

Budget Recommendations Advisory Committee
Police and Fire Subcommittee
October 21, 2020
6:30 PM
Draft Minutes

Members Present: Bob Kelly, Chair; Corey Stevens, Christine Soutter, Don Clement, Judy Rowan, Nancy Belanger, Anthony Zwaan, Amy Farnham, Christopher Zigmont, Liz Canada, and Kaley Briden.

Members Absent: Enna Grazier, Kathy Corson

Others Present: Russ Dean, Doreen Chester, Niko Papkonstantis, Fire Chief Eric Wilking, Assistant Fire Chief Justin Pizon, Police Chief Stephan Poulin, Deputy Police Chief Michael Munck.

Mr. Kelly called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM and read a statement:

As Chair of the Select Board, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that all votes taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote. Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states their presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting and who that person is (son, daughter, spouse, etc...), which is required under the Right-to-Know law.

1. Police Department

Ms. Rowan said each of the Chiefs delivered very lean budgets this year. Police had a 1% increase and Fire had a 1.2% increase, while Public Safety Shared Services is down 6.3%. The Public Safety study results have resulted in some changes already. The Fire Department applied for a three year grant for two Firefighter/EMT positions. The study made recommendations about upgrading the current safety complex. In vehicle requests, the subcommittee recommended the purchase of one vehicle, a hybrid cruiser, and deferring the purchase of a patrol cruiser.

In Salaries, the department determined that one Administrative position was no longer necessary. Line item 555001, Accreditation, represents expenses that the PD contracts for. Regarding line item 55106, Equipment Purchase, the actual is low but they expect to spend this line.

Ms. Chester said the Police Administration total is \$818,453; the Police total is \$3,359,779.

Mr. Stevens asked about the IT contract. Chief Poulin said he's happy with the IT contract services. They are mostly remote but with some site visits.

MOTION: Ms. Soutter moved the Police Administration budget of \$818,453. Ms. Belanger seconded. In a roll call vote, Kaley Briden abstained as she came in late, and the motion passed 10-0-1.

Ms. Chester said the Police Staff number is \$667,313. Patrol is \$1,871,362. Animal Control is \$2,651. The total Police budget is \$3,359,779.

MOTION: Mr. Stevens moved the Police Department budget of \$3,359,779. Ms. Belanger seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

Ms. Rowan said that in Vehicles, the subcommittee recommends that Police purchase one hybrid Patrol cruiser and defer a second patrol cruiser. The cost would be \$48,000: \$39,500 for interceptor and \$8,500 for the equipment, transfer, installation, and signage. Mr. Kelly added that they recommended one vehicle instead of two because they want to collect data about hybrid vehicle performance and limit discretionary purchases. Dr. Zwann asked why a hybrid vs a more standard vehicle. Was this something the Sustainability Committee was involved with? Mr. Zigmont said Dave Sharples' team worked on a study over the summer that looked at the town's carbon footprint, and hybrid vehicles were key to meet goals for Greenhouse Gas emissions.

2. Fire Department

Chief Wilking and Assistant Chief Pizon were present for the Fire Department discussion. Ms. Rowan said they expect to spend many lines which are not yet spent. Line item 55149, Hose Replacement, had a decrease, as the new engine does not need hose replacement. Dr. Zwaan said in the first line item, 51110, Salaries Wages F/T, there's a note which indicates two new firefighter/medics for six months. Chief Wilking said that's a mistake. 31 FT employees is an accurate number, there's no increase in personnel. Ms. Briden said line item 55050, Education/Training, would be mostly virtual. Chief Wilking said each line item was level funded or reduced as appropriate. Regarding Education, he doesn't want to cut it to zero in case there were opportunities. Mr. Dean suggested \$1,000 in this line.

MOTION: Ms. Rowan moved to reduce line item 55050, Conference Room and Meals, to \$1,000. Dr. Zwann seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

Mr. Stevens asked about the grant. Chief Wilking said that FEMA infused the SAFER grant fund with an additional \$500M, but changed the rules to allow larger cities to access funds with no co-pay, so towns like Exeter were overlooked. FEMA will open up the new grant round in February/March. Assistant Chief Pizon said they didn't receive an official notification of not receiving a grant, but they would have heard in September. They're looking to tweak the application to make it more successful next year, and he will meet with regional reps from FEMA about this. Mr. Stevens asked what they'd be doing with the funds. Chief Wilking said they're looking for two firefighter positions that would finish out the shifts. The grant is for three years at 100% salary and benefits, vs 70/30 grant which is more typical. Mr. Clement said that after the three years, the town

would have to pay the costs. Ms. Rowan said in the study, the recommendation was based on having the full number of personnel: three for the ambulance and four for the fire engine, on a regular basis. Chief Wilking said the study recommended a number of changes, such as staffing an ambulance with two people, not three, to free up help for other calls. Staffing currently can drop to five, but the normal number is six. They must strike a balance between the department's needs and what the town can afford. Mr. Dean said this study was comprehensive, and tracked all data for the year and gave them information to use. It will be used as a long-term planning document for the town. It is still being finalized, but results will be posted on the website soon.

Ms. Chester gave an updated Fire Department total of \$3,894,914.

MOTION: Ms. Rowan moved the Fire Department budget of \$3,894,914. Ms. Belanger seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

In vehicles, the Fire Department requested a replacement of Car 2. Ms. Rowan said that given Covid, the subcommittee recommended deferring this purchase. Mr. Kelly said Mr. Dean is planning a review of the town's vehicle program, so it would be prudent to defer. Both Chiefs are engaged with public facility planning, which is just getting started.

3. Police Dispatch, Communications, and Health

Ms. Chester said the new health number is \$63,788. The Communications total is \$398,386. Mr. Stevens said the Camera System line was unspent. Mr. Dean said he can get an update on that spend.

MOTION: Ms. Rowan moved a Communications budget of \$398,386. Ms. Belanger seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

Ms. Chester said Health had no change in benefits, at \$119,196. Ms. Rowan said Consulting is a \$1 placeholder for hazardous materials mediation. Chief Wilking said James Murray negotiated the mosquito contract with another company offering the same products at a large decrease. Mr. Clement said Mr. Murray has also done a fantastic job on Covid planning and recommendations.

MOTION: Ms. Rowan moved the Health budget of \$119,196. Ms. Soutter seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

Ms. Chester said the Shared Services total budget is \$517,582.

MOTION: Ms. Belanger moved the Shared Services budget of \$517,582. Mr. Clement seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

4. Minutes

a. There were no minutes approved at this meeting.

5. Review Calendar

a. The next meeting is Thursday, October 29, the DPW subcommittee.

6. Adjournment

Mr. Kelly adjourned the meeting at 7:42 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary