

**Camden Budget Committee
Minutes of Meeting
March 15, 2012**

PRESENT: Committee Members: Chairman Filip, Steve Neil, Vice Susan Dorr, Kelly Macomber, George Forristall, Tom Armbrrecht, Matthew Lewis, Brian Gasser, Meg Sideris, Delisa Morong, Nicole Bland, Howard Jones, Colleen Duggan, Peter Lindquist, and Kristin Bifulco. Also present were Town Manager Pat Finnigan, Harbormaster Steve Pixley, Gene McKeever, Harbor Committee, Chair, Finance Director Carol Sue Greenleaf, Development Director Brian Hodges, and Opera House Manager Kerry Hadley.

ABSENT: Parker Laite, Sr., Tom Jackson, Peter Orne, Randy Stearns, Steve Durrell, and Kimberly Taliadouros

Select Board: Morgan Laidlaw, Donald White, Jr., Martin Cates, and James Heard. (John R. French, Jr. absent)

Chairman Filip called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Scheduled for discussion this evening were the following proposed budgets: Conservation Commission, Historic Resources Committee, Midcoast Regional Planning Committee, Chamber of Commerce, Planning & Development, Harbor & Landing, Opera House Town Office, Opera House Auditorium, Administration/Finance/Assessing, Insurances, Professional Services, and Information Technology

Regarding Harbor & Landing,

John Arnold made a motion to recommend \$154,800 for the Harbor & Public Landing budget. George Forristall seconded this motion. The motion passed on a 17-0-0 vote.

Regarding Planning & Development,

Manager Finnigan reported at the beginning of this fiscal year the Codes/Planning and administrative staff were moved to this budget line, along with any mileage and professional development costs. This year's part time line and planning board line have additional hours built in for the Comprehensive Plan support. The Planning Board and Zoning Board lines include advertising costs which are off set with applicant's fees but with the loss of the local paper those fees could be quite a bit higher this year.

There was a discussion why Camden is paying more towards the Chamber than the other communities.

Executive Director Dan Bookham replied that they have asked every community to contribute. Historically Rockland has not contributed because they were never asked to. This year we have asked \$1,000 from Thomaston, \$3,500 from Rockland, \$3,500 from Camden, and \$1,000 from Lincolnville. As you may be aware the Town of Rockport has a policy not to contribute any funds towards collaborating agencies. The Chamber has to operate off this budget and it is not their expectation for Camden to shoulder the Chamber.

Meg Sideris stated that our Chamber is one of the largest chambers in the area but it is also the most with the most small businesses and to her that is a really good reason to support our chamber as fully as we can.

George Forristall made a motion to approve Planning/Development budget for \$242,600. Susan Dorr seconded this motion. The motion passed on a 17-0-0 vote.

Regarding Opera House Town Offices,

This budget is for the portion of the heat, electricity, cleaning supplies, etc. The cost is split 50% between the Town Office and the Auditorium. The Auditorium budget includes the other 50% of the shared cost. This line also includes salaries for the Assistant Opera House Manager (20%) and the Custodian (50 %). The medical insurance lines, FICA, and retirement are also pro-rated. The heat consumption has gone down to some energy conservation measures that have been installed.

John Arnold made a motion to recommend \$86,900 for the General Government Town Office budget. Meg Sideris seconded this motion. The motion passed on a 17-0-0 vote.

Regarding Opera House Auditorium,

Manager Finnigan reported the full time salaries line includes 50% for the custodian, 80% for the Assistant Opera House Manager which are both shared with the Town Office and 100% for the Opera House Manager. She is recommending a reclassification for the Assistant Opera House Manager from a Class 8 to Class 10 which will need to go before the Personnel Board and approved by the Select Board but she wanted to include the amount in this budget request to have funding should the reclassification go forward. She also noted that about 40% of the Auditorium line is supported by revenues collected from shows, performances, meeting, etc held at the Opera House.

A budget member inquired about the medical insurance increase, it appears that line looks like it has doubled. Pat explained the reason this line shows such a large jump is mainly due to the Opera House Manger (Kerry) just became a full time position July 1st which was approved last year. She was not receiving medical insurance until this July. The Assistant Manager has been receiving medical insurance because his position has been full time with the Opera House since 2008.

Meg Sideris inquired why the reclassification for the Assistant Opera House Manager. Pat explained she is recommending this because when the position was created in 2008 it was set as a laborer level and not a professional level. We have been using the current employee's level of expertise which is outside of the classification grade that position is currently on and that is why she is making the recommendation.

Brian Gasser asked if the \$70,000 in the revenue line is the amount we collect from events being held at the Opera House.

Opera House Manager Hadley stated she is very proud of the record their department has. They are always on target with their expenses or under and they are always over their budget revenues. By the end of February they had already collected 90% of their revenues and had only spent 62% of their expenses. She has booking beyond June and by that time they will have collected \$80,000 in revenues which is \$10,000 or 12% above what was budgeted. They have already improved their performances, events, etc. They hold 170 meetings in this building that are unpaid for such as

Town Meeting, CEDAC, Planning Board, Select Board and other town committees. They provide the set up and audio for these meetings excluding Planning Board and Select Board meetings because they do their own set up and provide own secretarial services which includes the audio. Last year the meetings were 132 but this year the meetings have been increased to 170. The \$70,000 that was budgeted for revenues is for outside events held here and the fees are based on sliding fee scale system.

