

## **Police/Fire Subcommittee Summary of 2023 Budget**

Unlike many municipalities throughout the U.S., the Exeter PD and FD are fully staffed with high morale reported in both departments. This reflects the considerable investment the town has made in benefits, equipment, and training. Both departments are well-resourced with excellent leadership. Budget increases in each department are mainly a result of contract agreements, CBA negotiations, and inflation. Both the PD and FD have continued to increase in diversity by hiring more female officers or FF/AEMTs. The subcommittee recommends no changes to the PD and FD preliminary budgets.

All PD patrol officers respond to animal control issues. The funding for the animal control officer has been shifted to create a second lieutenant's position responsible for professional standards and accreditation. As part of its community policing philosophy, the PD has added Maple, a black lab puppy who is funded through community donations.

The FD has been affected by supply chain issues resulting in delayed equipment and turnout gear as well as replacement vehicles and apparatus. Replacement Engine 5 now has a delivery date of July 2023 and Ambulance 1 is anticipated to take 18-24 months to deliver.

FD line items Vacation Replacement OT, Personal Replacement OT, and Sick Replacement OT are the line items that keep the FD fully staffed per shift. Sal/Wages Call Back OT is used for call of FFs off duty to cover courses, prevention classes, training, emergencies, etc. Retirements, resignations, and long-term injury/illnesses contributed to overtime expenses this year. The department has instituted incentives to reduce overtime.

### **Vehicles and CIP:**

No new vehicles have been requested by the PD. 2 vehicles encumbered from 2021 due to supply chain issues and 2 for 2022 will be arriving this month.

The PD requested ARPA funds for new tasers. Instead tasers will be purchased through a 5-year lease purchase agreement for \$177,705 @ \$22,133 per year and listed as a warrant article.

The FD is still awaiting delivery of its Ford F250 pickup to replace Car 3 ordered in 2021. The subcommittee does not support the request for the Inspector Vehicle Replacement (pp. 42-43). Though 12 years old, it has under 60,000 miles on it indicating that it is used an average of under 5,000 miles annually.

The subcommittee supports in principle the proposed conceptual scheme for the Police Complex with Fire Substation (p.3). (We reserve the right to change our minds should new information make the project unsupportable.) The Town Manager provided an amortization schedule that would be proposed for the funding of the building. On a 20-year bond, the first-year tax impact on a \$300,000 property would be \$192 (divided into 2 tax payments). Subsequent years would see the impact drop down to a low of \$111.