

**WALDO COUNTY 2023 PUBLIC HEARING
AND FINAL BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
NOVEMBER 4, 2022
In-person and Remote Teleconference (Zoom)
6:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Budget Committee Members Joshua Gerritsen (Lincolntonville), Thomas Wagner (Waldo), Linda Payson (Searsport), Tammy Higgins (Winterport), Penny Sampson (Unity), Elaine Higgins (Freedom), and Bob Kurek (Palermo). Also present were County Commissioners Amy Fowler, William D. Shorey, and Betty I. Johnson; Finance Director Karen Trussell, IT Director J-sun Bailey to run the teleconference, and County Clerk Barbara Arseneau took the minutes.

CALL TO ORDER: W. Shorey called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. with the flag salute, and read the policy for remote participation, roll call for votes, etc.

INTRODUCTIONS: Chairman J. Gerritsen asked the Commissioners, staff, and Budget Committee to introduce themselves.

APPROVED MINUTES:

****P. Sampson moved, B. Kurek seconded to approve the minutes from the September 23, 2022 Budget Committee meeting.**

Roll Call Vote: P. Sampson – yes, B. Kurek – yes, E. Higgins – yes, T. Wagner – yes, L. Payson – yes, T. Higgins – yes, J. Gerritsen – yes. Passed.

PUBLIC HEARING:

****E. Higgins moved, T. Wagner seconded to open the Public Hearing.**

J. Gerritsen asked if anyone from the public wished to speak or ask any questions. Nobody spoke.

****B. Kurek moved, E. Higgins seconded to close the Public Hearing.**

Roll Call Vote: P. Sampson – yes, B. Kurek – yes, E. Higgins – yes, T. Wagner – yes, L. Payson – yes, T. Higgins – yes, J. Gerritsen – yes. Passed.

1010 Emergency Management Agency:

****B. Kurek moved, E. Higgins seconded to approve the 1010 EMA budget as submitted at \$163,940.00.** Discussion: P. Sampson asked how much undesignated funds remained. A. Fowler said that undesignated funds won't be known until the end of the year. Reserve account amounts were discussed.

Roll Call Vote: P. Sampson – yes, B. Kurek – yes, E. Higgins – yes, T. Wagner – yes, L. Payson – yes, T. Higgins – yes, J. Gerritsen – yes. Passed.

1015 District Attorney:

****B. Kurek moved, E. Higgins seconded to approve the 1015 District Attorney's budget as presented in the amount of \$262,000.00.**

Roll Call Vote: P. Sampson – yes, B. Kurek – yes, E. Higgins – yes, T. Wagner – yes, L. Payson – yes, T. Higgins – yes, J. Gerritsen – yes. Passed.

1020 Commissioners:

****E. Higgins moved, P. Sampson seconded to approve the 1020 Commissioners' budget as presented in the amount of \$322,051.00.**

Roll Call Vote: P. Sampson – yes, B. Kurek – yes, E. Higgins – yes, T. Wagner – yes, L. Payson – yes, T. Higgins – yes, J. Gerritsen – yes. Passed.

1025 Finance Office:

B. Kurek moved, E. Higgins seconded to approve the 1025 Finance Office budget as presented in the amount of \$82,051.00.

Roll Call Vote: P. Sampson – yes, B. Kurek – yes, E. Higgins – yes, T. Wagner – yes, L. Payson – yes, T. Higgins – yes, J. Gerritsen – yes. Passed.

1030 Facilities:

****T. Higgins moved, E. Higgins seconded to approve the 1030 Facilities budget as presented in the amount of \$331,668.00.** Discussion: P. Sampson asked if K. Nealley had looked into solar. K. Nealley explained that they are working on a proposal and it should be available for the Commissioners soon. 1/3 of the project was rebated even though it was a government project. J. Gerritsen asked if they knew how much energy would be offset, and K. Nealley replied that it will depend on the cost of the system and payback and estimated about 70%. W. Shorey advised that he and K. Nealley have also been speaking with others and plan to form an energy committee. More information will follow on the web page.

Roll Call Vote: P. Sampson – yes, B. Kurek – yes, E. Higgins – yes, T. Wagner – yes, L. Payson – yes, T. Higgins – yes, J. Gerritsen – yes. Passed.

1035 Information Technology:

****T. Higgins moved, B. Kurek seconded to approve the 1035 Information Technology budget as presented in the amount of \$86,246.00.**

Roll Call Vote: P. Sampson – yes, B. Kurek – yes, E. Higgins – yes, T. Wagner – yes, L. Payson – yes, T. Higgins – yes, J. Gerritsen – yes. Passed.

1065 Registry of Deeds:

****E. Higgins moved, T. Wagner seconded to approve the 1065 Registry of Deeds budget as presented in the amount of \$248,670.00.**

Roll Call Vote: P. Sampson – yes, B. Kurek – yes, E. Higgins – yes, T. Wagner – yes, L. Payson – yes, T. Higgins – yes, J. Gerritsen – yes. Passed.

