

Meeting Minutes
Exeter Fire Department
Budget Sub Committee Meeting
October 16, 2013

The first Fire Department Budget Sub Committee Meeting was held Wednesday, October 16th in the Fire Department Training Room. The meeting commenced at 9:00 am; in attendance were committee members Allan Corey, Harry Thayer, Fran Hall and Nelson Lorenco. Fire Department staff included Fire Chief Brian Comeau, Assistant Chief Ken Berkenbush, Assistant Chief Eric Wilking and Office Manager Susan Baillargeon.

Initial questions were turned over to Harry Thayer in light of his extensive experience and understanding of the Fire Department.

Mr. Thayer inquired about discretionary spending percentages included in the budget? Chief Comeau responded that most of the figures are contractual, just 10% or \$380,000 of the money is not tied to the actual budget. Examples include vehicle maintenance, although we budget for vehicle maintenance we need to also include extra money for items such as pump and ladder testing, bucket testing for the bucket truck etc. The 5% increase \$40,285.00 is due to the 53rd payroll week.

Ms. Hall inquired about communications and software; do we handle on our own or as a group? Chief Comeau advised that other than our IMC Software that we share with the Police Department, our equipment and software are independent due to fire service requirements and needs.

Mr. Corey inquired about uniforms vs. protective equipment? Chief Comeau addressed the differences between the two (2) accounts. One being protective equipment includes fire fighting gear, where the uniforms account covers daily station wear. Assistant Chief Berkenbush explained that the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) uniforms are to be fire rated; these specially treated uniforms are \$150.00 per shirt. We provide our staff with 100% cotton uniforms; these also meet the standard and are much more affordable. The NFPA also requires separate laundry areas, there are three (3) located at the Fire Department, one for daily uniforms, 1 for the ambulance due to exposures such as blood borne pathogens and the 1 for protective fire gear. Chief Comeau also explained the dry cleaning account for staff officer uniforms.

Ms. Hall inquired about the line item for physicals? Chief Comeau responded that this is a weak area in the fire department. All employees receive a baseline physical prior to employment. NFPA fire codes require yearly physicals. Cardiac arrest and cancer is the number 1 killer of firefighters, physicals and prevention go a long way to prevent line of duty deaths, limit the town's liability and make a healthier employee. The department does have the only certified fitness trainer in the State.

Mr. Lorenco inquired into the difference between physical standards of physicians vs. COEH. Chief Comeau responded that most physicians do not have the industrial equipment.

The discussion then turned to the Health Department. Chief Comeau advised that the department is asking to have the Deputy Health Officer position be increased from 32 hours a week to 40 hours a week.

At this point Assistant Chief Berkenbush outlined the responsibilities of the position and the two sections. One being local health covering food service inspections, daycare, foster care, trash, mold, landlord issues, animal issues, etc. The Public Health is the grant funded side includes emergency preparedness, sheltering and health related clinics, i.e. HEP-C.

Mr. Lorenzo inquired into how much the Health Dept. is mandated? Asst. Chief Berkenbush responded the restaurant food services, day care, foster care, etc.

Mr. Corey suggested increasing the cost of food service licenses and would like the Asst. Chief to present this article to the enter Budget Committee as they did not understand the scope of the Health Dept.

Mr. Thayer asked if the subcommittee is ready to recommend this position to full time?

Mr. Lorenzo is not yet.

The committee decided to meet and discuss.

Ms. Hall inquired about the sub fire station. At this time Chief Comeau presented the department's "Station 2" power point CIP presentation.

Mr. Corey stated the need for staffing details and equipment, as well as ongoing annual costs.

Chief Comeau presented a review of the Fire and Police Radio system. The Fire Department already has a repeater license in place. The Police and DPW would need to acquire the appropriate licenses. The system would greatly improve safety and communications.

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 and was followed by a committee tour of the fire station.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Baillargeon
Office Manager
Exeter Fire Dept.