

Final Minutes

Exeter Budget Recommendation Committee

October 28, 2015

Call Meeting to Order

Chairman Corey Stevens called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Offices building. Other members present were Peter Lennon, Judy Rowan, Frank Ferraro, Francine Hall, Don Woodward, Bob Kelly, Barry Sandberg, Allan Corey, and Phil Johnson. Members absent were Anthony Zwaan, John Gilbert, Nikki Graney, Stephanie Canty and Vice Chair Bill Campbell. Also present was Town Manager Russ Dean and Selectwoman Nancy Belanger, Selectman Dan Chartrand, Selectman Don Clement, Finance Director Doreen Ravell, Police Chief Richard Kane, William Shupe, Stephen Poulin, Fire Chief Brian Comeau and Assistant Chief Eric Wilkins.

Chair Stevens said they would be going over Police, Fire and Finance budgets tonight.

Minutes of the September 23, 2015 BRC meeting:

A Motion was made by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. Woodward to accept the minutes of the 9/23/15 BRC meeting. Motion carried – all in favor.

Police

Mr. Ferraro said the Police Department is comprised of 40 employees. He said overall the proposed budget has increased by 3.11% over 2015 primarily due to operating under a new contract which provides for salary increases and increased holiday pay. The department is requesting two vehicles totaling \$68,038. He recommended that the old Expedition from Police be rotated into DPW for a light duty vehicle.

Mr. Woodward said the department is understaffed right now. He said Chief Kane has budgeted for Equipment Purchase and some of it is used to match funds.

Chief Kane thanked the subcommittee for their work.

Mr. Lennon said a couple programs seem to be behind in like 401-4320 Vehicle Maintenance. He asked why that line isn't going down if the department is getting two new vehicles and getting rid of two old vehicles. Chief Kane said all 13 vehicles in the department get repairs. Mr. Lennon said the department will still have fewer older vehicles which won't need as much maintenance. Chief Kane said all 13 vehicles still require maintenance. Mr.

Ferraro said it is on the same rotation as last year's budget. Ms. Ravell said the actuals since 2012, with two vehicle replacements each year, is around \$20,000-\$21,000. Mr. Lennon asked if most repairs are done in the last quarter. Chief Kane said they already know of some repairs that have not been done yet, i.e. snow tires.

Mr. Kelly asked if the subcommittee talked with DPW about the suggestion with the Expedition. Mr. Ferraro said he mentioned it, but has not had an opportunity to discuss it. Mr. Kelly asked who handles internals to do the kick over of the vehicle to DPW. Chief Kane said to talk to Highway and DPW and see how long the vehicle is predicted to last. He said the Mechanic has already said it is done. Mr. Corey said he is on the DPW subcommittee and this issue has been discussed and will definitely be on the agenda.

Mr. Dean said they have been consolidating budget vehicle requests town wide for the past 4 or 5 years. Mr. Kelly said it seems it would be more transparent if it were within the department. Ms. Ravell said they are working within the lines of the State requirements which say it's in General Government.

Mr. Lennon questioned line 405-4311 Equipment Maintenance. Chief Kane said \$100,000 was voted in last year. He said he pays for service contracts for Motorola to come in and make repairs if things break. He said the new equipment has been purchased, but it has not been installed yet. Also, the service contract has increased.

Chair Stevens asked about line 5200 Consulting-Prosecutor. Chief Kane said they have a contract with the Rockingham County Attorney Office.

Ms. Ravell gave the updated Benefits total for Police Administration which is \$204,193. She said the updated Administration total is \$758,696. In the Staff division, the benefits total has increased to \$201,375, bringing the new Staff total to \$621,424. In Patrol, the updated benefits total is \$691,212, bringing the updated Patrol total to \$1,976,677. There is no change in the Animal Control division. In Communications, the new benefits total has decreased to \$138,493, bringing the new Communications total to \$462,065. The updated Police total is \$3,820,112.

Motion: A Motion was made by Mr. Woodward and seconded by Mr. Lennon to approve \$3,820,112 for the Police budget. Motion carried – all in favor.

Fire

Mr. Ferraro thanked the Fire Department for meeting with the subcommittee. He said the Fire Department has 38 employees. The overall budget, before adjustments, decreased by \$36,411 due to retirement of senior personnel. The majority of the budget is in Fire Suppression. The subcommittee recommended reducing line 5263 from \$10,230 to \$5,000 and reducing line 5919 from \$5,000 to \$2,500. The subcommittee doesn't recommend the proposed number of stress tests. The Fire Department proposed two capital projects which are

the replacement of a washer machine and the replacement of 3 multi-gas meters. The Health Department budget has decreased \$1,651. The capital project for \$20,000 is for the fence at the Sportsmen's Club.

