

BEACH STIPEND COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Nov. 6, 2014, 6:30 PM

OL TOWN HALL AMERICAN LEGION HALL (2nd Floor)

In attendance: BJ Bernblum, Fred Callahan, Keith Coakley, Beth Cote, Rich Dakin, and First Selectwoman Bonnie Reemsnyder. Wendy Gavin was excused absent.

- 1. Approval of Minutes:** As the minutes were not completed before this meeting, the approval of minutes was tabled until the next meeting.
- 2 & 3: Discuss Proposed Policy and Methodology Regarding Stipends:** Beth Cote proposed to have a discussion on the direction that the committee is going. She feels that there are a lot of assumptions that were made, and she wants to make sure that we are all on the same page. In order to focus on the policy she feels that all committee members should agree on what associations should be included in the stipends, and whether or not we should right the stipends. She is concerned that basing a philosophy and proposed stipend by limiting the total amount to the \$100,000 that has been allocated is not the fairest way to approach this. She feels that the beach associations should come to BOF and justify their request through their expenses, and it should not be based on linear feet of beach, # of residences, etc. BJ Bernblum commented that this is what is currently happening, but the committee was formed to try to determine if the stipends are justified, and what would justify the stipend. He feels that the committee has actually agreed that each of the beaches have some policing needs, and other needs, such as cleaning, road maintenance, would be a beach by beach approach. Keith Coakley said that the amount that we were working with for some of the justification of the stipends is being based on the cost estimate submitted by First Selectwoman Reemsnyder and Officer Heinssen as to the added cost if the beaches did not have their own security. Fred Callahan felt that we agreed to review this in five year increments, and Keith Coakley said that it is in the draft of the policy. Beth Cote still felt that we still need to look at each individual association and decide if each should be given a stipend. BJ Bernblum asked the committee if each felt that we should continue the stipends, or terminate immediately. Beth Cote felt that it should not be terminated immediately, but consideration to terminating over time should be done, though she did feel that some stipends are warranted to some associations. She sees a responsibility where we create a problem, but not in those circumstances that we don't create a problem. She is concerned that this approach to allocating the money is flawed. If we allocate money for policing issues, is there a chance that IF the homes become year round, the beach associations might make the case that more security is needed year round? BJ Bernblum asked if Beth Cote felt that the security detail does deter the need for police. She wanted to assure the committee that she is not advocating to get rid of the stipend totally, but just questioning what it should be based upon. She feels that those beaches adjacent to the Town Beaches are more in need of added stipends more than those associations that are further from any Town Beach. BJ Bernblum agrees that each association is unique, and that its needs for security are unique, but the ability of the committee to divine and quantify those unique elements and translate them into the legitimate policing costs is not possible. Keith Coakley made the point that we are not giving the associations what they need, but rather, we estimated what we are saving (\$52,500), and dividing that amount between the associations as fairly as possible. Keith Coakley reviewed the model that was suggested for allocating the \$52,500 estimated savings on policing (attached). Fred Callahan pointed out that this did not include Edge Lea, but Keith said that if they were added, it would be the same formula, but the total amount would be further diluted. Special situations for additional stipend amounts, as follows:

- \$4,000 for Miami Beach for beach cleanup, due to the public using their beach;
- \$4,000 for Miami Beach for maintenance of Pond Rd.
- \$5,250 for White Sand Beach for road maintenance due to heavy use of their roads
- \$5,000 for MBA for OL Rangers policing the beach
- \$9,000 for Federation of Beaches for ATV
- \$6,876 for Rogers Lake Association for use of clubhouse

The total with the extras is \$86,600, which is \$14,000 less than the \$101,000 total from the current budget.

Fred Callahan mentioned that their association just received the form for their budget request, which is standard. While this committee may make a recommendation before next year's budget is approved, the associations should submit their requests as usual.

First Selectwoman Reemsnyder expressed some concerns about the allocation for WSB, as she felt more consideration should be given to their security, as they must put someone at the gate to check beach stickers. If they did not have the gate keeper to check stickers, the town probably would need to do that. Also, allocating \$4,000 for Pond Rd., which is very short, while only allocating \$5,250 for road maintenance in all of WSB seems unequal. First Selectwoman Reemsnyder suggested that a better suggestion might be for a mutual aid agreement between MBA and the Town stating that the town will maintain and plow Pond Rd. because most travelers going down Hartford Ave. turn right onto Pond Rd., in order to get back to Rte. 156. The committee agreed that any agreement for the town to take care of Pond Rd. should be handled by the Town (BOS / BOF). Beth Cote also agreed that WSB has a unique situation due to town residents using the roads to access the Town Beach, though she questions whether the town usage accounts for 50% usage. First Selectwoman Reemsnyder shared that officers of the WSB Association would disagree, noting that many town residents use the beach all year round and use all the roads for entering and leaving the town beach. Rick Sullivan, Pres. of WSB mentioned that the number the committee was using was an amount used for their road maintenance anticipation for that year, but other years it may be substantially more, should roads need to be repaved, and not just repaired. He would like to see the town commit to 50% of the road maintenance/plowing costs each year, due to the high non-association resident use. There was a question about whether or not they have a 5-yr. capital plan, as the town has a 5 yr. capital plan. Since the town likes to allocate large capital expenses over several years, it could help the planning if the town was going to be responsible for 50% every year. It might be helpful to have the Old Lyme Public Works Department look at the roads and give an opinion on the timing of repaving. The point was made that the figures used in this model was to remain the same until reviewed in another 3-5 years. There was further discussion about the town just paying the assessment on the property owned by the town (town beach is assessed at \$1.3 million, and the assessment is 3.75 mills, equaling approx. \$5,000/yr.). It was suggested that the recommendation be that the town pay the assessment like any other owner within the association. BJ Bernblum shared his concern that this should not be a "contract" that the town must live by, but rather a formula that should be reviewed in future (5 yr. suggested) to determine if it still works.

There was discussion about Rogers Lake Community Center, with concern about giving money to an organization that seems similar to a church offering space for many community organizations. Some felt that this was not the responsibility of the town to fund this usage, though the town appointed commission "Rogers Lake Authority" uses the building monthly. If Rogers Lake Community Center did receive a stipend, it was suggested that there be a Memo of Understanding that there is mutual aid to allow the Community Center to be used as a staging location for times of emergency, as RL area has one entrance.

Beth agreed to take a closer look at the allocation of the police costs (\$52,400) and come back to the next meeting with suggestions.

Keith asked if everyone agreed that a stipend of \$5,000 for Rogers Lake is appropriate in exchange for a Memo of Understanding that the community center would be used as a staging area during emergency. BJ suggested that the MOU should refer to the fact that the Community center should still be made available to other community organizations (ie. RLA, NAA, Girl Scouts, etc.).

Future Meetings: The next meeting of the Committee will be Monday, Nov. 10, 2014 at 5:00 PM.

Public Comment: Dave Evers mentioned that the associations govern themselves, and the service they provide helps the town, saving them money.

Scott Boulanger questioned where the figure of \$52,500 for police savings came from. He agreed that the biggest factor costing the beaches more is the influx of day trippers to the beach area. He feels that the presence of security in the private beaches does deter crime and the amount of the savings cannot accurately be assessed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:18 PM