

Budget Recommendations Committee
Police and Fire Department
Tuesday, Nov 5, 2018
Town Offices, Nowak Room
Final Minutes

1. Call meeting to order

Attendees: Doreen Chester, Finance Director; Russell Dean, Town Manager; David Beavens, DPW General Subcommittee; Len Benjamin, Police and Fire Subcommittee; Judy Rowan, Police and Fire Subcommittee Chair; Nancy Belanger, General Government Chair; Mike Dawley, Rec, Welfare, and Library Subcommittee; Nick Gray, vice-chair and DPW Subcommittee chair; Niko Papakonstantis, Water Sewer subcommittee and chair of the Budget Recommendations Committee; Bob Kelly, chair of the Water and Sewer Subcommittee; Tai Chin Tung, General Government; and Corey Stevens, Police and Fire Subcommittee; Julie Gilman, Kathy Corson, Ann Surman, and Don Clement, Select Board Members, were present at this meeting. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Papakonstantis at 6:30 PM.

2. Approval of Minutes

There were no minutes to review.

3. Subcommittee Report Review

Chief Bill Shupe, Captains Stephan Poulin and Michael Munck represented the Police Department. Ms. Rowan provided a summary of the subcommittee's findings, saying the Police Department continues to pursue a community policing approach and have obtained \$22,000 in grant money. This year they are requesting two Ford Explorers, one to replace the oldest frontline cruiser and one to replace the detective's car, which is a 2009 Crown Victoria.

Ms. Chester stated that the new benefits total for Police Administration is \$214,068.

MS Rowan discussed Administration line items. Line 4301, Computer Maintenance, was underspent in 2017, but historically does get spent. Line 5453, Computer Equipment, had a decrease of \$5,470 as a result of moving computer purchases to the IT Department budget, Line 7000. Line 5810 historically does get spent, so no change there.

Ms. Chester stated that the new Police Administration total is \$770,488.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to move \$770,488 for Police Administration. Mr. Beavens seconded. All were in favor.

Ms. Chester stated that the new Staff benefits total is \$196,985.

Regarding Staff, Ms. Rowan said that the use of overtime was driven by one-time events in town such as this year's homicide, labor-intensive efforts such as burglaries, and the need to perform after-hours detective work. The recommendation from the subcommittee and the chief is to increase this line. The subcommittee suggests reducing the patrol line to fund an increase in overtime of \$7,000. Mr. Dawley asked the chief if there was a trend in more "one-time events" causing a rise in overtime spending. Chief Shupe said that he didn't think so. The homicide had caused them to spend \$7,000 on staff overtime, but they haven't spent much more since then. In the years that they don't have a major incident, they're fine.

Ms. Tung asked why the prosecutor was split with Hampton Falls 80/20. Chief Shupe responded that he has the prosecutor four days out of the week.

Mr. Clement asked how many personnel are in staff, administration, and patrol. Chief Shupe replied five in staff: four detectives and a detective sergeant. In admin, seven total with assistants. In patrol, seventeen.

Ms. Chester stated that the new Police Staff total is \$650,364.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to move \$650,364 for Police Staff. Mr. Beavens seconded. All were in favor.

Ms. Chester stated that the new Patrol benefits total is \$613,409.

Ms. Rowan discussed Patrol, starting with line item 1300. They recommend moving \$7,000 out of this line into the Staff line, reducing overtime to \$75,000, which is above historical spending and gives them a cushion. Mr. Stevens said there was a compelling case to have the dollars there in case they need it, but they haven't been at the \$75,000 level in several years; they could take \$10,000 out of that line and still have enough money to cover historical spending, provided nothing goes wrong. Chief Shupe agreed that they don't typically reach that mark, but suggested \$7,000 rather than \$10,000. He informed them that from January to April they will have two guys in the academy at the same time, and the gap will be covered by overtime. Mr. Dawley asked if there were a significant difference from a payroll perspective between with a young patrol staff and a more senior patrol staff. Mr. Dean said that it's about \$17,000 from the minimum to a top step officer.

