

Budget Recommendation Committee

November 5, 2014

Final Minutes

Call Meeting to Order

Chairman Corey Stevens called the meeting to order at 6:30pm in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Offices Building on Wednesday November 5, 2014. Other members present were: Allan Corey, Bob Kelly, Fran Hall, Don Woodward, Bob Wentworth, Judy Rowan, Dr. Anthony Zwaan, Peter Lennon, Bill Campbell, and Phil Johnson. From the town was Russ Dean, Town Manager, Laura Hill, Staff Accountant and Doreen Ravell, Finance Director. Also there were Selectman Don Clement, Selectwoman Nancy Belanger, Anne Surman, Clerk, and BOS vice Chair Dan Chartrand.

CIP meeting will be on November 18th and reserved for spill over on November 20th. No questions from last meeting.

Christmas Parade

Darius Thompson from Exeter Holiday Parade Committee spoke regarding the Christmas Parade. Mr. Thompson spoke on the Parade and the fundraising aspect and how it has changed in the past years. He stated that his committee has done their part to control the cost of the parade. Spoke on specific aspects regarding the finances. \$6,000- \$7500 is what it cost on average. Contributions from donors have been extremely helpful in making sure that in the past that the parade takes place, 100 percent of all donations go towards the parade. The largest cost is the police detail. The committee is searching for other ways to get funding as well as looking into the light decorations as well for the holiday season. Chairman Stevens said that the board has approved the budget for \$3000 and also stated that the Parade is important for the community.

Questions

Dr. Zwaan asked about how many people are in the committee and Beth said that there are 7 people but they could always have more volunteers.

Ms. Hall asked in regard to vendors, and Mr. Thompson answered that they are open to vendors. Beth Dupell said that they have a \$35 registration fee for vendors.

Holiday Light Budget

Beth Dupell spoke on the budget and said that they have \$5000 and then another \$700 for electrical. Last year's total cost was \$3500 for supplies and materials. Volunteers can sign up on November 22nd to sign up at the Fire Station.

Questions- none.

Fire Department

Bob Wentworth introduced the subcommittee made up of Mr. Allan Corey, Ms. Judy Rowan and himself.

Mr. Wentworth gave introduction on the Subcommittee. Then he turned it over to Fire Chief Comeau. Chief Comeau introduced Ken Berkenbush, Assistant Chief and Eric Wilking Assistant Chief. Chief Comeau stated that the Fire Department operates five divisions: Administration, EMS, Health, Fire and Emergency Operations. Chief Comeau said that their budget is \$3,807,002 and how they reach that number, through evaluated equipment needs and replacement items. In 2014 budget was reduced by \$40,000 by the BOS. The 2015 Budget increases come from cost of living and step raise of 3.2% unionized members and 1.6% non union. Chief Comeau stated that this year they can drop the recertification due to fewer members having to recertify. The EMS revolving will drop by \$3700. Spoke on the medical evaluation that is required for fitness for duty. The cost can range from \$466 to \$1365.

Questions

Mr. Corey asked regarding the Health officer and what it covers. Mr. Campbell asked why they don't have a few evaluations every year. Chief Comeau agreed that it does take time and that they would like enough to get them started and then they can decide whether or not they would do it yearly, just want to have a starting point to get a baseline. Chairman Stevens asked if there was a way to project it yearly. Chief Comeau stated that the base case scenario would be to do it annually or bi annually.

Mr. Woodward asked if there are any other towns locally that would be willing to pay for services. Chief Comeau said that for certain services they charge but they do not contract services right now.

Ms. Surman agrees with Mr. Campbell and also asked if there will be a penalty if it does not have. Chief answered and said that it is a regulatory committee, but there is no penalty.

Ms. Rowan mentioned discussions about whether it could be covered by insurance. Answered that they did reach out to insurance companies and the result was that the health trust excludes benefits for exams required by departments.

Mr. Kelly asked if the intent is to establish baseline for standards in the department. Chief Comeau answered and stated that yes it is very important to have employees who are fit and that the standard is needed to maintain a certain level of fitness. Mr. Kelly states that he likes the idea of reinstating it, but it would be nice to spread it out but that doing half might not be necessary to do, maybe start with a quarter and go from there.

Ms. Hall said that the program passed around in regard to the insurance is moot as they are already doing physicals, but what happens to someone who does not meet the standard. Chief Comeau

said that the standard is set by the NPA and that it is a personnel issue and that there are a lot of unknowns. Ms. Hall also stated that the Police are not coming forward with the same concerns.

Mr. Corey spoke on the EMT and why it could not be financed from the revolving fund instead of the general. Town Manager Dean spoke on the revolving fund and said that certain amount of funds get returned if not used back into the general fund.