1070 Registry of Probate:

****B. Kurek moved, E. Higgins seconded to approve the 1070 Registry of Probate budget as presented in the amount of \$299,390.00.**

Roll Call Vote: P. Sampson – yes, B. Kurek – yes, E. Higgins – yes, T. Wagner – yes, L. Payson – yes, T. Higgins – yes, J. Gerritsen – yes. Passed.

1075 Sheriff's Office:

****E. Higgins moved, T. Wagner seconded to approve the 1075 Sheriff's budget as presented in the amount of \$2,309,020.00.** Discussion: P. Sampson said she brought Chief Deputy Matt Curtis a donut for the drug return, and her question about the "Wreaths Across America" had been answered, which was how much money the Sheriff's Office spent on this. It is approximately \$500.00 shared

with Association including fuel and hotel, and there is no overtime expenditure. It is up to the association to cover the shifts. P. Sampson asked if still spending taxpayer dollars on the Rotary membership and the Sheriff said yes. The Sheriff said the department belongs to the Belfast Rotary and is part of the Belfast Chamber. Part of membership is professional organization. P. Sampson said it was \$210.00 last year. M. Curtis noted that this was the only membership expense. P. Sampson said her issue was the same as membership to a snowmobile club. She didn't think the taxpayers should pay for membership to professional organizations that are not open to everybody. L. Payson stated that the Rotary is open to anyone. Former Sheriff Jeffrey Trafton confirmed that they serve everybody across the County, noting that the Rotary does all kinds of charitable functions for people of all kinds of categories. The Sheriff's Office philosophy is that they should be a part of that and meld into the community as a whole. He felt that out of a \$5.5 million dollar budget, this was \$210.00 well spent. J. Trafton explained other organizations that are law enforcement organizations and also TRIAD, and the Sheriff's Office is not members of any snowmobile club. They are involved with organizations that do charitable and benevolent work.

Roll Call Vote: P. Sampson – yes, B. Kurek – yes, E. Higgins – yes, T. Wagner – yes, L. Payson – yes, T. Higgins – yes, J. Gerritsen – yes. Passed.

1076 Communications Center:

****T. Higgins moved, E. Higgins seconded to approve the 1076 Communications Center budget as presented in the amount of \$1,132,579.00.** Discussion: P. Sampson noted that a "hot topic" was purchasing a vehicle for the Communications Center, a Toyota Tacoma used by the Communications Center Director as a daily driver and to check the towers. P. Sampson referred this matter to the Commissioners. A. Fowler said that originally there was no vehicle in the budget. In years past, the director had to use a vehicle from the Sheriff's Office to go check the towers. The County purchased a Tacoma, the cheapest one there is, as there were no spares in the Sheriff's Office. B. Kurek asked if this was purchased with ARPA funds, and A. Fowler responded that it was purchased from one of the County reserve accounts for use traveling to and from work, checking the tower sites, and attending work-related meetings, etc. J. Gerritsen asked how often the director goes to tower sites. Director Michael Larrivee said he has been visiting the tower sites with the new project two to three times a day, and before this he was fixing problems at least once a week. The generators also must be tested regularly. P. Sampson asked if the EMA Director used to take care of the towers. A. Fowler explained that the EMA Director only manages the ones related to EMA. P. Sampson said that in recent social media communications, she was asked to bring up that there was a concern that the truck was seen outside Waldo County. M. Larrivee explained that his personal car broke down so he used it and paid for the fuel from his personal funds. The Commissioners stated that they were also aware of this temporary use. M. Larrivee said he had chosen to have the truck fully lettered and fully marked so it was easily identified. He may stop at the store on the way home, but that's the extent of personal use normally.

Roll Call Vote: P. Sampson – yes, B. Kurek – yes, E. Higgins – yes, T. Wagner – yes, L. Payson – yes, T. Higgins – yes, J. Gerritsen – yes. Passed.

1080 Special Appropriations/Advertising and Promotion:

****E. Higgins moved, T. Higgins seconded to approve the 1080 Advertising and Promotion budget as present in the amount of \$10,000.00.**

Roll Call Vote: P. Sampson – yes, B. Kurek – yes, E. Higgins – yes, T. Wagner – yes, L. Payson – yes, T. Higgins – yes, J. Gerritsen – yes. Passed.

1090 Audit:

****B. Kurek moved, E. Higgin seconded to approve the 1090 Audit budget as presented in the amount of \$8,500.00.** Discussion: T. Higgins asked if the audit had been received, and A. Fowler said no, not yet.

Roll Call Vote: P. Sampson – yes, B. Kurek – yes, E. Higgins – yes, T. Wagner – yes, L. Payson – yes, T. Higgins – yes, J. Gerritsen – yes. Passed.

1095 Debt Service:

****P. Sampson moved, E. Higgins seconded to fund zero dollars for Debt Service.**

Roll Call Vote: P. Sampson – yes, B. Kurek – yes, E. Higgins – yes, T. Wagner – yes, L. Payson – yes, T. Higgins – yes, J. Gerritsen – yes. Passed.