Ms. Rowan mentioned that, according to the chief's calculations, line item 6260, Fuel, could move from \$57,360 to \$51,625, a change of \$5,735. That's 1800 gallons per month x 12 months, 21,600 gallons, at \$2.39/gallon.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to move \$75,000 for line item 1300. Mr. Dawley seconded. All were in favor.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to move \$51,625 for line item 6260. Mr. Dawley seconded. All were in favor.

Ms. Chester stated that the new total for Patrol is \$1,905,102.

MOTION: Ms. Tung moved to move \$1,905,102. Mr. Kelly seconded. All were in favor.

Mr. Dawley observed that there were no Animal Control expenses year to date. Ms. Chester said it is usually spent at the end of the year. This year it's \$172 spent through September 30th. Chief Shupe said they buy supplies and pay veterinary services at the end of the year.

MOTION: Mr. Stevens moved to move \$1750 for Animal Control. Ms. Belanger seconded. All were in favor.

For Communications, Ms. Rowan pointed out line item 4333, the SPOTS computer program for motor vehicle and criminal records. The state has told the department to keep \$4,500 on hand to pay for the item whenever the state gets around to billing it. Chief Shupe added he has called and emailed the state office, and they said they can't break out the invoicing by town. This is the third year that they haven't been invoiced by the state, but back in 2014 they were invoiced for \$4,500. Mr. Kelly asked if they may receive a multi-year bill at some point, but Chief Shupe couldn't predict how they would be billed. Mr. Kelly said they could consider removing it from the budget and if they were ever billed to argue that the money was no longer available. Chief Shupe said that was fine.

MOTION: Mr. Benjamin moved to make line item 4333 zero dollars for 2019. Ms. Belanger seconded. All were in favor.

Ms. Chester stated that the new benefits total is \$133,503, and the new Communications total is \$447,529.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to move \$447,529. Mr. Benjamin seconded. All were in favor.

Ms. Chester stated that the total Police budget is \$3,774,733.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to move \$447,529. Mr. Benjamin seconded. All were in favor.

Mr. Stevens asked about the two vehicles in the General Fund budget. Chief Shupe responded that one is to replace the oldest frontline cruiser, which they've done annually for years. The frontline car is up to 150,000 miles, and it's driven hard around the clock by different people. The replacement will be a Ford Explorer. They'd also like to replace a 2009 Crown Victoria. The odometer is broken, so the mileage is unknown. Maintenance will not inspect it next year. They plan to get the detectives into a Ford Explorer with a trunk vault to make things more professional, rather than working out of a Tupperware in the trunk. Ms. Rowan added that this is a planned multiyear expense; another is a 2010 replacement next year. Mr. Stevens pointed out that the trunk vault is under Administration, line item 5875, and is also a multiyear project. Mr. Dawley asked how many vehicles they put in the General Fund. Mr. Dean responded that it varied from year to year. To maintain consistency they do 4 - 5 cash purchases. CIP reexamined the fleet status, and this year established a Capital Reserve Fund of \$100,000, but police are rotating cruisers out every year. Mr. Dawley asked why they wouldn't put a couple vehicles into the budget for the police every year. Mr. Dean replied six years ago each department had its own vehicle requests, and it wasn't a seamless process - surpluses or overages had to be eaten by the department - so they took all the vehicles town-wide and put them into one spot. They found that this centralizing works better.

Mr. Papakonstantis and Ms. Rowan thanked Chief Shupe for his participation.

Fire Chief Comeau and Assistant Fire Chief Wilkins participated in the Fire Department budget discussion. Ms. Rowan said that the department is seeking an additional two

firefighter/EMTs and an administrative clerk. The subcommittee does not support the request for two additional firefighter/EMTs. They recommend taking a year to assess the impact of the two new firefighters hired in 2018. Since 2007, total calls have increased by about 1,000 and 6 EMTs were added, so each new firefighter/EMT is answering an additional 3 calls per week. The subcommittee recommends a thorough study of the department's overall needs done by a third-party vendor, and they suggest including funds for such a study in the 2019 budget. The subcommittee supports the request for a part-time office clerk to take over during the current clerk's absences. For the CIP items, the subcommittee recommends the communications upgrade and the ambulance.