The Ambulance budget is funded by the Ambulance Revolving Fund. Overall, that proposed budget is down.

Mr. Ferraro continued to say the department is requesting to replace one vehicle. Overall, the subcommittee approves the department's proposed budget with the two recommended decreases.

Chief Comeau thanked the subcommittee. He said they had some good discussions. He said last year \$100,000 was approved to install a radio system, which is almost operational. Last year the department also requested to do medical surveillance on the whole Fire Department to meet NFPA guidelines. Chief Comeau said to date 9 members have been through it, and by the end of the year almost all members will be completed.

Chair Stevens asked Chief Comeau if he agreed with the subcommittee's recommendations. Mr. Comeau said this type of medical surveillance was done every year. It has been cut down the last couple years and he's trying to get it back up so every member can go through it every year. Mr. Ferraro said the subcommittee agreed and fully funded medical surveillance and provided funds for two stress tests. Ms. Hall asked how you could reassign members if you don't know their medical status. She asked if these particular tests provide details. Chief Comeau said he gets a "Fit for Duty", and no other details. Mr. Ferraro asked if the results from the surveillance physical are sent to the employees PCP automatically. Chief Comeau said they do now, that it is a policy. Mr. Ferraro recommended if the employee gets a "Not Fit for Duty" they should make an appointment with their PCP and be put on light duty until they get results. Chief Comeau said yes, that is how they have had to handle it. Mr. Ferraro said in regards to the stress tests, he questioned if they have any real value. He said they wouldn't want to fund more than a couple a year. He said two allows for an aberration that may be there. Ms. Rowan suggested next year Chief Comeau come back with some sort of policy. Ms. Hall asked if \$10,000 is a yearly number they can expect. Chief Comeau said if they follow NFPA standards. Half of that will only cover half of the members. Ms. Rowan suggested Fire Fighters use their health insurance and still go to their PCP and get medical attention on their off year. Chief Comeau said this covers so much more than a PCP physical. Fire Fighters are way more susceptible to carcinogens. Chief Comeau continued to say the reason these standards are in place are to hopefully lower to cancer deaths in Fire Fighters. Mr. Sandberg asked if there are any ramifications if they don't meet the NFPA standards. Chief Comeau said NFPA is a standard that Fire Fighters use as a benchmark. Mr. Corey asked if they establish this as additional health money, can they withdraw it in the future. Mr. Dean said it is not in the contract, so to consider it optional at their funding discretion. It can start/stop at the town's convenience. Ms. Hall said stress tests are important because people aren't getting them with their regular physicals. She is less convinced on basic physicals.

Motion: A Motion was made by Mr. Ferraro and seconded by Mr. Woodward to change line 0501-5263 Physicals to \$5000. Motion carried – all in favor.

Motion: A Motion was made by Mr. Woodward and seconded by Mr. Ferraro to reduce line 5919 from \$5,000 to \$2,500. Motion carried – all in favor.

Chait Stevens asked for updates on line 5820, Education/Training. Ms. Ravell said the YTD is \$859. Chair asked about line 5918, Shelter Equipment. Ms. Ravell said the YTD is \$0. Chair Stevens asked about line 5919, Emergency Management Equipment. Ms. Ravell said the YTD is \$3,500 with \$800 encumbered.

The BRC discussed line 5918, Shelter Equipment. Chief Comeau explained the school charges if there becomes a need to use them as a shelter as the school uses their own supplies and the town reimburses. Harry Thayer explained some costs and said \$1200 in this line is very reasonable. Mr. Kelly said it is hard to fund something you don't know you'll need. He said it seems like disingenuous budgeting.

Ms. Hall asked what Chief's expenses are. Chief Comeau is it for meetings he is required to go to. Mr. Lennon asked what kind of things he needs the funds for. Chief Comeau said this averages \$60/month for seminars and things like meal reimbursements.

Mr. Lennon said the Education/Training line and the Conf./Rooms/Meals line are showing underspent. He asked why the \$10,000 is necessary. Mr. Wilkins said that line is used for things such as college class reimbursement for employees and speakers for seminars. Mr. Lennon said they are only at \$1100 YTD for Conf./Room/Meals. Mr. Wilkins said the bulk of the conferences are in December.

