

Enfield Budget Committee MINUTES (Draft)

Saturday November 5, 2016 DPW Building 9:00AM

Members present: Sam Eaton, Nancy Smith, Annabelle Bamforth, Shirley Green, James Buffington, Janet Shepard, Fred Cummings, Mike Diehn, Mark Eisener

Excused: Holly West

Absent:

Others Present: Steve Schneider (town manager), Richard Crate, Jr.; Richard Martin; Jim Taylor

Administrative: Sam called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

Approval of October 20 minutes:

James made a motion, Nancy seconded. Janet noted that on the last paragraph regarding approval of minutes, the words “discuss” and “approve” need to be swapped. The minutes will be fixed to reflect that change. The minutes were then approved with those changes. Fred, Mark, and Mike abstained from voting.

New Business:

Budget Presentations:

Police Chief Richard Crate Jr. presented the police budget request. The department’s 2017 request does not have significant changes other than the staffing increase. Crate said the department should be fully staffed soon. Despite the temporary shortage, Crate said that the other officers did a great job picking up slack and ensuring efficient police operations.

Crate said that Enfield is still dealing with opioid crisis along with the rest of the state, but the town is not dealing with the same level of robberies and other drug-related crimes that have been occurring in other areas of New Hampshire. Crate said that the low crime levels could be attributed to consistent patrols serving as a preventative. According to Crate, frequency of cruisers appear to be a deterrent for people attempting to case homes. The department is trained to use Narcan for overdoses and it is continuing to be used in our community.

Speeding appears to be the number one concern among Enfield residents. The donated radar trailer has been used throughout the town to help address this issue.

Crate said he feels that this budget is in good shape. The line for gas is an area that is particularly difficult to estimate. With two new officers and the uncertainty regarding the price of gas, there may be some fluctuation.

Crate told the committee about the need to update the department's Tasers. The Tasers are not technically on lease; the department is under an agreement with the manufacturer which calls for equipment updates periodically. Crate said the new Tasers are more intuitive and can sense layers of clothing. The current Tasers have one sensor; the new ones will have two sensors.

Fred asked about the cost. Crate responded each Taser costs somewhere between \$1,060-1,080. However, those costs are built into the agreement between the department and the manufacturer.

Fred asked about the uniform line; that line has historically been spent over budget, but the request remains the same for 2017. Crate responded that he will take another look at uniform spending for 2014 and clarified that last year the department moved to a different type of uniform. There was some grant money used on uniforms as well. Crate said he does not anticipate needing more than what's budgeted for next year.

Crate discussed replacing one of the department's vehicles, the Fusion. The Fusion would be replaced with an Interceptor SUV, and the Fusion would go to the highway department. He clarified that the leases for cruisers are under CIP, so the budget committee won't see that cost in the police department budget.

Sam asked about the part-time line. Crate answered that he does not adjust that line. Steve said personnel and salary lines are initially set to the maximum, or "worst-case," and will be adjusted. Steve added that the initial personnel line is generally based on previous hours.

There was some discussion of a high school student intern who helps out with clerical work from time to time at the station. Crate said that having that student at the station helps to serve as a reminder of issues that youth are facing.

James asked about what is included on the contracted services line. Crate responded that costs for prosecutors, membership to the Central NH Operations Unit, a copier rental and computer services are some of the items included in that line.

Sam asked about storage of body camera footage. Crate said that Taser is developing software available next summer that can input voice data into a report. Crate added that he still wants to research that more. Sam asked about how voice recognition would work. Crate answered that it would not likely serve as a method for voice recognition and would work like a transcription service.

Crate explained that the emergency management line is a fee for a regional group to provide hazardous waste removal and treatment. At one time, the account was full when everyone was paying and a length of time had gone by with no incidents, but payment from Enfield has become necessary once again.