Ms. Chester stated that the Administration benefits total is \$193,819.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked Ms. Rowan to explain the office clerk position. Mr. Benjamin said the current clerk takes time off, and there must be someone to fill those hours. Firefighters are currently taking up the slack when the clerk is out with duties that are not in their job description. Mr. Stevens said subcommittee support wasn't overwhelming, but when the functions are handled by assistant chiefs, there's a case to be made for adding additional support. Chief Comeau said there's no change in the situation from the past few years, but the office manager has more seniority so more time off now. Mr. Dawley pointed out that the request is for 720 hours; Mr. Papakonstantis added that it's 20 hours every week for FY '19. \$11,700. Mr. Dawley said 20 hours a week is a lot if they're only covering vacations. Chief Comeau said the new person would be in each week. Mr. Gray asked if the clerk's duties are consistent through the year. Chief Comeau replied the admin work is a constant workload, including accounts receivable, EMS forms, comp injuries, ambulance billing, etc. Mr. Papakonstantis said that the subcommittee recommends an increase of \$10,848 in line item 1110. Ms. Chester said they would add a part-time line in there, line item 51200 for part-time hours. There would be no additional benefits.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to move \$10,848 for new line item 51200. Ms. Rowan seconded. All were in favor.

Ms. Chester stated that the new Administration total is \$582,047.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to move \$582,047. Mr. Kelly seconded. All were in favor.

Mr. Gray asked for an explanation on line item 5263, Physicals, which is up 50% or by \$2600. Chief Comeau said that the state passed the worker's comp presumption law, which puts the burden of cancer in the fire service on worker's comp, not the individual. They need to make sure they can cover physicals for all firefighters each year, rather than two thirds of them as now. Mr. Benjamin explained that these physicals are much more specialized than normal physicals. They're given to new employees, and if the firefighter is subsequently diagnosed with cancer, it's presumed to be work-related. It's better from a firefighter perspective to have annual physicals, since any problem is detected earlier. Mr. Stevens added that annual physicals are important to try to relate cancer back to exposure, but that Senate Bill 541 is unclear as to whether an annual physical is required. Mr. Papakonstantis asked if they have a preferred provider for the physicals; Chief Comeau replied they use Convenient MD. Mr. Benjamin added

that this amount also covers the two new positions, which they are not supporting; without them, the amount would be reduced by \$500.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked Mr. Dean if Primex would provide assistance or grant money with the physicals. Mr. Dean said he hadn't heard anything from them. Mr. Stevens said that in line item 5810, Conference Rooms and Meals, the subcommittee recommended a decrease of \$1300, to try to get at the money for physicals.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved that line item 5810 be changed to \$3500. Mr. Benjamin seconded. All were in favor.

Ms. Chester stated that the new benefits total is \$194,469, and the new salaries total is \$363,153. The new Fire Administration total is \$580,747.

MOTION: Mr. Dawley moved to move \$580,747. Ms. Belanger seconded. All were in favor.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked them to discuss Fire Suppression and their recommendation not to add two new Firefighter/EMTs. Mr. Stevens said that there were two new firefighters hired last year with the support of the Select Board and the town. The subcommittee recommends they hold off a year on further hires and continue to watch the performance improvements from those hires. They also recommend a capital outlay of \$50,000 to hire consulting resources to analyze the department and what staffing levels should be. It's been ten years since the last study, and the needs and dynamics of the department have changed. Mr. Benjamin said that last year there was extensive discussion and analysis on the previous request for two new firefighters. The subcommittee did not support the hires, but the department did make them. There's been no appreciable change in the amount of activity since last year. Ms. Rowan added that the building and facilities need to be analyzed as well.

Mr. Dawley asked for a summary of last year's discussion about the hires. Chief Comeau said they're currently running one lieutenant and five firefighters on two shifts, and one lieutenant and six firefighters on two shifts. The shifts with seven personnel can have two members out and not use any overtime to cover them. Last year, his suggestion to the board was to hire new firefighters and put them on the most senior shifts, where personnel have the most vacation time and sick leave time. By the end of this year, they will have had a \$50,000 savings in overtime from that coverage. Their suggestion for 2019 is to have two more hires, to cover the time even more in 2019. Ms. Belanger observed that during the first year, the new hires were at-will employees not covered by the union contract; will they see the same savings next year, when they are covered? Chief Comeau replied that there'd be more savings next year, because they'd have full year rather than partial year coverage of these shifts. Having extra people gives them the flexibility to move people where they need them to cover medical issues, deployment, or other absences. Ms. Rowan said the \$50,000 savings in overtime this year cost the town over \$90,000 in salary and benefits for six months, and would be \$180,000 for a full year. Chief Comeau said they're also covering more of their ambulance calls. In 2017, they asked for mutual aid over 100 times prior to the two hires. After the hires, there were only 31 mutual aid requests, and in 2018, only 12. Ms. Belanger asked whether mutual aid requests were due to multiple in-town calls at once, or whether it was because the department was

