

CONWAY MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE

Wednesday, August 17, 2022

Marshall Gymnasium

Conway Recreation Center, Conway, NH

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM. The following Budget Committee members were present: Chair Peter Donohoe, Vice Chair Frank Jost, John Colbath (left at 6:50 p.m.), Bob Drinkhall, Jim LeFebvre, Dave Jensen, Quentin Lewis, Bill Marvel, Randy Davison, Ellin Leonard, and Stacy Sand (arrived at 6:40 p.m.).

Excused: Kit Hickey and Terry McCarthy

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Drinkhall.

3. Approval of Outstanding Minutes (6/15/2022):

Mr. Colbath moved, seconded by Mr. Marvel to approve the June 15, 2022, minutes as written. Motion Carries. (6-0-4[Mr. Drinkhall, Mr. Donohoe, Mr. LeFebvre, and Mr. Jensen])

4. Town email accounts (vs personal email):

Chair Donohoe noted the town is recommending and offering town email accounts for Budget Committee business as personal email accounts / conversations are discoverable with RSA 91-A (Right to Know Law) requests. Unfortunately, each additional town email account would cost \$6/month. A discussion ensued among the committee with suggestions such as opening a separate private gmail.com account or continue with the private email account currently in use that can be redirected to a regularly used account. **Mr. Colbath** clarified email accounts that are currently used could be affected by 91-A request depending on the statute of limitations.

5. Updates from School, Town, and Procedures Subgroups:

Mr. Marvel provided an update for the school subgroup, noting obsolete, duplicative, and overly burdensome questions have been removed. **Mr. Jensen** commented on the lack of childcare in the MWV, suggesting with the moving of the 6th grade to KMS it could open space for the school district to offer early childhood education and bring in additional revenue. After further discussion, **Mr. Davison** noted he will discuss this possibility at the next School Facilities Committee meeting.

Ms. Sand advised the board the town subgroup has approached their questions on a needs-based budget and challenging the town to only fund programs that meet identified goals.

Ms. Leonard noted the non-profit subgroup is continuing to work on updating the cover letter and questionnaire materials to improve quality and consistency of responses from the non-profit organizations. Further suggesting having a coach available to help those under-resourced organizations in ensuring appropriate information is provided. A discussion ensued among the

44 committee regarding a variety of possibilities to streamline the request and presentation for non-
45 profit funding.

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47 6. Updates on Conway Bathroom Committee:

48 **Mr. Colbath** noted the committee has divided into subcommittees to research different areas for
49 restroom facilities. The Chamber of Commerce indicated North Conway businesses will not
50 continue to support the Ski Museum restrooms being open. Currently the bathrooms at Whitaker
51 have been opened to the public daily from 10-4 until Columbus Day and with the use of ARPA
52 funds two attendants have been hired to “check” the restrooms periodically for vandalism. On
53 average 30 people per day utilize the restrooms.

54
55 In response to committee questions **Mr. Colbath** stated it cost \$10,000 - \$12,000 to have the Ski
56 Museum restrooms open. He clarified \$75,000 was a suggested amount to be provided by th
57 Chamber of Commerce prior the voters approving \$399,000 article. It is believed the low usage
58 is a result of Whitaker being outside of the commercial village and 17 businesses that offer
59 restrooms to patrons.

60
61 7. Updates from Conway School Board / 6th Grade to KMS / School Closing Progress, etc.

62 **Mr. Davison** provided an overview of the JMA and Tuition Area Agreements that will be
63 discussed on August 18, 2022, at the KHS Tuition Contract Meeting. He noted the current tuition
64 agreements use a 65/35 formula (65% attendance and 35% evaluation), which is the maximum
65 allowed by the State. An additional update was provided regarding the School Board 3-2 vote to
66 move the 6th grade to Kennett Middle School starting with the 2023-24 school year.

67
68 **Mr. LeFebvre** inquired if there will still be an approximate \$240,000 loss by moving the 6th
69 grade. **Mr. Davison** advised it is down to approximately \$100,000.

70
71 8. Rooms and Meals Tax Investigation / Assessment:

72 **Mr. Jensen** provided the committee with the results of his investigation into the Rooms & Meals
73 tax collection and disbursement, including the original intent to return 40% of the funds to
74 support education. Several unsuccessful attempts were made to have the Legislature make the
75 distribution more equitable and return to the original intent. As of 2020, the Legislature decided
76 to only return a total of \$68 million among all N.H. towns with the remaining tax funds collected
77 going into the general fund.

78
79 Using 2020 data, Carroll County, primarily Conway and Wolfeboro collected \$20.5 million from
80 Rooms & Meals tax with only \$2.5 million or 12% being returned, while, Sullivan County had
81 65.5% returned. It has been suggested this formula is based on general population within each
82 town. Conway incurs increased policing and other expenses related to acquiring the \$18 million
83 in revenue and receives a very small percentage back.

84
85 **Mr. LeFebvre** suggested and volunteered to reach out the State Finance Committee. **Mr. Jensen**
86 will share his data collection with Chair Donohoe and **Mr. LeFebvre**.

87

- 88 9. Openings on Conway Municipal Budget Committee:
89 **Chair Donohoe** noted with the Mr. Corbett's resignation there are now two elected positions
90 open on the Budget Committee. He will follow up with Krista Day to readvertise the openings
91 and Louise Inkell to see if there were any write in candidates from the April election who may be
92 interested in the positions.
93
- 94 10. Old Business: None
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- 96 11. New Business:
97 **Mr. Drinkhall** expressed disappointment with the committee's failure to move for more
98 significant budget cuts and asked for the committee to be more conscientious to the taxpayer and
99 critically look the upcoming proposed budgets. **Mr. Marvel** stated through deliberations there is
100 a therapeutic effect on the selectmen and school board. **Mr. LeFebvre** expressed concern with
101 the lack of media coverage related to the Budget Committees deliberations. **Mr. Jost** reminded
102 the committee, a result of their discussions and recommendations the School Board cut \$350,000
103 from their budget at the town meeting.
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- 105 12. Public and Media Questions/Comments: None
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- 107 13. Adjourn:
108 **Mr. Jost moved, seconded by Mr. LeFebvre to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. Motion**
109 **Carries (9-0-0)**
110
- 111 Respectfully Submitted,
112 *Lisa E. Towle,*
113 Recording Secretary