**TOWN OF LOVELL**

MINUTES OF PRELIMINARY BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

January 3, 2023

PRESENT: Steve Goldsmith, Linda Legere, Catherine Stone, Eric Gulbrandsen, Kathleen Vachowski,

 Walter Grzyb, Scott Gardiner, Eugene Jordan, F. Jonathan Bliss, Christine Rothman,

 Jack Jones

Meeting was convened at 7:00 PM

 ITEMS ADDRESSED

1. The first item discussed was the Hobbs Library budget request and a proposed path to include this request into the Town Warrant, since it was rejected being submitted too late for consideration, by town rules. Christine Rothman attended this meeting representing the Hobbs Library. Ms. Rothman indicated that a misunderstanding let to the budget request being submitted late. Steve Goldsmith described the town process for receiving budget requests, and that December 15 is the last date a request can be received for consideration. He also indicated that over the years several requests for funding have been denied since they were not received by the date indicated above. Following review by the Town of Lovell and the Town attorney, a path which would allow the Hobbs Library funding request to be considered for inclusion in the Town Warrant without bypassing the Town date deadline was outlined. This alternate path is as follows:
2. A Citizen’s petition can be prepared that would request The Hobbs Library receive specific funding. This petition would be prepared by the Hobbs Library in accordance with specific criteria ( this criteria was provided to Ms. Rothman at this meeting). The minimum number of signatures required would be equal to 10% of the registered voters that voted in the last Gubernatorial Election. This minimum number of signatures of Lovell registered voters required was determined to be 71 based on the last election where 708 votes were cast for governor.
3. This petition must be completed and submitted to the Select Board not later that the regularly scheduled Select Board meeting of Tuesday February 7, 2023. The petition would then be reviewed and voted on by the Select Board at this meeting. If the petition receives a positive vote and is approved by the Select Board, it will be included in the Town Warrant for town voting at the Town Meeting to be held on Saturday March 4, 2023.

Mr. Rothman indicated that she would follow the procedure outlined and would submit this petition by the date required. Mr. Rothman asked whether she would be informed of the Select Board vote regarding the funding. The Select Board indicated that she can attend this meeting to see the discussion and voting, or she can review the minutes of this meeting that will be published soon after the meeting, on the town web site.

The Select did request that, in the future, a financial statement be submitted with the funding request, allowing a clearer understanding of the funding request and the Hobbs Library financial status.

1. The next item discussed was the funding request from Stoneham Rescue. Steve Goldsmith indicated that Stoneham Rescue responded to 48% of Lovell calls in the current year with Fryeburg Rescue responding to 90.4 % of Lovell calls during the same period. Mr. Goldsmith requested that the Budget Committee review this funding request with note made of this funding request being approximately equal to that requested by Fryeburg Rescue for a significantly greater call response in Lovell. Mr. Goldsmith also noted for the Budget Committee that supporting financial information requested of the Stoneham Rescue to justify their request was not provided.
2. The next item was a general discussion of the summary budget breakdown prepared by Steve Goldsmith. Mr. Goldsmith indicated that this summary remains under review but is essentially complete with the following items noted.
3. The preliminary total proposed budget has increased by $255,000 compared to the last years’ budget. (Please note that this increase does not include the budget request from the Hobbs Library). Methods of economizing are a continuing effort but costs have increased across the board.
4. A general discussion of all budget line items proceeded with discussion and clarification provided as required.
5. Specific note was made of the demotion debris pile at the Transfer Station, the extremely high cost of grinding and removing this pile and that the budget presented does not include funding to eliminate this pile. Research is under way to determine the actual cost of grinding and eliminating this pile as well as any alternative methods of eliminating this pile.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25PM. Minutes recorded by Jack Jones