

TOWN OF BATH FINANCE COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting

August 22, 2023

1. CALL TO ORDER: By Chairman at 4:00pm.

2. ROLL CALL: Susan Webster (X) Greg Schene (X) Mary Lynn Hickey (X) Quorum – Yes
Also present – Clerk Sharron Corrick, Councilwomen MacLeod and Skinner, Mayor Merki
Bath Tree Board member Kate Lehman.

3. Finance Committee Minutes of August 8, 2023 were approved by Common Consent.

Item 5.F. Forestry Grant was brought forward in the agenda to allow Tree Board member Kate Lehman to present her report and request. She explained to the FC that the Tree Board had submitted the final report for the Bath Tree Survey Grant. With this being done it is expected the Tree Board will soon be able to reimburse the Town for the \$11,000 loan given the Board for expenses of this project.

Ms. Lehman described the Board's 2024 plan (attached) to apply for the Division of Forestry's Demonstration City Grant. She requested that the Board be able to once again borrow funds in the amount of \$11,000 to \$15,000 from the Town to be able to initiate work should this grant be awarded. This loan would be repaid to the Town at the finalization of the new grant's work and documentation. It was noted that this type of arrangement has been successful in the past due to the Tree Board's reliability and hard work. The FC concurred it's support of the proposal as presented and will present it to Council at the appropriate time.

4. Clerk's Report –

A. Clerk Corrick explained that she is continuing to research available property tax and collections records in preparation of a meeting to be arranged with the Morgan County Assessor and Chief Tax Deputy. The concern is the disparity in the proposed amount and the collected amount received. When her research is complete she will meet with the FC on her findings. At that point a meeting with County officials will be planned.

B. Clerk Corrick and FC members Hickey and Schene have taken on the task of creating an accurate census of Bath addresses for tax collection and voter registration purposes.

C. Clerk Corrick provided the Town's budget comparison and account review. She explained the current budget revision and Resolution 2023-08-01 (attached). The FC concurred to move it forward to Council for approval.

5. Grant/Donation Project review and reports if available and needed:

A. Streetscape – Report attached.

B. Depot – Chairwoman Webster advised the November 11 Depot Event is being organized. The Potomac Edison billing was higher than normal and Mayor Merki explained the need to keep some air conditioning in the building to deter humidity damage.

- C. Trail Head – Report attached.
- D. NBRT – Report attached.
- E. BSSP – Report attached.
- F. Greenway Mausoleum – Report attached.

6. Town financial concerns of Council:

A. The Municipal Center needs will be kept on the agenda for further study.

B. Chairman Webster presented the 2023 Bath Revenue Budget as submitted to the WV Auditor's Office to show that fees for building permits are allowed in the State and to explain incomes from that line item in past years.

C The BSVFD is in need of a new fire truck. Mayor Merki explained it's cost and necessity. Ways to assist will be sought.

D. Councilwoman Skinner asked the FC for guidance on when mowing should end at Greenway Cemetery. The Committee recommendation was to end mowing on Labor Day.

E. General discussion was had on the possibility of a BSWW rate increase.

7. The BSWW and Town of Bath bills were reviewed and will be presented to Council for approval.

8. The next meeting date is September 5, 2023 at 4pm in the Municipal Center.

9. Adjourn

Chairman Severey Webster Date 9-5-2023

The Tree Board is still in the preliminary phase of planning our 2024 application for the Division of Forestry's Demonstration City Grant. We are using information published in the Comprehensive Plan issued after the tree inventory done by Bartlett Tree Experts. Our goal is to have the grant completed and ready to submit by mid-September.

One of the products of the previous grant cycle is a comprehensive plan with recommendations about what work needs to be completed in what timeframe. At the time when the comp plan was printed, Bartlett recommended that there are 46 trees in town that need to be removed. None of these trees is classified as an immediate risk to public health or safety. Some of the trees are small ones that the Tree Board or Public Works employees can remove with a lopper or small saw. The comp plan also indicated old and valuable trees that can be saved by pruning or structural work.