Mr. Lennon asked what the feeling of the subcommittee is on \$10,000 in line 5820 Training. Mr. Woodward said the subcommittee is willing to support this. Mr. Ferraro asked Mr. Lennon what he suggests for this line. Chair Stevens said from 2012-2014 they have spent between \$7,000 and \$9,000 of this line. Mr. Lennon asked if \$8,000 is reasonable. Mr. Wilkins said it is good to have money available here. He said past expenditures have shown they can spend the money. He said they work hard to be as fiscally responsible as possible. Chief Comeau said if the BRC cuts funds, things will get left out. Mr. Kelly supports the \$10,000 as the department is highly trained and they are requesting the \$10,000. Mr. Dean suggested looking at the level of this budget relative to the entire budget. He said there is a contractual part to this. He said this budget helps cover some expenses for courses taken by the department. Mr. Kelly said maybe they can take this opportunity to send other employees to some training.

Mr. Lennon asked in regards to line 5981 Consulting, why they aren't getting the Sportsmen's Club work done. Chief Comeau said the consultant will be at Monday's BOS meeting to discuss the next phase for remediation at the Club.

Mr. Lennon asked why there is an increase in Water Quality Testing. Chief Comeau said that is based on their projections of what the third phase of the study will cost.

Mr. Thayer said there is money throughout the whole budget for the Sportsmen's Club. He asked what the total cost to the taxpayers is for the Club. He said every year this comes up. Mr. Lennon asked how hard that would be to pull together. Mr. Dean said they have done that analysis before. The direct costs are the noise testing, removal of trap, cleaning up of clay pigeons. It is driven by the town and the Club in a joint effort. He said the DES Remedial Plan is something they're mandating. The Club does pay taxes on the property. Selectman Clement said an inspection showed contamination in 2006 or 2007. He said there has been a significant cost and most of it is based around lead contamination on the site. Mr. Kelly asked what exactly the fence will do. Chief Comeau said this was one suggestion possibility of isolating the area where contaminated so it is not disturbed. Mr. Kelly asked how they came up with fence numbers. Chief Comeau said based on linear footage, a 6 ft. chain link fence, they came up with the numbers. Mr. Dean said the RAP is on the website already. It breaks the property into three pieces. The second area is town land. One alternative is to fence that section to not allow access.

Ms. Ravell gave updated numbers. The Administration updated benefits total is \$178,536, bringing the new Administration total to \$525,063. The Fire Suppression updated benefits total is \$957,207, bringing the new Fire Suppression total to \$2,974,449. In Emergency Management, the new total is \$25,932. There is no change to the Health Division. The new Fire Total is \$3,704,500.

Motion: A Motion was made by Mr. Ferraro and seconded by Ms. Rowan to approve the \$3,704,500 for Fire. Motion carried – all in favor.

Mr. Ferraro said the department is requesting a new vehicle. He said the subcommittee looked at the vehicle and the appearances are good but the department has been spending money on maintenance and it needs replacement. Chief Comeau said this has been deferred for the past few years. This year they had to replace the springs on the vehicle. The department is asking for support to replace the vehicle. Mr. Ferraro said this is something the subcommittee recommends. Chief Comeau said this vehicles major function is to haul equipment to emergencies.

Motion: A Motion was made by Mr. Ferraro and seconded by Mr. Corey to approve the purchasing of the new Ford 350 dual axle pickup. Motion carried – all in favor.

The Board took a 5 minute recess.

Finance

Mr. Johnson said that Finance has three full-time employees. He talked about the department's responsibilities. They have a record of performance. He said the budget is good

and well reported. The Contracted Services is reduced. The software agreement is locked in at \$8,500. Travel reimbursement is up a bit for Ms. Ravell to go to Concord meetings, as she was elected to the State BOD.

Mr. Ferraro said in regards to lines 5800 and 5810 they were previously extremely low and he wondered why they bounced up so much. Ms. Ravell said it is due to herself being elected to the State BOD. It is for conferences.

Mr. Ferraro asked about line 5740, Software Agreement. Ms. Ravell said it is an estimate which may differ with the Warrant Article approval. Mr. Corey suggested waiting to see if the voters approve the new software then readjust. Mr. Ferraro said they can't assume the voters will vote for it.

Motion: A Motion was made by Mr. Allan and seconded by Mr. Ferraro to table Financial Software. Chair Stevens asked what this software is like. He asked to put out more information. Mr. Ferraro asked if there are track records of this system in NH. Ms. Ravell read a quote from Harris Software which she received. Mr. Lennon suggested submitting questions regarding the system. Chair Stevens said to send them his way. The BRC voted on the motion. Motion carried – all in favor.

Ms. Ravell said the new benefits total for Finance is \$90,237, bringing the new Finance total to \$283,017.

Motion: A Motion was made by Mr. Ferraro and seconded by Mr. Kelly to approve \$283,017 for Finance proposed budget. Motion carried – all in favor.

A Motion was made by Mr. Lennon and seconded by Mr. Kelly to adjourn the meeting at 9:31pm. Motion carried – all in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicole Piper, Recording Secretary