

FINAL

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING

MARCH 3, 1999

7:30 P.M. - MUNICIPAL OFFICE BUILDING - HANOVER, NH

The meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by the Chairman, Marilyn W. Black. Present were: Marilyn W. Black, Chairman; Katherine S. Connolly; John Manchester; John Colligan; Julia Griffin, Town Manager; and members of the public.

Ms. Black announced that this meeting was being taped by CATV 6 and that hearing enhancement equipment was available for anyone who wished to use it.

1. PUBLIC COMMENT.

Mr. Colligan indicated that he and Ms. Black had drafted a letter to inform all of the residents in Hanover as to the very fluid and fast moving situation in Concord regarding state funding of education. The reason for the letter is that the Selectboard has many concerns about the potential magnitude of the impact to the Hanover taxpayers as a result of a resolution to the Claremont issue. They would like everyone to know that although they do not know what the solution will be, they feel it will be very important for the community not only to participate in the Town budget but also in the school district budgets. After a House vote which is scheduled for March 4th, the Board will send out a letter to all Hanover residents to try to give them as much information as possible, recognizing that everything can change. Mr. Colligan pointed out that this is an historic time, and Hanover is one of the communities that because of its affluence will be feeling the impact of this resolution much more than a lot of the state. He stated that the Board will do its best to keep Hanover residents informed and welcomed any questions that people in the community might have.

Ms. Black added that the House on March 4th will supposedly vote on several bills, all of which are aimed at trying to solve the Claremont problems. April 1st is the deadline, and after the House vote any bills have to go to the Senate for action or amendment, and then to a committee of conference.

2. REVIEW OF FY 1999-2000 PROPOSED BUDGET FOR: AMBULANCE FUND, FIRE FUND, FIXED CHARGES

Ms. Black introduced Chief Bradley, Captain Broderick who is in charge of emergency medical services in the department, and Captain Frankenfield, the communications officer. Also present at the meeting was Frank Austin, Fleet Manager for the Town. She explained that Mr. Austin was invited to attend the meeting because one of the issues that will be addressed is to look at the equipment reserve and proposed expenditure for an ambulance in the coming fiscal year. Mr. Austin works closely with the Fire Department on maintenance of the vehicles and will be working with the ambulance committee as it gets down to working on specifications for the new ambulance.

Ambulance Fund

Ms. Griffin indicated that there were two significant changes in the Ambulance Fund this year. One is that for the first time, because the revenue picture is healthier than last year, they were able to shift salaries for 3/16 of the Department, essentially three firefighters' salaries, into the Ambulance Fund from the Fire Fund. This recognizes that the ambulance takes about 3/16 of the time allocated to fire and ambulance services. It is also possible to begin allocating some of the benefits associated with those three individuals over to the Ambulance Fund from the Fire Fund.

Ms. Griffin explained that the only other significant recommendation in the Ambulance Fund is the appropriation of \$120,000 from the Ambulance Equipment Reserve, which has sufficient funds for the purchase of a replacement ambulance for the current ambulance which has been in service since 1990. Ms. Griffin feels it is important to point out that this is an appropriation of funds to purchase the vehicle, but the appropriation is offset by revenue that comes into the Ambulance Fund from the Reserve Fund, and does not have any net impact on the bottom line.

Ms. Connolly asked if there was a reason why Uncollectibles, 093-320, had increased. Mr. Gilbar explained that uncollectible accounts are turned over to a collection agency; he noted that he should be writing off a certain percentage each year to stabilize the account rather than writing off many at once.

Mr. Manchester asked if the Town needed a new ambulance, and if so, whether the one that is purchased will have all the options or would it be middle of the line. Mr. Austin answered that the transmission on the current ambulance is becoming questionable, and the analysis on the engine is starting to show a lot of cylinder wear. There have also been problems electrically and there is some body corrosion starting underneath. He feels that maintenance costs on the ambulance will be fairly high, and feels it is a good time to look at replacing the unit before putting a lot of money into it in terms of repairs.

Mr. Colligan asked for more detail about allocation of maintenance expenses, and wondered how much was spent each year in maintenance of the ambulance. Mr. Austin answered that centralized fleet maintenance has only been in effect for a short period of time, and therefore he cannot provide a long history of repairs on the vehicle. He stated that the unit has a significant amount of down time, and that problems with the electrical system have been occurring. He added that an alternator would cost \$1,000 or more to replace. Mr. Austin indicated that the ambulance has been averaging down time of once a week lately.

Mr. Colligan asked if maintenance history of the existing ambulance would impact the decision in terms of configuring a new ambulance. He also asked how old the current ambulance is. Captain Broderick answered that the ambulance was originally scheduled to be replaced in 1997, but was moved to this budget. Ms. Griffin explained that the decision not to replace it in 1997 had to do with a decision to purchase the new rescue vehicle in 1996. At that point the Board and the Fire Department decided

it could not afford to buy a new ambulance because the ambulance reserve did not have sufficient funds. An additional three years was needed to set aside enough money into the reserve to fund the purchase of the replacement ambulance. By the time the new ambulance is delivered, the old ambulance will be 10 years old. She also pointed out that money has been set aside in this budget as Mr. Austin is concerned that the transmission may not last until the new unit is put into service.

Mr. Colligan asked for the projected life of the new vehicle. Captain Broderick answered that they are looking at a 10 year replacement schedule.

Ms. Connolly asked which vehicle gets the most use. Captain Broderick answered that up until six or seven years ago, vehicle 150 got the most use; now 151 is taken on every fire call and every ambulance rescue call. He added that the first choice on medical calls is 150; 151 is rescue and goes to accidents, low grade rescues and fire calls. Ms. Griffin explained that the rescue vehicle is there so that it can be used for ambulance runs if necessary. It becomes a dual purpose vehicle when the whole crew is out on a fire response call.

Ms. Connolly pointed out that in the past the same type of equipment was serving 10 towns rather than the 3 currently served. Mr. Austin explained that there was a shorter replacement schedule at the time the ten towns were served. He added that they are just proposing a 10 year replacement schedule; as they near the ten year point, they will evaluate it and see if the vehicle can be serviced to keep it longer.

Ms. Griffin asked what the mileage is on vehicle 150. Mr. Austin replied that it is in the 50,000 range, which includes a lot of idle time. He added that there have been no major component replacements with regard to the engine. He explained that idle time is a major factor in terms of engines as well as the transmission. The 50,000 mileage figure constitutes runs around Town; he added that highway miles would actually be easier on the vehicle.

Ms. Connolly commented that the Department did a magnificent job in putting vehicle 151 together.

Chief Bradley pointed out that the \$120,000 figure for the replacement ambulance assumes that the ambulance will be a functional, well-built, reliable vehicle. He feels that the estimated cost of \$120,000 is a good, strong estimate. If this is approved, Captain Broderick will put together a working committee of representatives with the Department to draw up bid specifications and go through the bid process.

Dept. 110 - Emergency Medical Services

Ms. Black questioned the cost of \$2,800 for purchasing jackets. Ms. Griffin indicated that this represents jackets for only half of the crew. Captain Broderick explained that in the past the Department had issued winter jackets and raincoats that could also be used during off-duty times. This request represents the first time official equipment will be purchased that

will be worn at work and will stay at work. They are hoping it will mean one coat per career. Ms. Griffin added that the coats are also coats which will be appropriate when dealing with patients and blood, etc. It has been manufactured to standard and is meant to protect the EMTs and paramedics.

Ms. Griffin pointed out that this request is for only half of the staff because she was not able to afford to fund the purchase of jackets for the whole crew in one year. She indicated to the Board that they would likely see a request for a matching amount next year.

Mr. Manchester asked for an explanation of the software package that tracks quality control. Ms. Griffin explained that this software matches the Department's ambulance billing software. The goal of the new software is to help plug into the billing software and help ambulance crews monitor quality control of the service they provide on every run. It helps the Department take a more strategic look at the kinds of services provided and evaluate the quality effectiveness of their service. Captain Broderick added that it is also a way to monitor personnel to make sure they are adhering to Department protocol.

Ms. Connolly recommended that a breakdown be done for education accounts for the Fire and Ambulance Funds. Ms. Black wished to run the accounts for all of the departments to ensure there is equity between departments.

Ms. Connolly pointed out that many of the expenses in the Department are up, while news from Concord is not good. Captain Broderick explained that while the budget for seminars has increased, he is getting a lot more call people that are now EMTs. They need to continue their education to recertify. He added that there are 25 people that use the funds to go to seminars.

Chief Bradley explained that another consideration is that every two years EMTs are mandated to recertify and there are two levels of recertification. Ms. Griffin noted that last year's budget did not contain funds for recertifications, so that what the Board is seeing this year is an every other year budget for recertifications. She added that almost all of the increase in line item 110-810, Education, is attributable to the recertifications that happen every other year.

Ms. Connolly pointed out that the figure the year before was half of that, or only \$2,300, which was the year they should have been recertified. Ms. Griffin explained that the year before was the year the Ambulance Fund was in very tough shape. There was no contribution to the equipment reserve that year because things were so tight, and a lot of things the Department requested were not funded. She does not remember what was done with the recertifications that year, but recalls that it was a no frills year.

