

**Board of Selectmen  
Special Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, March 3, 2022  
Preston Town Hall - Lower Level**

**1. Call to Order**

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

**2. Roll Call**

***Members***

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier  
Jerry Grabarek  
Ken Zachem

***Also Present***

Kimberly Lang, Recorder  
Sean Nugent - PRA  
Fran Minor - Senior Affairs  
Mary Lou Jensen

**3. New Business - 2022-2023 Budget**

**a. PRA**

Sean Nugent gave a general overview of the past 12 years of the Riverwalk Project, by the numbers sharing a spreadsheet that showed the Operating Budget, Town Matching Funding, and PRA Town Budget. He pointed out that due to Covid and all work on the site had stopped for two years in 2020 \$66,000 was returned to the town and in 2021 \$85,000 was returned. But now that work has resumed the operating budget shows a significant increase from the previous two years. However, the proposed 2022-2023 budget will remain the same as the 2021-2022 budget, \$113,275.

Even though the proposed budget is the same as the previous budget Mr. Nugent shared a breakdown of the 8 areas that comprise the budget. He pointed out that the Legal Services line has been reduced from \$10,000 to \$2,000. He also shared that DEEP required third-party engineers to be part of the Building Repair & Improvements line.

He stated that current grants are being used to pay for the Quick Hit items to help move the project closer to completion while waiting for the final funds to be released. The combo abatement that needs to be done is mainly asbestos removal. The sewage pump station

which ties into Norwich Utilities will remain the town's property. It was stated that when the property is conveyed to the Tribe that PRA will not be done it will need to continue to review activities, as well as approvals of any escrow monies for remediation work the Tribe needs to do. The PRA will need to remain active until the development of the site is complete. He pointed out that they are in the process of hiring a part-time Project Manager to check that work is completed to specs. The PRA does not want to continue with the same company they've been using due to the cost increases.

**b. Senior Affairs -**

Fran Minor introduced herself and Mary Lou Jensen, Chairwoman of the Senior Affairs Committee, to the Board. Ms. Minor explained that the biggest change is to move the funds for the congregate meals to the Part-time Staff Line. Having all the wages in one area will make it more clear to the bookkeeper. The hours at the Senior Center have been expanded. Typically Mondays are from 9-1, and Tuesdays and Thursdays 1-4. Mondays are now 9-3:30 and Tuesdays and Thursdays are 12:30 -4:30. The extended hours have been well received, with people enjoying the time after the congregate meal to socialize and play both card and board games.

At the last congregate meal there were 23 in attendance, which shows the importance of this service to our seniors.

The \$5,000 for the driver is paid for through a matching grant so the fewer dollars that the town budgets the fewer dollars that the Senior Affairs is awarded by the state. The amount that Preston is allocated from the state in matching funds is \$19,590. Luckily, Preston participates with 11 other towns to provide transportation to seniors. She stated that the transportation that the town provides is a lifeline for many seniors to get to doctors' appointments. If the seniors didn't have access to this transportation they would need to pay out of pocket. She did state that it is difficult to find drivers. One reason is that Preston pays \$15.06 per hour while other towns' pay is higher. The Selectmen requested that they be provided with a spreadsheet showing what area towns pay so that an increase can be justified. The Senior Affairs' current budget is \$73,700. The proposed budget, without the salary, is \$76,000.

Mary Lou Jensen shared her concern that Fran Minor is driving people to doctor's appointments and therefore she is unable to complete the office work that she needs to do, making finding drivers and possibly paying them more a priority. She also brought up that the current building that houses the Senior Center is needing many repairs and may need to be replaced.

**c. Miscellaneous Request**

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier stated that the Treasurer's budget will remain the same except for salary which has yet to be determined. She also pointed out that it was the only department

where there isn't an assistant. She suggested adding \$10,000 to the budget to pay for project help and administrative support. An assistant in the Treasurer's office can assure that all its tasks are completed in a more timely manner as suggested by the auditors and avoid any interruptions to future audits.

Animal Control, other than salary, there are no anticipated changes to their budget. An update from Keith Wucik was that insurance will have a 5% increase to \$2,100.

Next Tuesday will be the Budget Workshop Special Meeting at 6:00 P.M. on March 8, 2022, with Parks & Recreation, Library, and Miscellaneous.

**4. Public Comment** - No public

**5. Adjournment**

*Ken Zachem motioned to adjourn at 7:00 P.M... Jerry Garbarek seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

*Kimberly Lang*

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