

**ADVISORY BUDGET COMMITTEE
TOWN OF MADISON
November 19, 2024
MINUTES**

Members Present – Sharon Schilling; Rick Judkins; Selectboard Rep Joy Gray

Members Excused – Joe Dame; School Board Rep Sarah DeMartino

Others Present – Town Administrator Linda Shackford; MadTV Videographer Aysia Wellinghurst

Where and When Posted – Town Hall upper & lower bulletin boards and Madison & Silver Lake Post Offices on May 28, 2024.

Meeting Called to Order – By Schilling at 6:00 p.m.

Welcome and Introductions were made by Schilling.

Pledge of Allegiance – Schilling led those in attendance in reciting the Pledge.

Approval of Minutes – **Motion** by Judkins, seconded by Gray to approve the minutes of October 22, 2024 as amended. The motion passed **3-0**.

Silver Lake Watershed Management Plan Opportunity – SLAM members Dave Scarborough, Bill Lord and Ted Kramer approached the committee to elicit their support for a warrant article to obtain a pre-approved \$100,000 forgivable loan to hire a firm to perform a study of the Silver Lake Watershed and provide recommendations for its protection. The loan has a 1% interest rate that SLAM has committed to cover. This loan would be at no cost to the taxpayers but it does need Town Meeting approval.

Scarborough explained the details of the project answering several questions from the committee. There would be the need for a steering committee. This committee should be comprised of DPW, Selectmen, Conservation Commission and Advisory Budget Committee members. The logistics of who would appoint the group need to be determined. The committee would be responsible for approving invoices and any other controls necessary.

Scarborough, Lord and Kramer will be attending the next Selectboard meeting. Gray suggested to have details of other Town's committees and warrant article wording for the creation of a possible ETF with the Selectmen as agents to expend available at the meeting.

Motion by Judkins, seconded by Gray to recommend to the Board of Selectmen to support the effort of SLAM regarding the Silver Lake Watershed Management Plan. The motion passed **3-0**. Schilling will attend the meeting or write up something for the Selectmen regarding the committee's support.

2024 Budget Drawdown – Schilling asked if there have been any outstanding changes to the drawdown. Shackford mentioned that there have not, adding there are still reimbursements from the Trust Funds to be added.

2024 Revenue Worksheet – There were no remarkable changes of note in revenues. Gray will submit the detailed revenue for the Rec Department line prior to the next meeting.

Road Repair Budget – Dame met with DPW Director Shackford regarding review of a road condition list to be used for discussion of the road improvement warrant article. Consideration of raising the warrant article amount from \$250,000 to \$500,000 has been made. Schilling would like to have Shackford in attendance to discuss how the priorities of the paved roads are found at the next meeting along with a list of gravel roads by priority.

Trust Funds and Warrant Article Drawdowns – The committee reviewed the drawdowns.

CIP – The committee reviewed three draft documents related to work done in developing a CIP. Gray explained them while noting that they are a 20-year cost summary, a 10-year cost summary and a plan detail. The board would like to have department heads review with Gray asking that the Selectmen see it first at their November 26th meeting.

Health Insurance – Information regarding employee contributions to the health insurance premiums was discussed. Dame provided information and numbers showing increases to 8% and 10% from the current 5% employee contribution; the average state employee pays 14%. Schilling would like to discuss what the committee would like to do regarding the percentage of employee contributions.

Judkins cited the reasons he feels it is reasonable for the employees to contribute 10% by comparing the cost a retired person pays for insurance versus working employees.

Gray would like to see how much the employees currently contribute.

Schilling thinks the fact that the rest of the state and country pay 14% of their healthcare premium costs the Town employee contribution should be brought in line and is in favor of an increase.

Motion by Judkins, seconded by Schilling to recommend to the Selectmen to move the employee contribution to health care costs to 10%. The motion passed **2-0-1** with Gray abstaining because she will have her vote with the Selectboard.

General Budgetary Guidance – Schilling said that the Selectmen habitually return \$150,000 to \$200,000 to Unassigned Fund balance each year which is over taxing our citizens. Schilling would like to see the budget hold level this year if not be decreased by 1-2%.

8:32pm Gray left the meeting.

Schilling is an advocate for lowering the budget and would like to see salary management overall with Judkins concurring.

Motion by Judkins, seconded by Schilling to recommend to the Selectmen to hold the operating budget level if cannot make a 2-3% decrease. Both Judkins and Schilling voted in the affirmative.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for December 3, 2024 at 6:00pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Linda Shackford,
Town Administrator/Recording Secretary