Dr. Zwaan spoke as a physician himself, that he reacted to some of the requirements on some of the tests, and with his experience in the medical field and that his concern is that they are proposing exams that can have false positives and that are also very costly and the logistic implications should be factored in. Assistant Chief Berkenbush answered and said that it is always beneficial to make sure that the people who are coming to other peoples' aid need to be checked and make sure to maintain their health.

Dr. Zwaan asked whether the department require annual physicals to be provided since they are covered by the insurance. Chief Comeau agreed and said that it is their personal choice and said that they encourage with all their members to do it.

BOS Vice Chair Chartrand agreed with Mr. Campbell about putting it on a longer cycle, but that he appreciates the department, but he would like to suggest a four year cycle.

Chairman Stevens said that he is looking at line 1300 overtime and wonders if there is any way to shave some there and get the funds over to physicals. Chief Comeau said that it would be a risk not to have overtime. Mr. Lennon agrees with Mr. Stevens. Mr. Wentworth asked what number to propose and Mr. Lennon agrees with Mr. Stevens for \$80,000.

Mr. Kelly said that there should be time period to get in with the compliance and doing a quarter and then revisit it with more information. Chief Comeau stated that they need a starting point but that they will do the best with the funds given. Mr. Wentworth said that there are two points of concern- what time it affects budget and the issue with the towns' involvement with the health insurance companies, an administrative function and also that he would endorse to move tonight half of what was asked for.

Mr. Campbell suggested that every four years is better than every ten years. Mr. Wentworth said he would like to get the tone set. Ms. Hall clarified that they need to deal with it simultaneously. Mr. Wentworth respectfully disagrees. Chairman Stevens said that they should comment on it. Ms. Rowan asked if there is a special benefit to have it done by one provider. Chief Comeau said it is a separate issue. Chief Comeau said that if it is job related and is a standard then it is fine, but he does not get the results, just the name and fit for duty.

Mr. Wentworth made motion to move approve one half of the requested amount for physicals to select board with the concept being that it will be an integrated program introduced over a staggered period. Mr. Corey seconded. Line item #5263 change from \$18,166 to \$10,193. All in favor- motion carried.

Line item # 5810 Assistant Chief Wilking spoke on it and gave some information regarding the line item.

Line# 1300- Assistant Chief Wilking said that they spent about 84% already, stated that line #1150 Vacation Replacement has been rolled back as well as sick replacement. Said that last year the line was cut by \$20,000 and that deals with training and other important aspects and they did not have it this year, but that he respectfully requests it. Chairman Stevens asked if what the budget that they are looking for is not accurate and why is the budget going up so much. Assistant Chief Berkenbush said that you also have to look at the cost increase for next year. Chief Comeau said that they are doing more runs today with less money and that this is a tricky area to forecast where you might be. Mr. Kelly said that he thinks that the issue is why the budget needs to go up when in the past it always has been less. Mr. Lennon said you have to look at the totals but outliers also impact. Mr. Wentworth also spoke on it. Chairman Stevens said that he will not question it any further.

Motion made by Mr. Campbell line item # 1300 to reduce from \$115,215 to \$105,000 seconded by Ms. Hall. In favor is 5 and opposed is more, motion did not carry.

Line item #4341 Cistern Maintenance Assistant Chief Wilking spoke on fire ponds and gave information relating to them and the reason for the \$2000 increase. Selectman Clement asked whether or not homeowners' association could be responsible for the fire ponds.

Line item # 5016 Ms. Hall had question on building supplies and why they had doubled. Assistant Chief Wilking spoke on it as they need updated and new supplies and also the prices have gone up for this and they need it to maintain the building.

Line item #5019 was questioned by Chairman Stevens if it had been spent or not. Chief Comeau answered and said that right now they are holding on it due to the vehicle maintenance issue as well as computer that deal with the fire alarm receiving equipment. Stated that they have been holding off and this will be the last purchase made unless it is spent somewhere else. Mr. Kelly stated that last year they had asked for \$3000 specifically for the computer so therefore then the budget should go down. Chief Comeau said that they will do the best they can with what they are given. Mr. Lennon stated that this makes the past year's budget seem to be less relevant if it is taken and rearranged each year. Chairman Stevens agreed with Mr. Lennon and said that this is the end result. Mr. Dean said that the budget committee was given the transference report and that he respects the discussion and that they try to make a plan and stick with it but sometimes the plans change and they move things around but overall there are some line items that will be modified over the course of the year due to snow, ice and overtime. Ms. Surman said that if things are being moved around then it will not be credible if no one knows it was moved around.

Chief Comeau said that this is the first year he is dealing with this due to vehicle maintenance. Selectman Clement stated that maybe the confusion stems from the 2014 budget numbers. Ms. Ravehill said that year to date there is no transfers and it is the actual number that was approved. Mr. Wentworth said that he respects the management but it is not the budget recommendations committee to analyze each line. Chairman Stevens disagrees. Mr. Kelly said that his comment was why they are

keeping the \$8,000 budget for computers when they are buying the computers this year. Chief Comeau said if it was reduced they will respect it.

