

Sharlene Myers

From: Sharlene Myers
Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2020 6:12 PM
To: George Colby ; Joseph Davis ; Karen Gilles ; Linda Chase ; Paul First ; Sharlene Myers;
Tammy Donovan
Subject: FW: zoom meeting info request

fyi

From: Spencer-Reed Family [mailto:spencereeds@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2020 6:11 PM
To: Sharlene Myers <SMyers@newgloucester.com>
Subject: Re: zoom meeting info request

Thank you. Below is a letter of public comment from my family.
Rachel

From the Spencer-Reed Family, April 2020

Dear Board of Selectmen,

We are writing in support of the New Gloucester Public Library. When we searched for a home in 2013, one of the factors that landed us in New Gloucester was the availability and proximity of the town library. Our children have checked out countless books, some multiple times, and both librarians have been a wonderful resource to our family. We strongly oppose the proposed budget cuts. Reducing hours and eliminating the position of one of the librarians would make the library less accessible, and less safe, for both the staff and patrons. When our older child heard about the proposed budget cuts, he offered to donate his allowance to help make a difference for the library. Though his small contribution won't go very far toward saving the library, we agree with his sentiment that we and all town residents should contribute more tax revenue so the town can continue to provide the amenities and services the residents want. A robust public library is an essential component of small-town life and should be maintained at all costs.

Sincerely,

The Spencer-Reed Family
34 Rustic Way

On Wed, Apr 22, 2020 at 3:42 PM Sharlene Myers <SMyers@newgloucester.com> wrote:

Good Afternoon,

Below is the Zoom info for the Special Board of Selectmen's Meeting on Wednesday – April 22, 2020 – at 6:00pm

Website: www.zoom.us

ID: 929-1776-5274

Sharlene Myers

From: Sharlene Myers
Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2020 5:19 PM
To: George Colby ; Joseph Davis ; Karen Gilles ; Linda Chase ; Paul First ; Sharlene Myers; Tammy Donovan
Cc: Sharlene Myers
Subject: FW: Selectmen meeting

Another comment

From: Hannah Blackburn [mailto:htbeem@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2020 4:42 PM
To: Sharlene Myers <SMyers@newgloucester.com>
Subject: Fwd: Selectmen meeting

Dear Selectmen and Selectwomen,

I am very sorry that I will not be able to make it to tonight's meeting as I had planned, but wish to register my opinion on a certain subject if I may.

I believe that including a citizen Budget Committee in the budget process is beneficial to the community. Having served on various community based goop's boards, I know that it can be easy to get focused on one thing and run with it. I believe that including a group of invested individuals, outside of those already willing to serve our town formally (thank you for your time and effort you so generously donate), and bring a fresh perspective, while including more details than the average resident with an opinion (me). We all need refocusing sometimes, or

I will also say that when the budget does become the focus of talk, I hope you will resist cutting what makes a town a community at all costs. Regaining a sense of togetherness after the quarantine will be difficult at best, and all efforts should be made to rebuild our bonds. Parks and Rec, the Library, and the safety of our citizens are all important factors in this. As a tax payer I would rather have an increase in taxes than not have a community available to me.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Hannah Blackburn
310 Woodman rd

Sharlene Myers

From: Sharlene Myers
Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2020 4:08 PM
To: George Colby ; Joseph Davis ; Karen Gilles ; Linda Chase ; Paul First ; Sharlene Myers; Tammy Donovan
Cc: Sharlene Myers
Subject: FW: Written comment for addition to Zoom meeting

This just came in....

Sharlene F. Myers

Acting Town Manager
Deputy Clerk / Deputy Registrar
Town of New Gloucester
385 Intervale Road
New Gloucester, ME 04260
Tel. (207) 926-4126 ext. 1
Fax. (207) 926-4136
smyers@newgloucester.com



The Town of New Gloucester Board of Selectmen considers home email addresses personal information and asks anyone who sends or receives email with home email addresses displayed to respect peoples' privacy and consider the addresses as personal information. Once an email address is displayed on a public document, however, it may be open to public scrutiny.

From: Penny Collins [mailto:pennyc711@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2020 4:06 PM
To: George Colby <gcolby@newgloucester.com>; Joseph Davis <jdavis@newgloucester.com>; Karen Gilles <kgilles@newgloucester.com>; Linda Chase <lchase@newgloucester.com>; Sharlene Myers <SMyers@newgloucester.com>; Tammy Donovan <tdonovan@newgloucester.com>
Subject: Written comment for addition to Zoom meeting

Good afternoon,

Please add this written comment to the statements received in reaction to the current and proposed budget process ongoing for the town of New Gloucester. I reside at 30 Hillside Drive and my name is Penny Collins.

I am writing in protest to both the current proposed budget cuts to the library, fire and rescue, and recreation programming. I am also extremely opposed to the methodology being applied to this process.

I serve as the vice chair for the Fiddlehead School Board in Gray. I am also a small business owner. I know that this is a difficult time to plan and to make ends meet. I know the easiest way to make a budget work is to cut jobs. I have been at that table many times and I do not envy the task.

However I also know that districts have been given a grace period on finalizing budgets and that this is not a time to rush, but to be particularly transparent and reflective. There is absolutely zero call to rush the budget process, hinder public participation, or to make decisions without protocol.

I am disappointed in the approach being taken and the lack of conversation around income and taxes. You are proposing deep cuts to our services and community recreation. A town that can't afford to staff their rescue service, library, or recreation is simply NOT CHARGING ENOUGH to live here. The idea that we would continue to circle around a death grip on our notoriously low taxes in lieu of taking care of our citizens and our communal property is past due to change.

In these difficult times we need to serve our community MORE, not less. It seems completely against the wishes of the town if we asked for our own fire and rescue facility only to have it run unstaffed and underfunded. It's time for our recreation staff to find ways to keep NG outside, healthy, active, and in good spirits. Children will have been learning from home for months. You suggest they also have no library to support their learning?

It's a small town with very few services. Let's keep them high quality and in place. Otherwise we might as well shutter our beautiful town center and just go to a deeply rural lifestyle with no supports. Those that want it that way will be happy, and others will leave town in search of communities willing to better support their families. Even if it means paying taxes for the improved quality. I'm happy to do it!

Thank you for your consideration and good luck on your difficult task.

Best regards,
Penny Collins

April 21, 2020

Memo to:
Board of Selectmen
New Gloucester, ME 04260

Re: Special Board Meeting / Budget Process

Dear Board of Selectmen,

I urge you to reconsider your move to abolish the Budget Committee. Now more than ever, we need to be able mine the wisdom of a diverse group of experts who will thoughtfully consider all facets of the financial situation and make sound recommendations that respect the best interests of all the citizens of New Gloucester. The budgeting process must be transparent. Townspeople need to be able understand what the compromises entail, have an opportunity to provide input, and have confidence in the choices that are made. This can only happen if the Budget Committee is able to continue to function and deliver on its mandate.

Sincerely,

Pamela J. Fischer

Sharlene Myers

From: Fred Brusseau <fred.brusseau@verizon.net>
Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2020 9:15 AM
To: Sharlene Myers; lilacwine72@yahoo.com
Subject: Select Board - Input RE: Budget

Thank you for the meeting details, Sharlene. Also, are you gathering citizen input for the Select Board regarding the budget issues? If so, could you please forward to them the below:

Dear Select Board,

RE: Budget Cuts

There must be some other way. To strip this town of services that give it life and personality cannot be an option. The Library is an amazing service for so many people and so is the Parks & Recs Dept, PLUS both Inspire many volunteers from the community to donate their time and energy to making this the wonderful town that it is. Can we imagine a Fairgrounds with nothing in it? No pavilion with birthday parties, no playground with laughing kids? Well, without the Parks & Recs Dept along with its volunteers, those two sites would not exist. And we would all be poorer for it.

Dissolving the Budget Committee is also something my wife and I disagree with. This community is well served by having a second opinion about such an important item as the town budget.

Thank you

Fred and Kimberly Brusseau
482 Cobbs Bridge Rd
NG

Letter from Joanne McKee for Select board meeting April 22
Originally written for budget committee in February

Dear Select Board,

I would like to express my support of Morgan Rocheleau as recreation and sports director. His education and background have been important in developing wonderful programs for people of various ages and for those interested in more than sports.

He has developed a wonderful news letter so people are aware of the programs. Given enough time, I know he will offer more programs to all residents. New Gloucester residents no longer have to go to Gray to participate in programs there and have alternatives to the adult education program offered there.

Morgan has been a wonderful resource in helping to make the Community Fair successful.

He is working with the Environmental Resource Committee to continue to develop some areas of the fairgrounds for use of all residents and to improve other areas with environmental concerns that are a potential resource for more recreational programs.

He is developing long terms plans for improving many of the fields that have been a source of concern by all for years.

It is wonderful to have a full time director who is so resourceful and I hope he will continue in this full time position any years to see some of his ideas become a reality.

Joanne McKee
2/19/2020
4/22/2020

New Gloucester Town Manager
New Gloucester Budget Committee
Selectboard

April 22, 2020

From Douglas Smith

The New Gloucester Parks and Recreation Department is one of the most visible and positively interactive departments in the town. If cut, even partially, the affect would be felt across town because so many families and residents use the facilities and take advantage of the programs offered by the department. Especially in times such as these.

This letter was originally meant for the budget committee, pre-coronavirus, and I understand that budget constraints may be tighter than ever now. But in some ways it has become more important for recreational and other public activities to be available to residents of New Gloucester. I have observed people increasingly using open public spaces for social distance- friendly recreation over the past few stay-at-home weeks.

A cut will also effect the work of two town committees for which the P&R director is the staff liaison and active participant: Parks and Recreation, and the Environmental Resources Committee. I can assert this because I am a member of and chair of the ERC and have first- hand experience of the dedication Morgan Rocheleau has show to his job and the enthusiasm he has brought to development of new programs (many revenue producing).

Please consider alternatives to cuts to this department. You have a complex job with the budget and I wish along with this request that I could offer specifics for solving this problem.

Douglas Smith

22 April 2020

Dear Members of the New Gloucester Board of Selectmen,

In the COVID-19 crisis with all of the unknowns it has created, the challenges of budget development are beyond difficult. Austerity is a natural response. Thinking about the future, as well as the present, is important. Budgets are about dollars, but they also reflect what we value. I encourage the board to consider how positions and departments on the chopping block contribute not just to the fiscal picture, but to the educational, cultural, environmental and health assets of our community. Perhaps this is the rainy day that reserve funds are set aside for.

Community engagement is more important than ever. In developing a budget that the community can support, the Budget Committee plays a vital role. A budget hearing provides an important opportunity for taxpayers to weigh in. Honoring both of these will make it more likely that we'll be able to pass a budget at Town Meeting.

Several of the proposed staffing cuts will handicap the community in moving forward once the crisis is over.

- Under Morgan Rocheleau's leadership, Parks and Recreation has grown not just programs, but partnerships with other organizations and committees that have multiplied the opportunities for residents of all ages to enjoy all that our beautiful town has to offer. New Gloucester's quality of life and its identity are tightly entwined with the work of this department, especially as it supports the use of the Fairgrounds and Rowe Station and coordinates with the Environmental Resources Committee, and the Royal River Conservation Trust/ Little League project in the Lower Village. Programs generate funds, and the potential for more revenue generation must be considered. The larger contributions of this department are immeasurable.

- The library, as you've heard from many, is the heart of this community. With the changes taking place in the larger world, the role of the library is more vital than ever. The library's total budget is tiny in the big picture, but the value to the community is huge. The library budget was cut several years ago, the librarians are among the lowest paid in the state, and the volunteer group, Friends of the Library, works diligently to generate funds to replace those lost for books and programs.

- The town planner has a demanding, more-than-full-time job. As a member of the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee, I've come to appreciate how much Scott Hastings' expertise and steady focus contributes to the town. Our comp plan, which hasn't been updated since 1990, is essential to guiding the town forward, and it is not finished. The next phase of work, soliciting community input, is scheduled for this spring. It may have to take place virtually, but it must move forward. Other projects that will stall include the Upper Village and the work of the Land Management and Planning Committee. A half-time planner will be limited in what he can do.

In closing, I encourage you to:

- Support the continued work of the budget committee, and host a (virtual) budget hearing; and
- reconsider your proposed position cuts for Parks and Recreation, the library and the town planner positions, based on the important contributions that each make to the community.

Sincerely,

Debra R. Smith
9 Cobb's Bridge Road

Town Manager

From: Devan McKay <devyltm@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, April 20, 2020 6:09 PM
To: Town Manager
Subject: Recreational Program

To whom it may concern:

I'm writing regarding the recreational program and my support to keep the programs funded. I grew up in New Gloucester and it's a wonderful town that I feel invests in the future generation. Although, I am not a current resident in New Gloucester I chose to enroll my child in the cheering and tumbling program through the New Gloucester recreational program because I felt this program offered an amazing opportunity for my child. My daughter has been with Coach Becky for two years now in the cheering program. What an outstanding program that has changed my daughter in so many positive ways. This is the only sport/program she will do. She is shy and timid but in this program she has learned confidence, determination, integrity, courtesy, and the importance of physical fitness to stay healthy. Not only does this program offer physical fitness opportunities for the cheerleaders, Coach Becky teaches them to be outstanding citizens in the community. You will not find a better behaved, respectful, and kind group of cheerleaders. We as parents hear in the stands how respectful the Gray New Gloucester Diamonds are and they have received compliments from other teams and coaches. They are learning life lessons which is important for the future generation. It's important to have these activities to keep the children active and it's important for their mental health as well to be with friends doing something positive and rewarding. Coach Becky has done amazing things for this program and these cheerleaders. You will not find this just anywhere. New Gloucester is lucky to have her mentoring these children and the success of this program speaks a lot for her as a coach and the town for offering the program and supporting the program through the years. New Gloucester should be proud of such a wonderful group of ladies that represent the town. Please reconsider cutting these important programs for the children. These kids rely on these programs in so many ways. Let's invest in these children so their future can be bright.

