

**Town of Mount Desert
SelectBoard Meeting Minutes
Meeting Room, Town Hall
4:00 PM, March 9, 2020**

Board Members present were Chair John Macauley, Matt Hart, Martha Dudman, and Wendy Littlefield.

Members of the Public were also present.

I. Call to order at 4:00 p.m.

Chair Macauley called the Meeting to order at 4:00PM.

II. Unfinished Business

A. Review and Votes on Warrant Articles for May 4 and 5, 2020 Annual Town Meeting

Article 45: *To see what sum the Inhabitants of the Town of Mount Desert will vote to raise and appropriate for Department 851 Libraries, Village Improvement Societies, Recreation, and Public/Social Service Agencies for the 2020- 2021 Town Budget. Libraries: \$35,500.00 Village Improvement Societies: \$66,000.00 Recreation: \$88,000.00 Public/Social Service Agencies: \$127,387.00 Board of Selectmen recommends \$316,887.00 Warrant Committee recommends \$(XX.00 Board of Selectmen recommends the amount of \$316,887.00.*

Town Manager Lunt noted Article 45 requires action to bring it into conformance with the votes made at the previous meeting, and with the requests made by the Third-Party Agencies in order to bring them into balance. The number previously provided for the Article. The actual revisions to be voted on are \$127,387 for Public/Social Service Agencies, making a total of \$316,887.00.

MOTION: Ms. Dudman moved, with Ms. Littlefield seconding, Article 45 for passage as presented.

Warrant Committee member Katrina Carter inquired whether the number reflects the omission of requests by Eastern Area Agency on Aging, SPCA, and the Red Cross, and a reduction of the funds for the Seal Harbor Village Improvement Society. Manager Lunt noted no decrease was made in the amount requested by the Seal Harbor VIS. The other three agencies were not being approved for requests.

Ms. Carter pointed out that the reason for the omission of these organizations was because they were not present to make a request to the Board, however the Ambulance Service was being included even though they were also not present to make a request. Ms. Carter informed the Board that the Ambulance Service was not on a training as had been thought at previous meetings. She felt the Ambulance Service was as important a service to the Town as the Eastern Area Agency on Aging, and it was not fair to include the Ambulance Service if others would be left out, particularly the Eastern Area Agency on Aging.

Chair Macauley felt the Ambulance Service was more directly related to a Municipal service. Ms. Carter disagreed. If the Ambulance Service was included, then Eastern Area Agency on Aging should be as well.

1 Mr. Hart felt that a discussion with Basil Mahaney was probably warranted, but he agreed with
2 Chair Macauley. The Ambulance is in many ways a pseudo-Municipal department. Eastern Area
3 Agency on Aging has missed the third-party request meeting in the past as well.
4

5 Ms. Littlefield pointed out the SPCA and the Red Cross were also being omitted. Chair
6 Macauley asserted the third-party organizations being omitted were more ancillary organizations
7 than the Ambulance Service.
8

9 Ms. Dudman felt that if the Warrant Committee felt differently, their vote should reflect as much.
10 Her understanding at the time of the vote was that Ambulance personnel were at a training, and
11 therefore not able to attend the meeting. This was why she voted in favor of funding them, as
12 opposed to the others. Ms. Dudman felt she would like to fund the Ambulance as agreed upon
13 previously, but it was up to the other Board members and how they vote. If the Warrant
14 Committee feels strongly about it, they can vote differently.
15

16 It was noted the dollar amount of \$316,887 could be increased on the Town Meeting floor, and
17 such an increase has been done in the past. It was noted that no one from the Ambulance Service
18 has reached out to any Board member or Town official to acknowledge the fact that they were not
19 in attendance or offer an explanation.
20

21 Chair Macauley agreed in theory that if the others are not going to be funded because they were
22 not present, then the Ambulance Service should also not be funded. However, it is a service the
23 Town provides. The Town provides bays for Ambulance equipment and office space, and the
24 Fire Department assists the Ambulance Service on their calls. He felt it was quite different from
25 the other agencies and refusing to fund them would only create a problem for the Town in the
26 future.
27

28 Motion Failed 2-1-1 (Littlefield in Opposition, Hart in Abstention)
29

30 Town Manager Lunt explained that if the Article does not pass, the entire Article must be
31 recalculated, and deadlines must be met. He suggested as an alternative the Warrant Committee
32 make a new recommendation on the floor of the Town Meeting and it could be discussed and
33 possibly amended then. Making this change now creates difficulties preparing the Warrant and
34 getting it out by tomorrow.
35

36 It was noted that the Board is only recommending moving the number. It is up to the Warrant to
37 offer their opinion, and the citizens at Town Meeting to discuss and finalize. Ms. Carter asserted
38 that the Town citizens depend on the Board to make a recommendation.
39

40 Mr. Hart noted the Eastern Area Agency on Aging, the SPCA and the Red Cross all provide
41 valuable services. The Ambulance Service is an emergency first-responder. This should give
42 them a priority in the Town. Ms. Littlefield agreed, but reiterated that the Ambulance Service
43 had knowledge of the meeting and had time to send a representative. Wouldn't they have known
44 that if there was no representation the request would not be approved? Ms. Carter stated she
45 informed Mr. Mahaney of this in conversations prior to the meeting.
46

47 Manager Lunt warned the Board that a Warrant must be ready by the following day, or the Town
48 is in violation of its Charter.
49

50 In light of the time constraints, a vote was retaken.
51

Motion approved 3-0-1 (Hart in Abstention).

Article 46: *To see if the Inhabitants of the Town of Mount Desert will vote to increase the property tax levy limit by \$20,679 .00. See Appendix G (pg. XX). Explanation: The State Legislature passed a "tax reform" law known as LD# 1. This bill created a maximum municipal tax levy based upon this year's tax, plus an allowance for inflation and the Town's tax base growth due to new construction. However, LD#1 allows Mount Desert voters to increase that tax cap with the approval of a simple majority of the voters at Town Meeting. The only requirement is that a secret vote must be taken by written ballot. Board of Selectmen recommends Warrant Committee recommends (X Ayes;)(X Nays)*

Assessor Avila noted this was the Annual LD1 Article. He presented a handout providing an explanation of the Article and a calculation for raising the budget. The Town has a framework for raising the budget each year. The formula is mandated by State of Maine income growth. The calculation is provided. Currently the Town is over the approved budget increase limit by \$20,679.00. The LD1 Article would have to be voted on in order to raise the limit by that amount. It's been recommended to take \$400,000.00 from surplus to pay down taxes next year. If there's an adequate amount left in surplus the Article can be amended to reflect this extra amount. At this juncture, Article 46 must be recommended for passage to increase the limit of the budget by \$20,679.00. Manager Lunt felt there were no gross expenditures or overages. He felt the Town could make this change.

Two years ago, there was an increase of this type. Assessor Avila noted such increases occur fairly often. The budget overage is based on what is currently budgeted for the Town. This amount could change, depending on Town Meeting.

The increase will be voted on by the Board, but it can be changed on the floor of Town Meeting should the budget be altered by the Town Vote.

MOTION: Ms. Littlefield moved, with Mr. Hart seconding, to approve Article 46 as presented, with the requested budget increase of \$20,679.00 as presented. Motion approved 4-0.

III. Other Business

A. Such other business as may be legally conducted

There was no Other Business.

IV. Adjournment

MOTION: Ms. Dudman moved, with Ms. Littlefield seconding, to adjourn the meeting. Motion approved 4-0.

The Meeting adjourned at 4:15PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Wendy Littlefield, Secretary