The dispatch line has increased some. Crate explained that Enfield uses Hanover's dispatch services. He further explained that Hanover has been helpful to the town, particularly in being sure to include Enfield in its grant requests. Crate said there is a change expected next year regarding simulcast transmission for radio. A new simulcast will "bounce around" for the best signal, as opposed to now when manual switching of channels is necessary. This would essentially put area towns on the same channel. Mike asked if they'd be able to switch to their own frequency. Crate confirmed.

Ambulance:

Richard Martin presented the ambulance budget request for 2017. Martin discussed various FAST Squad participants gaining additional training, which would move Enfield toward a higher level of coverage. Fred pointed out the ambulance budget is down overall and showed concern specifically toward the equipment line. Fred said that if the ambulance were to go over budget, the overage would be negative for the town's undesignated fund (UDF). Fred said that he doesn't want to see departments overspending on line items. Richard responded that historically there have been some overages in the budget that were out of his control.

Fred cautioned against budgeting so tightly that in the case of an emergency, resulting overspending would hit the UDF. Sam responded that while he agreed that budget lines should be realistic, the UDF was exhausted largely due to contract overspending and not so much due to actual emergency spending.

Nancy asked if there was a general fund for the buildings in town. Steve responded that most departments are generally responsible for own buildings, but that there is a portion under the Government Buildings budget section that includes some equipment for department facilities.

Fred brought up investment in training to move toward a full ambulance staff. He suggested that the committee continue discussion regarding moving to full-time staffing during the day to replace mutual aid from Lebanon. James asked how many would be needed. Fred responded that the town would need two people full-time.

Fred explained that in using Lebanon mutual aid, Enfield is charged per call that Lebanon services, and Lebanon collects the ambulance fee from customer. Fred said that he worried that Lebanon may add another ambulance as well as more staff, which would increase costs for Enfield.

Department of Public Works:

Jim Taylor presented DPW budget request for 2017. Jim said there are some slight increases and significant decreases. He said that the cleaning contract is due for re-bidding early next year. That line has increased a little bit but he expects the same price range for the new contract. Heating gas has been level funded for this year. The community building line has dropped; it had gone up to complete the air conditioning unit. He said the same for is true for the DPW facility line; that was up to replace the furnace but it has gone down to where it was 2 years ago.

The cemetery line is level funded. Sam asked if any tree removals for cemeteries were planned for this year. Jim answered that there are none planned so far but there were some removals this past year.

For the highway administration section, Jim said that there are no changes in personnel and the staff will remain as is. There was one retirement and a vacant position for five months. There have been some small savings in insurance and salary costs.

Jim said that he left the overtime line level. Overtime costs were lower last year due to the lack of severe storms, but he noted that could easily change this season.

The survey & engineering line is increased. Jim explained that he needed a sophisticated permit to fix a culvert on Bog Road. While the repair was about \$3,000, the permitting costs were about \$7,800. Jim expects this trend to continue in some spots in town so he has increased this line.

Jim also slightly increased the salt line due to increased salt costs of a few cents per ton. Jim noted that fluctuation happens from time to time and said the increase estimate is based on previous years.

Jim expanded on use of road salt in town by explaining that salt treatment even in non-snowy weather is important for the roads. While there were not many storms last year, there was a lot of rain and overall wet weather, as well as temperatures hovering around 32 degrees, which required frequent applications. Jim said that he has been striving to avoid too much fluctuation on the salt line over the years.

The aggregate/fill line is level funded. Jim moved up the pavement maintenance line in case of increased cost. This year saw good prices, but Jim said those prices may not last much longer.

The vegetation line is up a bit due to the increased cost of renting mowers. Jim noted that buying equipment might be more sensible in the future if renting ends up costing more than purchasing.

Jim said if an excavator is purchased as part of the 2017 CIP plan, the equipment line may be able to go down a few thousand dollars.

Jim increased the gas line a bit because they came close to their maximum budget last year. Diesel has been reduced in price and he expects that cost to go down.

Equipment is down a little to account for reduction in some large maintenance purchases last year.