Ms. Black noted that item 110-610, Technical Supplies, had increased by \$600, and wondered if there was any way that could be leveled out from last year. Captain Broderick explained that the Department overspent last

year for this item, and the reason for the increase this year is due to being required to buy some additional items to outfit kits for the paramedics for the first time. Both trucks have to be outfitted with medical supplies, and then there can be an exchange.

Ms. Griffin explained that there is one paramedic currently, and one that has almost completed his training program. There are three firefighter EMTs currently going through the first year of what is a two year program, the first year being classroom work and the second year being clinical work.

Ms. Connolly questioned the increase in item 110-490, Contracted Services. Ms. Griffin explained that basically the additional expense results solely from the maintenance contract for software that was not budgeted for last year.

Ms. Black suggested that after the budget process is over someone should put together information about how much computers are costing Hanover for software, hardware, maintenance and contracts.

Dept 730,760 - Capital Projects

Ms. Griffin indicated that this department contains the appropriation from the reserve for the ambulance. She explained that there is an inflow into the Ambulance Fund from the Reserve Fund of that same appropriation. The only other significant item is that 110-960, Emergency Medical Services Department, contains an amount of \$20,000 which is what is being proposed to be contributed to the reserve. There is an average annual contribution to the reserve after this year of \$24,500 a year. One of the key issues currently is that the rescue unit is proposed to be replaced in 2006/2007. If in 2005 it is thought that the vehicle has two more years of useful life, then the amount reserved in that given year would be re-evaluated.

Ms. Black assumed that the new ambulance cost would come in under the \$120,000 appropriated. Ms. Griffin answered that it may well come in under it, but it cannot come in over; if it does, it will be necessary to re-do the specifications and re-bid.

Fire Fund

Ms. Griffin indicated that with the proposed budget the estimated rates for the four districts would be District 1 - 51 cents; District 2 - \$1.01; District 3 - \$2.03 and District 4 - \$2.54.

Ms. Black suggested that this year's Town Report should include a map of Hanover with the fire districts drawn in.

Ms. Black asked what money is received in 093-330, Training. Ms. Griffin explained that when the Department hosts a training seminar it charges for attendance by outside fire departments, and receives a piece of the revenue. Mr. Gilbar added that there is some wash in the expense side because materials have to be purchased. Ms. Griffin noted that because the Department hosted the paramedic training program it was able to put

through one of its firefighters at no cost, which resulted in a savings of \$6,500. Chief Bradley noted that the Department will offer the training program again in August.

Mr. Colligan asked for an explanation of 097-720, Insurance Dividend. Mr. Gilbar explained that this is the return realized from property and liability comp funds in the form of annual dividends. Ms. Griffin indicated that 1998 was the year the Town received a huge dividend from comp funds. She explained that they would prefer to be conservative because it is hard to know what to expect in terms of dividends returned. In the event that it is larger than projected, it helps the Fire Fund surplus.

Mr. Manchester asked for an explanation of 093-341, False Alarm Charges, noting that it showed an increase in billings. Ms. Griffin explained that this reflects the implementation of a discovery by Mr. Cox that some items were not being billed for that should have been. Captain Frankenfield added that although it does not show on the budget, the actual revenue for 1998 is \$2,800. He noted that this item is at \$900 year to date this year, and was \$1,800 last year.

Chief Bradley indicated that the Department charges \$100 after the third false alarm call.

Dept 110 - Fire Department - Administration

Ms. Griffin explained that the chief reason for the reduction in this budget is that the Chief's vehicle has been paid off.

Ms. Connolly referred to item 110-830, Meetings and Conferences, and asked if this was the year the Chief would be attending a conference, recalling that he went last year. Ms. Griffin explained that Chief Bradley is on the executive committee of the IAFC, and would like to take one of the captains with him this year to the international conference. One of the problems with being on the Board of the IAFC is that the Board member cannot attend any of the workshops. Chief Bradley would like to use his allocation this year to take one of the captains with him to the international conference.

Dept 120 - Fire Department - Suppression

Ms. Black pointed out that some places in the budget refer to 13 call firefighters while others refer to 12. Ms. Griffin answered that the number should be 12 firefighters. Chief Bradley stated that two more call firefighters have recently been added bringing the number in Hanover to 14. He added that there are nine call firefighters in Etna.

Ms. Connolly stated she is worried whether this is the year to add new call firefighters because of the other budget constraints which she fears will face Hanover taxpayers. Chief Bradley indicated that he did not wish to operate on the premise that one year he can add a call firefighter, and another year he cannot. He stated that he needs the funding available so that when he is able to recruit an interested person to join the call force that there are available resources to do that.