Motion made by Mr. Kelly to change line# 5019 from \$8,000 to \$6000. Seconded by Mr. Woodward. All in favor- motion carried.

Mr. Lennon asked about Line #5981- Water Quality Testing. Assistant Chief Berkenbush spoke on the Sportsman Club and said that due to the clay, lead, and other items relating to the club, that the DES has maintained water quality testing. Assistant Chief Berkenbush said that the name is poor way to define the line. Mr. Lennon said that the line is woefully mislabeled and he cannot understand with the history what are new requirements that justify the increase in the health budget. Mr. Kelly addressed the question and agreed that it should be labeled differently. Mr. Lennon said he would like to see more detail. Assistant Chief Berkenbush said that there are a lot of other elements as no one has decided what to do in regard to the club. Selectman Clement stated that Ken has done wonderful job and that the money that is in there is appropriate. BOS Vice Chair Chartrand said he would like to thank Assistant Chief Berkenbush and that the real answer is that the town has allowed the club to be there and that there has been a lapse to assume the responsibilities of the club that is on town owned ground, and that he believes that the responsibility will eventually come to the tax payers. Mr. Dean said that he would like to say that in fairness to Ken that the line item has evolved over time.

Motion to approve Administration total of \$534,975 made by Mr. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Lennon. All in favor- motion carried.

Motion to move fire suppression total \$2,993,496 made by Mr. Kelly seconded by Mr. Campbell. All in favor- motion carried.

Motion made to move the Emergency Management total \$28,816 made by Mr. Campbell, seconded by Kelly. All in favor- motion carried.

Motion to move Health total \$160,708 made by Mr. Corey seconded by Mr. Kelly. All in favor motion carried.

Motion to approve total of Fire Department \$3,717,995 made by Mr. Wentworth, seconded by Mr. Corey. All in favor- motion carried.

Chairman Stevens gave 3 minute recess.

POLICE

Mr. Wentworth went over the Police Department Budget expense line items. Mr. Wentworth said that they are only dealing with the expense side and that it is a recommendation of the subcommittee to deal favorably in regard to the vehicles.

Chief Kane said thanks to Bob and Judy for being on subcommittee. He mentioned that they had the Columbian National Police in town for 6 months of training. Chief Kane said the mission and value statement of the police. Chief Kane also spoke on the current goals and future goals on keeping Exeter a safe place to live and work. Spoke also about the 24 hour drug drop off box, as today the department has brought in 354 pounds of prescription drugs. Chief Kane spoke on the personnel that make up the police department as well as interacting with the schools. The budget has a \$5,668.00 increase mainly due to increase in wages, NHRS and general expenses. The general expenses have increased by \$25,874 or 8%, mostly attributed to estimated higher fuel costs and increase of the prosecutor contract.

Chief Kane stated that the majority of the employees are in the police union and a new contract is being negotiated. The only wage increases are 1.6%. Wages are higher by \$10,014 due to 1.6% COLA and the new pay plan. Retirement costs have increased by \$2,810. Chief Kane explained depth all the different divisions and the duties of the divisions as well as community service that they do. Exeter is recognized as the safest town in NH.

Questions

Chairman Stevens spoke on the radio equipment and says that he agrees, the only question he has is communication, in regard to phones Line #4351. Chief Kane answered and said that it also goes to fix phones that break as well as paying for the phones.

Mr. Kelly asked about Line 4320- Vehicle Maintenance. Chief Kane said that they are 82% already spent but that the amount of money gets them where they need to go.

Mr. Lennon asked about Line #5875. Chief Kane said that they are at 65% spent. Mr. Lennon also asked about Line # 4311 and #4330 in the difference in the maintenance. Chief Kane answered and explained in depth where the budget goes.

Mr. Wentworth motioned to move approval of the police department budget, seconded by Ms. Canty. Chairman Stevens suggested that they go by department.

Motion to accept police administration total of \$735,183 made by Mr. Campbell, seconded by Mr. Lennon. All in favor- motion carried.

Motion made to move Staff total of \$574,876 made by Mr. Campbell, seconded by Ms. Hall. All in favor- motion carried.

Motion made to accept Patrol division total of \$1,910,880 made by Mr. Campbell, seconded by Ms. Hall. All in favor- motion carried.

Motion to accept Animal Control total of \$1,250 made by Mr. Campbell, seconded by Ms. Canty. All in favor- motion carried.

Motion to accept Communication total of \$429,499 made by Mr. Campbell seconded by Ms. Hall. All in favor- motion carried.

Motion to approve Total Police of \$3,651,688 made by Mr. Campbell, seconded by Ms. Hall. All in favor-motion carried.

Next meeting is November 12th 2014.

Motion to end meeting made by Chairman Stevens and seconded by Mr. Lennon.

Meeting ended at 9:55pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brigitte Nelcoski
Recording Secretary