James asked if the 2017 DPW budget reflects a maintenance of current level of service, or if the budget may signify either losing or gaining ground in services. Jim said the town did great last year with servicing and repairing town roads and this budget reflects a continuation of this.

Fred asked about next year's road maintenance plans. Jim said the DPW plans on fixing portions of Shaker Blvd.; Alfano Drive; Anthony Court; Lockehaven Road from the Crystal Lake Rd. intersection to the Ibey intersection; Boys Camp Road; and West Farms Road. There's an estimated 11,000 feet or about 2 miles of road planned to be repaired next year.

The street lighting line is level funded. This line includes electrical work, replacement bulbs and the cost of keeping the lights on. Jim noted that the increase from recent years is largely due to rising electric rates.

Jim said that sanitation personnel should see some savings due to one retired position not being replaced. He added that the zero sort area and compactor allows for less staff.

The public information line has gone down but Jim said he kept some money on that line to allow for information to be mailed if necessary.

The sanitation collection contract line is at \$320,000, an increase from 2016's request for \$300,000. This line covers the curbside pickup contract and the trucking & disposal from the transfer station. The fuel line under the contract is level and is there in case fuel prices surpass a certain point.

Sam asked how many households were included in receiving curbside pickup when the Casella contract was signed in 2013. Steve and Jim responded that about 2,200 households were included at signing. Jim estimated that there have been about 60 new homes added since then.

Sam asked about the contract cost line appropriated at \$225,000 in 2015 but had an actual cost of \$315,000. Jim estimated a cost of about \$380 each week in trucking, which is included in the contract line but it is not actually part of the signed contract. Sam estimated that cost amounts to about \$20,000 for the year and pointed out that the amount does not fully account for the \$90,000 that was overspent in 2015.

Jim noted that some houses that are counted do not have toters, such as Lakeview which has a dumpster. He estimated that the contract itself is currently costing around \$24,000 a month. Sam asked for a detailed breakdown of the contract line, as well as further explanation of what was to be provided in that contract and what has actually been provided.

Mike asked if Jim feels that Casella offers a suitable service to residents for the price. Jim said that there is really no large operation available other than Casella; the company has purchased most of the smaller companies in the area including Canaan and Claremont.

Mark agreed that Casella is the only large trash pickup service in the area. Sam pointed out that this was also the case when trash was being picked up weekly.

Jim said that the recycling market has “tanked,” so he anticipates that Casella will want to renegotiate that contract in the next year.

The solid waste disposal line reflects tipping, or disposal, fee for when trash is hauled to Lebanon.

The committee moved to review the water and sewer budget. The water budget is close to level funded. A portion of various employees benefits are reflected in the water/sewer budget. Janet asked about the distribution system line. Jim said that reflects work on structures and instances of major line breaks.

Steve had asked if there were any drought-related issues this year. Jim said the water department had used some backup well water to relieve the main well. That water was harder than the main well’s water, which led to a couple complaints but no major issues.

There is a slight increase on sewer sanitation. The wastewater treatment is billed by Lebanon. Lebanon has gone up on billing between 6-10% each year. Pump station maintenance was overspent last year due to some large expenses. Fred asked if Lakeview’s treatment was included on that line. Jim confirmed it was. He added that the EPA has played a large role in increasing treatment cost with various regulations and guidelines.

Public comment: none.

Other business:

Fred told the committee that the Huse Park fence is being replaced. The town is going with black fencing similar to the fence at Copeland Block. The fencing will be paid with TIF funds. Fred added that a new Jaws tool was donated to the town through the Firefighter’s Association bingo night proceeds.

Fred also noted that the old Expedition SUV, which once belonged to the police station and was moved to DPW, is being replaced. That purchase is set to be included in the preliminary CIP plan. Fred said that the CIP is not planning on replacing another fire truck this year.

The next budget committee meeting is scheduled for November 10th and is expected to include the budget requests from the fire department, building inspection, and health & human services.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:44 am.

Budget Committee minutes taken and submitted by Annabelle Bamforth.