

Budget Committee Meeting – December 6, 2018

Attendance: Andy Reed, Tabatha Littlefield, Tony Avila (Selectman), Penny Sampson (Selectman), Pat Clark, Lynn Warman (guest), Charlie Schaefer (VRFP), Sue Ferreira, Lucia Picard, Tom Aversa (SRLT), Michael Hallundback (WCAP), Ray Estabrook (Game Loft), Brittany Cicchetti (NHFW), Alicia McCormick, Linda Cook (Spectrum), John McIntire

We began our meeting with the presentation for the Game Loft, represented by Ray Estabrook. He answered our questions and concerns. Penny added that the county budget is increasing, so we would keep that in mind. Ray diligently responded to our concerns about conflict of interest in his organization, which has been an on-going concern. We also discussed whether the money was going to the location in Belfast or to Mt. View; the bulk of the funding goes towards administration, salaries (although volunteers do the work with kids), and occupancy of the Belfast location. The motion was made to give them the \$500 that they are asking for. Motion passed with 4 in favor and 2 opposed.

Brittany Cicchetti represented New Hope for Women. The Selectmen had recommended \$300, which is \$200 less than they are asking for, simply because they are trying to keep taxes down and find a middle ground. John McIntire made a motion to give the full \$500. All were in favor. Motion Passed.

Tom Aversa represented the Seabasticook Regional Land Trust. He detailed the services they provide specifically to Unity. Tom also told us that SRLT has moved to being completely volunteer operated; no salaried employees. Motion made and passed for \$750.

Linda Cook represented Spectrum Generations. Spectrum currently has 90 paid employees. Linda answered our questions and concerns. Motion made and passed for \$500.

Charlie Schaefer represented the Volunteer Regional Food Pantry. As always, he gave us a very thorough and well presented review of what they accomplished this year, including their educational programs and the food they pass out. Sue asked how they decide whether to give food to someone. Charlie's answer was "never say no." They never turn anyone away. Motion made and passed for the full \$2,000.

Michael Hallenbeck represented WCAP and he reported that 108 Unity residents received HEAP assistance last year. Mark gave a very detailed report of the various benefits and assistance that Unity residents received through WCAP. WCAP has been a point of controversy at Town Meeting, but many still want to fund it for all the good they do. The townspeople have been content with a compromise. Motion was made to give \$2000, same as last year. Motion passed.

Broadreach was not present, but the committee was concerned that they may not have realized the location had changed from last year. We are going to check with them.

No meeting set for next time. We are waiting for the Town Budget.

Penny shared info on special appropriations petitioning with the County and they are planning to look into trying it out to reduce special appropriations funding on a county level. This would really help everyone!