Thank you for your time.

Devan Thompson McKay

To: The Town Manager of New Gloucester
The Selectmen of New Gloucester
Budget Committee of New Gloucester

From: Jennifer Bradstreet
288 Rowe Station Road
New Gloucester, ME 04260

Re: Proposed Reduction of Library Staff and Hours

Date: March 23, 2020

Dear Friends,

I am writing this letter to express my profound support for the New Gloucester library and to vehemently reject the current proposal to cut the library budget, effectively eliminating the Assistant Librarian position and reducing library hours substantially.

I had hoped to share my story in person at the public hearing (despite my dread of public speaking), but I appreciate you taking this letter as a substitute given appropriate COVID-19 precautions.

Admittedly, my family and I are fairly new residents to New Gloucester — we purchased our home in December 2017. I normally wouldn't get involved in things like this, thinking it isn't my place as a newcomer. However, I've read several letters in support of the library recently from more established residents and I think it's important that the town understand how this decision would effect young families like mine — and those who may consider moving here in the future.

My husband, Evan, and I started seriously considering New Gloucester as a potential residence in the fall of 2017. I was pregnant with our first child, he had just started a new job at Pineland, and we wanted to find a good, safe, rural community to raise our family. When I drove out to New Gloucester to see what it was like, I was charmed by the Village Store, of course, but my very next stop was the library. I was so impressed with all the resources this small town library had to offer and it was this positive visit that cemented our decision to move to this town.

Fast forward a few months later, our first son, Jonah was born. My husband went back to work and I was feeling very alone in a new town with a new baby, miles from friends and family. I was desperate for community and very lonely, so, even though Jonah was just an infant, I decided to attend the children's storytime at the library. I felt silly bringing a baby for what was clearly not a baby event, but I was welcomed warmly by Sue and Carla and the families they brought together there. Being able to meet and talk with other parents and residents was so important — it really helped my survival as a new mom. It also helped me start to feel part of the town we

moved to for the first time. Not being a part of the local school system yet and also working from a home office can be isolating. As such, the library has really been my single source of community.

Jonah and I have been going to the library storytime for two years now (and counting!). We aren't able to come every week, but when we do, we are both greeted by name by both Carla and Sue when we enter the door. Jonah knows and loves them both and it's a joy to see him toddle around the place as if he owns it! I visit the Village Store, town hall, Hannaford, and the post office all on a regular basis... yet the library is the *only place in town* where my son and I are greeted by name and I feel like I am known and valued as a member of the community.

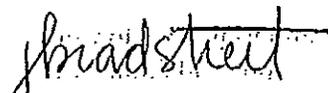
The library has also been an amazing resource for my husband and I. As recently as this past Christmas, when being home with a toddler was just too much, I visited the library alone during their late hours and worked on the puzzle for a bit, chatting with Carla and just having some time to relax. Even my husband, who is not natural "joiner" of activities, participated in the recent Cribbage Night after work. He really enjoyed it and it's now on our regular event calendar! Having extended hours means that we are able to go to the library after work or after Jonah is in bed. Too many local places are only open during "bank hours," which significantly reduces the time with "9 to 5's" are able to use them.

Having two librarians with such different and complimentary personalities is key to the chemistry of the place. I can't imagine eliminating the Assistant Librarian position, not only because I like Carla, but because I don't see how the library could do as much as they do now with just one staff member. Both librarians are integral to the programs like Cribbage Night and the Summer Reading Program — programs that bring residents of all ages together in a positive way.

Our town is growing with young families every year — on my dirt road alone, there are currently no less than three new family homes being built. We would do these families and our community an extreme disservice to cut our library funding in the manner that has been outlined. Quite simply, I find this decision to be extremely short-sighted as we look to grow our community.

I sincerely hope that the town staff can put their heads together to figure out another way to meet our budget needs without outting this vital community resource in such a drastic way.

Respectfully,


Jennifer Bradstreet
(207) 251-9035