responding to mutual aid requests from other towns. Assistant Chief Wilkins responded that it's mostly multiple calls within Exeter; 20% of their call volume happens within 30 minutes of other calls. Mr. Dawley pointed out that when they call for a mutual aid ambulance, that's lost revenue for Exeter. Chief Comeau added that the revenue is about \$500 per call.

Mr. Dawley asked how the two hires made last year manifested in the 2019 budget. Chief Comeau said most shifts will have 6 firefighters, so they're not sure how it's going to work out. Ms. Rowan said the overtime was reduced by \$1,000, the increased vacation replacement by \$8,500, and there is decreased overtime of about \$32,000. Altogether, it's about \$50,000 in savings. Assistant Chief Wilkins said that since the two hires they're seeking wouldn't start until July 1, they'll be short in the first six months, so it'll look a lot like last year.

Mr. Dawley said they would never get to a level of cost savings that would pay for the new hires' salaries. Assistant Chief Wilkins said that more firefighters means increased safety and coverage, increased ambulance revenue from mutual aid calls, decreased overtime, and increased productivity. Mr. Dawley said that adding four people in two years is tough to swallow; Assistant Chief Wilkins replied that their work is divided into four shifts, so that's only adding one person per shift. Ms. Rowan said in 2007, there were 3,588 calls, and in 2017, 4,572. In that period, they hired six full time firefighters and EMTs for 1,000 more calls. Mr. Dawley asked about the workload on each firefighter; Chief Comeau said it depends on the calls. Shifts that have seven firefighters can manage three calls at the same time, while the shifts with six have to start calling in overtime or mutual aid.

Ms. Rowan said that the subcommittee and the Fire Department agreed on the need for a comprehensive study to determine how to meet the department's needs. Chief Comeau said that there was a warrant article for a study last year that was voted down.

Mr. Dean said the two new firefighters in the '18 budget were brought on in May, so it's still a small sample. He explained that there are four shifts of 24 hours per shift, with seven people on two shifts, six on the other two: 28 vs 26. They can drop two people without having to bring someone back to fill that five person minimum, but if someone is out long-term, they start to have trouble. They are more active during the day than at night, but you're buying them for all 24 hours. They hired an intern last year to do an analysis on calls, and found that most fire calls are in the urban core. Most of the activity is still concentrated down here, but in the interest of future public safety, they may have to build a second fire station.

Mr. Dawley asked what the expectation is from a study. Mr. Stevens raised the example of a similar study done in Northboro, Massachusetts. A third-party would come in and analyze the call volume, the nature of the calls, and the geography and trends in the town, and make recommendations on staffing and infrastructure. They'd create a roadmap for what the department might look like in five or ten years. Ms. Rowan said that these studies create a solid foundation for decision making and planning.

Mr. Dawley said the chiefs seem to know their department, so he questioned the need for outside expertise. Mr. Papakonstantis said they don't have the man hours or technology to do the analysis in-house. They want an independent party to make public safety recommendations. \$50,000 in one year can help support decision making for years. Mr. Stevens asked if they are more comfortable having someone look at the department and say "here's a roadmap for the future" or just adding two firefighters a year without a plan.

Mr. Gray wondered if they could update the 2007 study internally for less money, by having an intern compile similar data. Chief Comeau said he could have his staff update that study, but they never got to the staffing level recommended in 2007. \$50,000 is light for the kind of study they are suggesting. Getting the additional two firefighters will get the staff where it needs to be, then they'll have plenty of time to do a study.