Ms. Connolly wished to put item 120-390, New Personnel, on the list for further discussion.

Referring to account 120-390, New Personnel, Ms. Griffin indicated that the request is for \$4,410 to allow the Department to recruit at least one call firefighter. In fairness to the Department, she stated that in the last few years in trying to balance the budget this is one of the first accounts she would cut. One of the reasons it was lower than this in the last two years is because she cut it after the Department gave their requests.

Ms. Black wished to put 120-140, Overtime Services, on the list for further discussion. She noted that last year the Department spent \$117,000 and is budgeting \$122,000. She would like them to reduce that account to at least \$120,000.

Ms. Griffin recalled that she had reduced this from the Department's original request of \$130,000. Ms. Black stated that the amount was not that high last year for overtime services, so she feels the Department can work with less this year as well.

Captain Frankenfield pointed out that there was a retirement that occurred in July. Ms. Griffin explained that when there is a retirement, the pay out gets added to that salary line; it is a one-time lump sum payment.

Ms. Black asked if the Town used to reserve for that purpose; Ms. Griffin answered that there is a reserve in the Fire Fund, 640-290, called Severance Benefits Pay, for \$15,000.

Ms. Connolly questioned item 120-740, Operational Equipment. She asked how much radios cost referring to a request for \$8,400. Recalling last year's budget, she noted that two radios cost \$2,150. Captain Frankenfield explained that the request was for two sets of radios, consisting of two coverage radios and two portable radios.

Mr. Colligan asked for an explanation of administration charges. Ms. Griffin explained that these are charges to the Fire Fund from the Administration budget. Because the Fire Fund is a separate fund, it receives charges into it from administration and from communications for its share of dispatch. She added that she is recommending that the equipment reserve contribution to the Fire Fund be \$70,000 this year.

Dept. 130 - Fire Department - Fire Prevention

Ms. Black referred to the request for funding for the new "Risk Watch" elementary school education program developed by the NFPA, and asked if anyone had talked to the school to see if they have time to implement the program.

Chief Bradley answered that he has not contacted the school as he felt it would be better to fund the program and then approach the school. To show the program he would have to get the State Fire Marshall to come in along with a representative from NFPA to explain the program the way it should be explained. He did not want to get this underway until he knew whether or not the Board would consider funding the program.

Ms. Black questioned whether the teachers would have the time to devote to teaching the program. Chief Bradley explained that the program is built in and worked into the daily curriculum. The teachers go through an orientation and follow a curriculum.

Chief Bradley explained that the request for funds is for the purchase of materials. Ms. Black pointed out that teachers generally do not like to teach canned programs. Chief Bradley indicated that there is plenty of room for creativity within the program; it is in several schools around the country and has been very well accepted. He added that the reason he likes this program versus a canned fire prevention program is that it is comprehensive covering fire prevention, firearm safety, injury prevention, bicycle safety and motor vehicles.

Dept. 140 - Fire Department - Hazardous Materials

Ms. Black pointed out that 140-170, Operational Equipment, is up by 60%. Ms. Griffin explained that this represents the cost of the new sensors for the gas meters which are not replaced every year. Captain Broderick added that in the event of a call, any confined space has to be metered before it can be entered to ensure its safety.

Dept. 150 - Fire Department - Fire Alarm Maintenance

Ms. Black pointed out that last year 10 fire alarm boxes were stripped and maintained at a cost of \$710, yet the Department is requesting \$2,000 this year to do 10 more. Captain Frankenfield explained that the funding is also to maintain the system as required, and is basically a maintenance budget for the 15 miles of wire.

Dept. 160 - Fire Department - Fire Training

Ms. Black asked if there was a schedule for every firefighter with regard to their training. Chief Bradley answered that there is a training schedule that has been developed for monthly drills as well as in-service weekly training and drills.

Dept. 551 - Main Station

Ms. Griffin pointed out that there is no significant increase in this budget this year, only a request for funding in building equipment that is to do shelving in one office and to install an air conditioner in another office.

Dept. 560 - Etna Station

Ms. Griffin explained that there was one request in this budget which she had cut, in part to help balance the budget. The Department had requested building ventilation equipment for the Etna Station to clear out diesel fumes that accumulate each time they start up the apparatus. She would like to revisit the technology options as the option presented was quite expensive at \$17,000.

Dept. 640 - Employee Benefits

Ms. Griffin noted that this department contains Section 125 points, essentially health insurance benefits for employees, minus the contributions that the employees make toward the policy; it also contains social security, retirement costs, workers' compensation and severance benefits pay. She added that she is attempting to budget an amount each year for retirement to be prepared when a retirement occurs. If the funds are not spent, they accrue to fund balance.