In putting together this grant application, we are exploring the cost of removing 2-3 dead trees lining the entrance road into the old section of Greenway Cemetery. We also propose to remove a Bradford pear at the corner of Washington Street and Independence. This tree is in poor health, and is an invasive species; it is a longer-term goal of the Tree Board to replace invasive species with trees more suited to the area.

We want to prune a large sugar maple at the end of the Depot Lot. While this tree was classified as a mostly healthy tree that can be saved with pruning, it has dropped branches, some of them large, onto the sidewalk so does present some risk.

We also want to arrange with Reading Landscaping to plant two 3-inch caliper trees on Washington Street between Congress and Independence. In 2-3 years, once these replacement trees are larger, we will remove two silver maples that are close to the end of their life cycle and currently present a low to moderate risk for breaking under certain conditions.

While conditions may change, over the years we plan to use grant funds following this same formula: 1) remove dead trees, based on their level of risk; 2) prune or otherwise treat large valuable trees whose lifespan can be extended through treatment; 3) remove invasive species; 4) plant trees specific to the location, especially when necessary to replace trees that have been removed.

The reason I'm appearing before you is to ask the level of financial commitment the town can offer in order to pay for work not currently budgeted by the Tree Board.

Over the previous two years, the town has advanced the Tree Board between \$11-15,000.00 to keep the town safe. Past experience has indicated that meeting the in-kind match required by a grant of this magnitude is not a problem. This year, it's possible not all of the work will be done at the same time, as was the case with the 2023 grant.

It is easiest if the town advances the Tree Board the entire amount needed to pay our bills. If it appears that this will be a burden, the Tree Board can commit to using our Hotel/Motel funds to pay bills as presented if doing so 1) leaves sufficient funds to pay for unplanned or emergency tree trimming or removal; 2) and/if we have paid a bill as part of the grant, and our funds are low, we can ask the town for funds to pay for emergency work.

One of the in-kind tasks the Tree Board will complete this year is a 5-year plan that will help us have a better idea of how much money we need from Hotel/Motel funds and grants to keep the town beautiful and safe.

Ora Ash, Deputy State Auditor
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REQUEST FOR REVISION TO APPROVED BUDGET

Subject to approval of the state auditor, the governing body requests that the budget be revised prior to the expenditure or obligation of funds for which no appropriation or insufficient appropriation currently exists. (§ 11-8-26a)

CONTROL NUMBER
 Fiscal Year Ending: **2024**
 Fund: **2**
 Revision Number: **3**
 Pages: **1**

Person To Contact Regarding Request:

Name: **Sharron Corrick**
 Phone: **304-258-1102**
 Fax: **304-258-3638**
 Email: **townofbath@wvdsi.net**

Town of Bath
 GOVERNMENT ENTITY

271 Wilkes Street
 STREET OR PO BOX

Berkeley Springs WV 25411
 CITY ZIP CODE

Municipality
 Government Type

REVENUES: (net each acct.)

ACCOUNT NUMBER	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	PREVIOUSLY APPROVED AMOUNT	(INCREASE)	(DECREASE)	REVISED AMOUNT
310	Coal Severance Tax	2,991	9		3,000
298	Assigned Fund Balance	4,798		9	4,789
	#N/A				
	#N/A				
	#N/A				
	#N/A				

NET INCREASE/(DECREASE) Revenues (ALL PAGES)

Explanation for Account # 378, Municipal Specific:
 Explanation for Account # 369, Contributions from Other Funds:

EXPENDITURES: (net each account category)

(WV CODE 7-1-9)

ACCOUNT NUMBER	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	PREVIOUSLY APPROVED AMOUNT	(INCREASE)	(DECREASE)	REVISED AMOUNT
	#N/A				
	#N/A				
	#N/A				
	#N/A				
	#N/A				
	#N/A				
	#N/A				
	#N/A				
	#N/A				
	#N/A				
	#N/A				

NET INCREASE/(DECREASE) Expenditures

APPROVED BY THE STATE AUDITOR

BY: Deputy State Auditor, Local Government Services Division Date

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE OF ENTITY

8/22/2023
 APPROVAL DATE