Mr. Dean recommended that people look at the Northboro study. Their town is a similar size but there are 2,000 calls, while Exeter's Fire Department gets 4,000 calls. For the EMS operation, they would want to look at response times and see if a second station in the north part of town is warranted. The town knows that the Public Safety facility is outdated, it was built in 1979, but the question of what they should do needs to be analyzed fully to make good decisions. Average response times are 68% of calls with a 4 minute response, they're trying to reach 80%. They would also look at responses to different kinds of calls. Mr. Papakonstantis said that last year there was a warrant article for a Fire study at \$40,000, but the budget committee thought it would be beneficial to add \$10,000 and make it a Public Safety and facilities study.

Mr. Dawley said there hadn't been any discussion of substandard response times, and asked if that is that an issue. Chief Comeau said the last two studies looked at how to get to an average staffing level, but the main focus was best location for a new fire station; they found that Epping Road was a key location. They have 10 - 12 minute response times for the High School. They do a lot of runs during the day, but severe calls are at night, so staffing must be consistent. Mr. Papakonstantis asked what analysis the subcommittee reviewed to not recommend additional firefighters. Mr. Benjamin said they had asked if there had been any changes since last year, and the chief said no, so they felt additional staff was not necessary. Ms. Rowan said they looked at the changing call numbers since 2007, and the impact of additional firefighter/EMTs who hadn't yet been there a whole year. She thought they should wait until next year to consider this issue. Mr. Dawley said if they don't add the firefighters, they may run into overtime issues, but will they have public safety issues? Chief Comeau said they'll do their best with what they're given. They need to think about growth, not necessarily in population numbers, but in the age of population and new properties in town. The department needs to grow proportionally to the town's growth.

Mr. Dean stated that they need to be more aggressive and competitive in applying for grants. Mr. Dawley asked if they have enough time to apply to all the grants. Mr. Benjamin said if they got a grant to add two firefighters, he felt the committee wouldn't support continuing those positions in the budget. Chief Comeau added that Salem added 12 firefighters over four years with grant money. Assistant Chief Wilkins said that their grant application had the entire town in support of those positions. In Exeter, the budget committee does not agree that the Fire Department is understaffed. He knows a study would say that they need these positions; they are terribly understaffed. Seven is a bare minimum. Mr. Benjamin asked what is preventing them from submitting a grant. Assistant Chief Wilkins said they have to have documents indicating widespread town support for these new positions. They are hesitant to apply for any grant, because if the grant gives them funding for four positions, and they don't hire that, they lose their grant eligibility for 3 - 5 years. Mr. Benjamin said if they have approval, wouldn't the grant be denied because it looked like it had already been funded?

Mr. Gray said the amount of development on Epping Road in three years will easily justify two new staffers. Mr. Stevens said given the history of debate over what is needed, an outside study seems justified.

Mr. Kelly said overtime was severely underspent, peaked in 2016, but prior to that really low. This year we're looking at the same thing. Chief Comeau said that in 2018 each shift had five firefighters, they burned up the rest of their budget to make it up. He can't predict what two additional firefighters will do for the budget next year. Mr. Kelly said he was pretty sure that the chiefs knew what the study would say; what he'd rather do is get a handle on the overtime. He'd rather hire one person and cut the overtime budget down to \$50,000 or \$60,000. Mr. Dawley said he still wants to wait until they have a full year of data with the two new firefighters they have. Chief Comeau said it only takes one fire to have several firefighters out on workman's comp, so he doesn't feel that they can cut the overtime. Assistant Chief Wilkins said that last year they spent \$91,000 on vacation replacement overtime, which was overbudget by \$55,000. They spent almost \$70,000 for sick time replacement, over by \$30,000. They had to make up \$85,000 in their budget, and they had to freeze all non-essential spending. This year, they feel comfortable that at the end of the year they'll be \$45,000 - \$50,000 in the positive. They've cut their overtime request for FY '19 by \$25,000. Mr. Kelly said that the \$91,000 looked like a one-off. He wanted to see them wait a year and see if that eased off. Mr. Dawley agreed that he wanted to take his chances for one more year. Mr. Gray said he agreed on the financial aspect, but he was concerned that public safety will be impacted. Chief Comeau said that it will be impacted, since they will be down to five firefighters per shift and will be limited in the response to calls they can make.

