and likely will change.

Jorgensen also noted that the tuition rate for Lincoln Academy has increased, as has the payroll due to the new teacher contracts. There is no increase in teacher FTE numbers. This Article accounts for 70% of the total increase in the budget, at an increase of \$280,000.

Beaudet moved, seconded by Ajami, to recommend Article 33 in the total amount requested of \$2,800,285.50. Motion passed, 9 – 0.

Article 34, Special Education. Principal Ribeiro noted that the increase of \$65,598 for Special Education is partly accounted for by the way in which shared programs among the AOS schools now bill the school for the programs. In prior years' budgets some of these costs have been absorbed in B.C.S. salaries. The new system more clearly identifies total Special Ed costs.

It was moved by DiMauro, seconded by Porter, to recommend the requested amount of \$1,086,395.61. Motion passed, 3 – 0.

Article 35, Career and Technical Instruction. Jorgensen explained that at present, no Bristol students have requested placement at the Rockland Vocational School. The request for \$100 is a place holder in case such a request is made, in which case transfers could be made to this account.

Beaudet moved, seconded by Harvell, to recommend \$100 for Article 35. Motion passed, 9 – 0.

Article 36, Other Instruction. This line shows an increase of \$11,500 to bring extra-curricular trips for sports teams back to pre-pandemic levels. It assumes B.C.S. teams will be allowed to travel to away games.

It was moved by DiMauro, seconded by Leeman, to recommend the requested \$109,390.51. Motion passed, 9 – 0.

Article 37, Student and Staff Support. In the absence of questions, Ajami moved, seconded by Harvell, to recommend the requested \$324,156.41. Motion passed, 9 – 0.

Article 38, System Administration. This year's Bristol share of AOS 93 costs is up by \$6,000 due to COLA increase in the pay of AOS staff. Ajami moved, seconded by Beaudet, to recommend the approval of the requested \$138,834.53. Motion passed, 3 – 0.

Article 39, School Administration. The increase in this Article of \$24,880.42 is due to the hiring of a second Administrative Assistant for the school office. Porter moved, seconded by Ajami, to recommend the requested \$275,782.13. Motion passed, 9 – 0.

Article 40, Transportation and Buses: This line shows a decrease in the requested appropriation of \$26,998.36, due to decreased need for bus monitors and for Secondary Special Education transportation. Harvell moved, seconded by Piasecki, to recommend the requested \$474,750.00. Motion passed, 9 – 0.

Article 41, Facilities Maintenance. The increase of nearly \$24,000 reflects increased costs of wages, fuel and supplies. Beaudet asked if there is any change in janitorial staffing. Ribeiro replied no, there is one full-time and three part-time custodians. Beaudet also asked about the increase shown for the mowing contract; Carroll regretted that there had only been one qualified bidder for the contract. Beaudet moved, seconded by Davidson, to recommend the requested \$488,075.04. Motion passed, 9 – 0.

Article 42, All Other Expenditure. Piasecki asked what additional funding, other than this line item, is available for the school meals program. Jorgensen indicated that it is supported by federal funds, channeled through the state; this line covers any expenses not reimbursed by federal and state funding. Ribeiro noted that this is the first time that all students, regardless of family income, qualify for free school meals. Porter moved, seconded by Harvell, to recommend the requested \$19,095.10. Motion passed 9 – 0.

Article 45, the school budget summary Article: In response to questions about the likely needs for renovation and construction, Carroll led a discussion of options for space that will be studied in the coming year. In response to Beaudet's request for a ballpark construction cost figure, Carroll noted that recent school projects in Maine have ranged anything from \$400 to \$875 per square foot. Until we have some clarity on what we want he is hesitant to throw out a number.

It was moved by Harvell, seconded by Ajami, to recommend the requested total of \$5,716,864.83. Motion passed, 9 – 0.

The Chair thanked the School Board and staff and called for a short break before hearing the Parks budget.

Bristol Parks and Recreation Department:

The Committee resumed at 8.15 pm and the three Parks Commissioners, Clyde Pendleton (chair), Sandra Lane and Laurie Mahan were joined by departing Parks Director Lara Decker who had helped them put together the budget for 2022.

Pendleton noted that they are conservatively forecasting revenue of \$445,000 compared with actual revenue of \$552,071.91 in 2021. Revenues outperformed the budget estimate in 2021, due to a combination of Covid and the new pavilion. The apparent reduction reflects the receipt of a \$30,000 one-time grant from Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust in 2021 for the Beachcombers Rest learning center at the Pemaquid Beach Park, plus the uncertainty as to whether visitor numbers will hold up so strongly if Covid declines or goes away. Piasecki asked about the National Park Service grant for the Swimming Hole / Fish Ladder Park; Hall replied that this is not money received by the town, but a line

that can be drawn down if the Town approves and co-funds projects at this park over the next three years.

The Chair asked if the audit is completed yet (it is not) and what changes had been made to capital reserves the previous year. Pendleton noted that Parks had added \$178,500 to their several capital reserve accounts in 2021, reflecting the significant additional surplus revenue earned.

Beaudet asked about reports that liquor sales were being considered at the Beach Park. Pendleton emphatically denied this, but noted that there is interest from licensed caterers in serving at wedding receptions. This is currently not under consideration.

Pendleton then turned to the expense budget. This showed an increase from \$359,735.50 in 2021 to \$417,110. This includes the hiring of an additional maintenance person, shared with the town garage; other increases include additional stock for tee shirt and similar sales; increased staff wages and salaries; and a new emergency preparedness line. Any surpluses will once again be moved to capital reserves.

Beaudet wished to thank Lara Decker for her role in getting so many grants for the Parks Department, and asked if these might be expected to continue. Decker replied that she expected so, and that she will remain active as a volunteer in helping the Town get future grants.

Di Mauro moved, seconded by Beaudet, to recommend approval of the Parks budget as presented. Motion passed, 9 - 0.

Under 'Any Other Business,' Hall reported a request from the CLC Ambulance Service that two or three members of the Budget Committee might form a subcommittee to be invited to join the CLCA Board at its budget meetings in November, so that the Budget Committee will have greater insight into the budget needs of the ambulance service. Hanson, Davidson and Beaudet volunteered, and will be contacted later in the year once meetings are scheduled.

There being no other business before the Committee, the chair declared it adjourned by acclamation at 8.47 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Hall
Town Administrator