Brian Gasser asked if this was the only source of funding for the Opera House. Kerry stated it was and they do try to get funding when they can. They look for sponsorships and advertising sponsorships as well.

Brian Gasser commented as he looks at this budget he does not think it's fair to keep asking the Camden taxpayers to keep funding the Opera House at \$140,000. He applauds this effort and it's not that he does not support the Opera House but we are not gaining anything if anything we keep going backwards if you look at revenues versus expenses. He asked Kerry if she saw any change coming in this pattern. Kerry explained that if you look at the sheet she just handed out the rental value for the meetings they support is conservatively based at \$20,000 added to the \$80,000 estimated revenues that would bring it up to \$100,000. If the Opera House didn't support the meetings the town office would have to pay someone else that money anyways.

In 1994 when the Opera House underwent renovations which was mostly paid for by MBNA, at the Select Board and Town level it was set to have a non-profit rate for Camden and allow for schools to have a subsidized rate. What has happened over the years is our rentals are mostly Camden non-profits. The Opera House Committee just completed their strategic plan and they work very hard at trying to find ways to make those fees up. We are always trying to play catch up because the nature of the beast is it is extremely staff intensive.

Susan Dorr, budget committee member, and Opera House Committee Chair, commented as a committee they are always feel like they are playing catch up and with Kerry's tireless efforts she leaves no stones unturned when looking for ways to make revenue. The Opera House is not necessarily a profit center it is an anchor that has been identified by CEDAC as a vitality in this community. On a dollar for dollar basis it may not bring in the revenue to pay for itself but if you consider what it does for the community it is an extraordinarily functional entity.

Howard Jones commented he is a very strong supporter of the Opera House however it is a little concerning that that our expenses are still out pacing our revenues. His experience with planning is if you cover your baseline and you get incremental income you will have outpaced your expense line and he does not see this with this budget and it has nothing to do with the multiplier effect. At what time do we cover our baseline and then see incremental growth to offset some of those costs? However, as a taxpayer he does not mind paying for this.

Kerry Hadley replied she totally agrees with Mr. Howard but all she can say is with what we charge and what naturally comes at them is extremely time and staff intensive. We keep getting more stuff that is staff intensive and we don't have the time to go out and get the other stuff that we need (revenue) that would add to the baseline.

Meg Sideris commented as far as she can tell everything that happens in this town in a big way partly happens because we have the Opera House. We have the opportunity to bring revenue in town and she does not think you will ever see it in writing the value of the Opera House.

Howard Jones made a motion to recommend a budget of \$207,600 for the Opera House Auditorium. Meg Sideris seconded this motion.

Kristin Bifulco commented this being her third year on the budget committee and hearing this discussion over and over she would like to ask why the Opera House cannot do fundraising events or apply for grants the same as the Snow Bowl does.

Kerry Hadley replied by stating she would love to see assistance from the Development Director for grants and she has looked for volunteers to write grants, but again they just do not have time to do this right now. If they had any time at all carved out of a week they would be applying for grants. There really are very few grants that they would be eligible for. The Snow is different because they are an enterprise fund and would have to establish the Opera House as a 501(3)c to be eligible to apply for grants or become even more creative and utilize the staffing they have to start help getting grants for the Opera House.

Tom Filip added the Opera House operates much like the Library and Snow Bowl and that is they provide a community service to the extent that we are paying for it and trying to balance part of the budget with the revenues from that.

Delisa Morong stated if we didn't have the Auditorium budget line in here the town would have to pay the full amount of the electricity, heat, sprinkler system, elevator, etc so if you look at the percentages that would add about \$60,000 to the operating budget for the Town.

The Chairman called for the vote for the motion on the floor. The motion passed on a 16-1-0 vote. (Gasser opposed)

Regarding Administration/Finance/Codes/Assessing,

John Arnold made a motion to recommend \$664,535 for the Administration/Finance budget. Tom Armbrrecht seconded this motion. The motion passed on a 17-0-0 vote.

Professional Services,

John Arnold made a motion to recommend \$51,000 for the Professional Services budget. Steve Neil seconded the motion. The motion passed on a 17-0-0 vote.

Regarding Information Technology,

John Arnold made a motion to recommend \$56,000 for the General Information Technology budget. Brian Gasser seconded this motion. The motion passed on a 17-0-0 vote.

Regarding Insurances,

Tom Armbrrecht wondered if we could find out if we increased the deductible lines in some of these lines if it would make a significant difference in these amounts. Manager Finnigan replied she would look into that option and report back to the Committee.

John Arnold made a motion to recommend \$152,500 for the Insurance budget with the condition that the town manager investigate whether these amounts could be reduced with

higher deductibles. Susan Dorr seconded this motion. The motion passed on a 17-0-0 vote.

Susan Dorr made a motion to adjourn meeting at 8:10pm. John Arnold seconded this motion. The motion passed on a 17-0-0 vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice L. Esancy
Recording Secretary