

Town of Isle La Motte
Select Board Budget Meeting
18 Jan 2023@1:30 pm
Town Office at school

Present: Rusty Spaulding, Mary Catherine Graziano, Paul Zera, Selby Turner, Mary LaBrecque, Debbie Spaulding and Sylvia Jensen

Meeting called to order at 1:35 pm by Chair Rusty Spaulding

Changes to Agenda : None

The electricity charges have been redistributed as most of them go to street light (not town hall).

Chair Spaulding inquired about the budgeted amount⁵ for Office Assistant (\$19,000). Steve Mank replied that this was for 21 hours/week at \$18/hr.

Road Commissioner Selby Turner arrived to discuss the highway budget. By his estimate, the highway surplus this year is \$85.15.

There was discussion between Mary Catherine Graziano about different highway grants available from the state. She also commented that the statute requiring highway funds to be kept separate from the General Fund, has been changed, so now a highway surplus may be moved to the General Fund. Sylvia Jensen inquired about the 2021 highway surplus, and was told the 2021 surplus of \$29,860 was used in 2022.

Steve Mank suggested that Selby Turner and Mary Catherine Graziano meet to firm up the expected revenue from the expected grant projects. He also commented that the Highway Revenue should show every dollar of grant projects, and how he would like to see highway revenue and expenses broken down.

Sylvia Jensen commented on old line items, and Steve Mank stated that he is working on removing the items that are no longer needed.

Chair Spaulding proposed that he would like to have a public budget meeting on a Saturday to give the public a chance to give input. After some discussion around date and time, 04 Feb 2023 @10:30 was decided.

Steve Mank commented that non-tax revenue is estimated to be similar to 2022. Delinquent Taxes will be lower as there is not as much left to collect as in the previous years.

In 2022, \$3060 was placed in the Land Record Restoration Reserve.

Steve Mank was asked what he thought the General Fund surplus was and he replied that he thought a couple hundred dollars.

There was much discussion about ARPA funds. Chair Spaulding feels that we should ask the voters to approve using \$50,000 of the ARPA money to start the land record digitization process and new PC's for the Town Office. He would like to return the \$14,500 the town paid for the use of the school to the tax payers (for 2 years). Mary Catherine Graziano countered that in a survey she had taken, most of the 23 responders indicated that they would like a public forum to discuss use of the money.

Steve Mank discussed a question about dues that the town pays. \$1600 goes to Vermont League of Cities and Town(VLCT) and \$35 goes to another organization which provides free training to members.

He also commented on other officer expenses such as Delinquent Tax Collector, Select Board, Cemetary Commission, and Clerk of Select Board. Sylvia Jensen commented that the Board Clerk had charged \$100 for several liquor control meeting minutes which were only a few minutes in length. Chair Spaulding thought that she wasn't charging for them but said that he would check with her.

The postage charge will be significantly higher due to mailing of Town Reports, which will cost \$2.88 for First Class, which is how they had been mailed in the past.

Steve Mank commented that he had not looked at appropriations, but Chair Spaulding replied that any new appropriations will be voted on as Articles and after that first year will be voted on with the General Fund budget.

The Rec Department is asking for \$4400. There was much discussion about this and comments that they need to do some fund raising. The previous director sponsored a 5k run which was quite successful.

The Lister Reserve Fund had \$2303 last year and \$750 this year. Sylvia Jensen inquired about setting money aside (from taxes) every year to pay for the next reappraisal. Chair Spaulding replied that he is not in favor of that as it can be paid over the two years that the appraisal is ongoing.

The Animal Control Officer (ACO) was expected to attend the meeting at 3:30, but had not yet arrived. The expenses from 2015-2017 for Animal Control were \$389.60, \$60.00, and \$389.68, respectively. There were no charges for 2018-2020. The charges for 2021 were around \$190. The new ACO is requesting a \$1000 stipend and a cell phone. There was discussion around these issues and the need for clarity around compensation. Debbie Spaulding also stated that by statute, towns are required to appoint an Animal Control Officer. The Select Board will review the ACO's budget requests on their own and discuss at the next meeting.

Sylvia Jensen commented on the results of the State Equalization Study and that the results indicate that Isle La Motte may have a larger increase in School Taxes because of it. Chair Spaulding felt that most taxpayers who own 2 acres or less or have lower incomes will not be adversely affected.

Motion to adjourn by Paul Zera, second by Mary Catherine Graziano at 4:08 pm. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary LaBrecque

Rusty Spaulding

Paul Zera

Mary Catherine Graziano