Fixed Charges

Dept. 610 - Debt and Interest

Ms. Griffin stated that the Howe Automation lease purchase is offset by \$30,000 a year by the Howe Corporation. She added that this budget year is the last year on the Howe lease which will free up approximately \$25,000 of expenditure in 2000/2001.

Dept. 640 - Employee Benefits

Ms. Griffin pointed out that this department includes Section 125 points, the health insurance plan for all General Fund employees minus deductions for co-pay, and social security, retirement, workers' compensation, miscellaneous and severance benefits pay.

Dept. 650 - Solid Waste Disposal

Ms. Griffin indicated that this account includes funds to have Northeast Waste empty the trash cans in downtown Hanover on Main Street. It also includes Hanover's participation in the Household Hazardous Waste Collection event sponsored by the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission. She explained that the Town pays an amount per each Hanover resident that participates in the event; this amount is offset by a subsidy received through the State.

The account also includes \$3,000 budgeted for ongoing monitoring of the wells at the closed landfill, and \$15,000 for the purchase of landfill tickets which are sold to Hanover residents who wish to use the Lebanon Landfill directly.

3. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Ms. Griffin distributed a letter from Speaker Sytek to members of the House which includes her latest proposal. Based on this latest amendment submitted by Speaker Sytek, Hanover will still be a donor community in the statewide property tax plan she is presenting. Hanover would be paying to the State via an \$8.75 per thousand statewide property tax a total of approximately \$2.8 million, although this tax would be collected by the Town of Hanover. The State would then send back to every community \$3,700 per pupil, resulting in Hanover receiving back from the State approximately \$2.4 million. This includes only the New Hampshire students. Ms. Griffin indicated that a tax calculation has been prepared on the assumption that

Hanover receives back from the State \$2.4 million, or \$3,700 per pupil, and assuming that Hanover taxpayers still want to support the same level of funding per pupil in Hanover that is currently funded.

Using the proposed fiscal year 1999/2000 budget taken out of the recent Dresden and Hanover school report, the total tax levy would be a little over \$11 million (including only the Hanover share). Added to that number would be Hanover's payment to the State of approximately \$2.8 million. Subtracted from that number would be the State grant received back from the State, to come up with the new net amount to be raised locally of \$11,438,000, more or less. This would require a tax rate of \$14.85; the current school tax rate is \$13.41, for a net increase in the school tax rate of \$1.44, a 10.8 percent increase in the school portion of the tax rate in Hanover taxpayers, and a 7.4 percent increase overall for the General Fund including county, municipal and school portions.

Mr. Manchester asked if the Sytek plan is the one that was endorsed by the BIA. Ms. Griffin answered that it has won the endorsement of the BIA, but it is important to point out that the Sytek plan only produces \$707 million for State Education. Ms. Black pointed out that part of the Sytek plan is the utility tax. Ms. Griffin added that there will be major debates as to whether or not this is adequate, and there is a chance that Hanover's share could increase.

4. SELECTMEN'S REPORTS

Ms. Connolly

Ms. Connolly reported that the Planning Board met March 2nd to discuss zoning amendments and College cases. She believes that there will be five zoning amendments going to the voters.

Mr. Manchester

Mr. Manchester reported that the new dorm at Dartmouth College was approved at the Planning Board meeting, and they began to review a proposed penthouse on Steele Hall. Ms. Connolly explained that this is the old chemistry building from the 1920s which is being totally renovated. They are hoping to add a mechanical penthouse to remove odors.

Mr. Manchester also noted that there will be a Howe Library meeting on March 4th.

Mr. Colligan

Mr. Colligan had nothing to report.

Ms. Black

Ms. Black had nothing to report.

Ms. Griffin informed the Board that the League of Women Voters had scheduled a forum on statewide property tax and school funding issues to

be held at DHMC on March 15th, the same evening that the Board had planned to hold its public hearing on the budget. She wondered whether the Board wished to reschedule its public hearing to March 22nd or March 17th to allow the Selectmen to attend the forum if they wished. The Board agreed to schedule the public hearing to March 17th rather than March 15th.

5. OTHER BUSINESS.

There was no other business.

6. ADJOURNMENT.

Ms. Connolly MADE THE MOTION to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Colligan SECONDED THE MOTION and the Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.

SUMMARY

- 1. Ms. Connolly MADE THE MOTION to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Colligan SECONDED THE MOTION and the Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


John Colligan, Secretary

These minutes were taken and transcribed by Nancy Richards.