2000 Interest:

****E. Higgins moved, P. Sampson seconded to approve the 2000 Interest budget as presented in the amount of \$19,000.00.**

Roll Call Vote: P. Sampson – yes, B. Kurek – yes, E. Higgins – yes, T. Wagner – yes, L. Payson – yes, T. Higgins – yes, J. Gerritsen – yes. Passed.

2005 University of Maine Cooperative Extension:

****T. Higgins moved, B. Kurek seconded to approve the 2005 University of Maine Cooperative Extension Budget as presented in the amount of \$58,050.00.**

Roll Call Vote: P. Sampson – yes, B. Kurek – yes, E. Higgins – yes, T. Wagner – yes, L. Payson – yes, T. Higgins – yes, J. Gerritsen – yes. Passed.

2025 Employee Benefits:

****E. Higgins moved, T. Wagner seconded to approve the 2025 Employee Benefits budget as presented in the amount of \$1,861,319.00.** Discussion: P. Sampson asked if the Severance/Assistance Reserve account was in this budget and was told no.

Roll Call Vote: P. Sampson – yes, B. Kurek – yes, E. Higgins – yes, T. Wagner – yes, L. Payson – yes, T. Higgins – yes, J. Gerritsen – yes. Passed.

2035 Waldo County Soil and Water:

****T. Higgins moved, E. Higgins seconded to approve the 2035 Waldo County Soil and Water Conservation District budget as presented in the amount of \$26,000.00.**

Roll Call Vote: P. Sampson – yes, B. Kurek – yes, E. Higgins – yes, T. Wagner – yes, L. Payson – yes, T. Higgins – yes, J. Gerritsen – yes. Passed.

2040 Records Preservation:

****B. Kurek moved, E. Higgins seconded to approve the 2040 Records Preservation budget as presented in the amount of \$4,000.00.**

Roll Call Vote: P. Sampson – yes, B. Kurek – yes, E. Higgins – yes, T. Wagner – yes, L. Payson – yes, T. Higgins – yes, J. Gerritsen – yes. Passed.

2045 Reserves:

****T. Higgins moved, E. Higgins seconded to approve the 2045 Reserves budget as presented in the amount of \$25,000.00.**

Roll Call Vote: P. Sampson – yes, B. Kurek – yes, E. Higgins – yes, T. Wagner – yes, L. Payson – yes, T. Higgins – yes, J. Gerritsen – yes. Passed.

2050 Grant Writing:

****E. Higgins moved, T. Higgins seconded to approve the 2050 Grant Writing budget at zero dollars as presented.** P. Sampson asked if this had to be in there. The Commissioners said it used to be highly funded in years past and may be again one day. Dispatch and EMA write their own grants.

Roll Call Vote: P. Sampson – yes, B. Kurek – yes, E. Higgins – yes, T. Wagner – yes, L. Payson – yes, T. Higgins – yes, J. Gerritsen – yes. Passed.

****P. Sampson moved, T. Higgins seconded to approve the total County Budget as presented in the amount of \$7,249,484.00.**

Roll Call Vote: P. Sampson – yes, B. Kurek – yes, E. Higgins – yes, T. Wagner – yes, L. Payson – yes, T. Higgins – yes, J. Gerritsen – yes. Passed.

1050 Jail:

****P. Sampson moved, E. Higgins seconded to approve the 1050 Jail budget at \$3,189,146.00.**

Roll Call Vote: P. Sampson – yes, B. Kurek – yes, E. Higgins – yes, T. Wagner – yes, L. Payson – yes, T. Higgins – yes, J. Gerritsen – yes. Passed.

****P. Sampson moved, E. Higgins seconded to approve the 2023 Budget Grand total at \$10,438,630.00.**

Roll Call Vote: P. Sampson – yes, B. Kurek – yes, E. Higgins – yes, T. Wagner – yes, L. Payson – yes, T. Higgins – yes, J. Gerritsen – yes. Passed.

J. Gerritsen asked if there were any closing thoughts from the Budget Committee. P. Sampson said that with the tax stabilization, it increases Unity's taxes by nearly \$15,000.00, and it is hard to make up for that amount in such a small municipality. They will either have to raise taxes or cut something else out. With the tax stabilization program, it will put the onus on people under age 65 to make the difference.

J. Gerritsen said he is moving to Rockport and regretted that he will no longer be able to serve on the Budget Committee in the future. All thanked him for his years of service in this capacity.

****B. Kurek moved, T. Higgins seconded to adjourn the meeting at 6:48 p.m.**

Roll Call Vote: P. Sampson – yes, B. Kurek – yes, E. Higgins – yes, T. Wagner – yes, L. Payson – yes, T. Higgins – yes, J. Gerritsen – yes. Passed.

Respectfully submitted by Barbara L. Arseneau Waldo County Clerk
Barbara L. Arseneau