Mr. Benjamin said that they discussed only adding one firefighter. It would be a half step, but gives them some added support. Mr. Papakonstantis asked if they are fully staffed now, other than the deployment. Chief Comeau said that they had one retirement, and they're looking to replace him by the end of the year. As of now, they're fully staffed, but will be reduced again by January. Mr. Dawley asked about how overtime and potential firefighter fatigue impacts public safety. Chief Comeau said they have more young people living in the community, so they're more willing to do overtime, but there's a lot of burnout with older members. Right now it's not too bad. Mr. Gray asked why they need equal shifts if 75% of calls happen in the day. Chief Comeau said they had tried to get floater language in the union contract, so that one person could fill in Monday through Friday during the day. This would work for the first year after hiring, but after that the contract is clear on the hours they can work. The union was willing to discuss it, so they're closer, but they're not there; maybe in 2020. Mr. Dean said the schedule of work is a negotiated item between the town and the union.

MOTION: Mr. Dawley moved that they not approve the two additional firefighters in this budget. Mr. Gray seconded. By a show of hands, all were in favor.

Ms. Rowan moved on to Fire Suppression. In Holiday Pay, line item 1420, the spending is a product of when people take holidays, which tends to be at the end of the year. There's an increase in line item 5019, Fire Alarm Supplies, since Unitil is putting in new poles which require movement of wires and adding new wire. In line item 5740, Software Agreement, dollars were moved here from Communications Equipment. Chief Comeau said this line is a software upgrade that will allow them to capture more response time data. The Contract Services, for

Fiber Optic Work, has been paid by Water/Sewer. Chief Comeau said that this was a placeholder in the budget for Newfields Road work. Because of the large fiber optic line to the DPW, their route on Newfields Road had to change, and they hired Phoenix to come in and do that work.

Ms. Rowan said that the subcommittee recommended they reduce line item 5820, Education/Training, by \$1500 to \$10,000 based on historical usage.

MOTION: Ms. Rowan moved that they move \$10,000 for Education/Training. Mr. Dawley seconded. All were in favor.

Ms. Rowan said that line item 5912, Breathing Apparatus, has been reduced. Last year it was increased by \$3,000 to service the apparatus, which is not needed this year. They can expect this to be a future CIP item. In line item 6260, Fuel, there was an increase of \$1,185, to \$15,670, based on contracted fuel cost.

MOTION: Mr. Dawley moved to move \$15,670 for Fuel. Mr. Stevens seconded. All were in favor.

In Capital Outlay, Ms. Rowan said that the Exhaust System line item is \$18,900. This includes \$14,400 for improved exhaust system, since the firehouse needs to have a robust exhaust system to deal with emissions. \$4500 is for a magnetic exhaust mount; a magnetic system has fewer leaks and less maintenance.

Mr. Dean returned to the question of the study. He said that \$50,000 is all in the Fire budget, but the proposed study would address Fire, Police, and Dispatch, so they should consider distributing the cost in these budgets. Mr. Gray asked if this would avoid having a warrant article on the study; Mr. Dean said it would be up to the Select Board. Mr. Gray said that his preference is for it to go in front of the voters as a warrant article. Ms. Rowan said she'd appreciate having the data that would form the basis for future decision making. Ms. Tung said that they do have data coming from the Fire Department, but that the committee is saying they don't have data. Perhaps a compromise would be to have an intern work with the professionals on a limited study. Mr. Dean said they already had an intern working with the Fire Department's data, but now they need a professional consulting firm for the next steps. Mr. Dawley said the study will say they need a new fire building and new staffing, and they still won't be ready to fund it. Mr. Dean responded that they have never pulled in Police and Dispatch data, and that may change the story.

Assistant Chief Wilkins said that in addition to a facility study, they need to determine questions such as spreading staff over two facilities. Mr. Dawley said he had never understood what the staffing plan was for the second facility, even though they had a study to work with. Mr. Dean said that they had never decided what the facility would be, whether a full Public Safety facility or just a Fire station.

Mr. Kelly said they should make some kind of recommendation on the study to the Select Board. Mr. Dean can come up with the scope of work. Mr. Stevens asked if they should split the study's cost between the departments as Mr. Dean suggested. Mr. Dean said it doesn't really matter.

MOTION: Mr. Stevens moved to include a study of Fire, Police, and Dispatch staffing and facility needs, and include it in line item 7305 of Fire Suppression Capital Outlay. Ms. Belanger

seconded. Mr. Dean mentioned that the EMS revolving fund could pick up some of the study's cost. By a show of hands, Mr. Dawley and Mr. Gray voted nay, and the motion passed 8-2-0.

Ms. Chester stated that the new Fire Suppression total is \$3,203,700.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to move \$3,203,700 for Fire Suppression. Ms. Rowan seconded. All were in favor.

Ms. Rowan said there were no changes to Emergency Management. Mr. Papakonstantis said the total is \$26,937.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to move \$26,937 for Emergency Management. Mr. Benjamin seconded. All were in favor.

Ms. Rowan said that there were no changes in Health.

Ms. Chester stated that the Health benefits total is \$12,700.

Mr. Dawley asked about the qualifications and job scope of the Health Officer. Chief Comeau said in addition to being certified, the current officer is in the process of also being certified as a fire inspector. Mr. Dawley asked if they get any help from the state. Chief Comeau replied no, they're a self-inspecting town, which means that they handle all of the licensing and inspection fees for every restaurant, daycare, and foster care facility in Exeter. The revenue, which is about \$22,000 this year, stays here, and facilities are inspected annually, rather than every three years by the state. There are seven self-inspecting towns in NH. Assistant Chief Wilkins added that everything you hear on public health is funneled through this office.

Ms. Chester stated that the new Health total is \$133,209.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to move \$133,209 for Health. Mr. Benjamin seconded. All were in favor.

Ms. Chester stated that the new total Fire Department budget is \$3,944,593.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to move \$3,944,593 for the Fire Department. Ms. Rowan seconded. All were in favor.

Ms. Rowan said that the subcommittee recommends the dispatch communications upgrade, as the equipment is outdated and no longer supported by the manufacturer. Chief Comeau said that a few years ago he asked for \$340,000 to rebuild the Fire, Police, and DPW radio system, but he only got \$100,000 of seed money, which they used to set up a Microwave Point to Point system. Since then, communications have been a lot better, but they had to use old components. When the dispatcher talks today, they talk from the water tower on Epping Road; they don't have wires or phone lines. The proposed upgrade gives them three new radio components: the Police Department's radios at dispatch and at the water tower, and the radio at the Fire Station which becomes their backup system. They're now trying to find alternative ways to fund the rest of the system. The High School has agreed to fund a BDA system in their building, so that the resource officer who works there can get communications out to dispatch, which is not currently possible. The next piece is negotiating with a cell phone carrier to give them equipment at no cost to the community.

Mr. Dawley asked where they're at with the communications tower. Chief Comeau responded that Economic Development has been working on it. It will be up at Cross Road and Kingston Road. Mr. Stevens said that next year the last component of this project will come up,

and it would be about \$75,000. Chief Comeau said that they've already seen significant improvements in communications, including for the DPW, but the plowing season will be the real test. The software in this dispatch upgrade is needed to run the new radios. Ms. Tung asked if this will be a service contract or a one-time spend, and Chief Comeau said that it's a one-time spend which will finish from the Fire Station to the water tower system. They'll have a warranty for several years, but eventually they will have to do maintenance on the system.

Ms. Rowan then discussed the request for a new ambulance. She had asked the department about the possibility of rebuilding the existing ambulance, but this would put it out of commission for six months and would negatively impact service in that time, so the subcommittee is recommending the new ambulance. She said that the department expects to get \$22,000 back in the sale of a current vehicle, which will offset. Assistant Chief Wilkins said they had two ambulances within their CIP. They're trying to stay on a six- or seven-year replacement cycle, and the money is coming from the Revolving Fund, not the General Fund. He added that the sale price of the current vehicle was not set, so they'd prefer to get \$235,349 as the full price of the vehicle and let the trade-in value play out.

4. Review Board Calendar

The Water and Sewer subcommittee report will be on Thursday, November 8th.

5. Adjournment

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Benjamin seconded. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 9:51 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary