

APPROVED

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING

FEBRUARY 9, 1998

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; Brian Walsh, Vice Chairman; Jack Nelson; Katherine S. Connolly; John Manchester; Michael Gilbar, Director of Administrative Services; 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

There was no public comment.

2. 3RD PROPOSED FY 1998/1999 BUDGET MEETING

FIRE FUND

Ms. Black asked for an explanation of the increase in Item 093-310, Hydrant Rentals. Chief Bradley explained that there were more hydrants added, which resulted in the increase.

Ms. Black asked if Item 093-320, Special Fire Services, could be increased to help balance the Fire Fund budget. **Mr. Nelson wished to mark Item 093-320, Special Fire Services, for further review.**

Ms. Black noted there were two new items, 093-341, False Alarm Charges, and Item 093-350, Life Safety Code Review. Chief Bradley explained that False Alarm Charges anticipates approximately \$1,000 in false alarms. Life Safety Code Reviews are in anticipation of some major projects regarding new construction and life safety code reviews that the department will be charging for.

Mr. Walsh asked what the charge is for a false alarm. Chief Bradley answered that each occupancy is allowed three false alarms in one year; the fourth and subsequent alarms will be charged at a rate of \$100 each. Chief Bradley explained that the reason for allowing three false alarms is to get a new system running smoothly. The number of alarms that are allowed free of charge is set forth in the ordinance.

Mr. Walsh suggested that the Board review the ordinance regarding this matter.

Dept. 110 - Fire Department - Administration

Mr. Nelson asked for an explanation of the need for five computer workstations. Chief Bradley answered that there is one in his office, the department secretary has one, there is a workstation in the EMS Captain's and Training Captain's office which is shared, one in the maintenance and Fire Alarm Officer's office which is shared, and one that is being used as a workstation and the file server in the watch room.

Ms. Connolly noted a contracted services item for computer software. Chief Bradley answered that the software is on all five computers and is for incident reports and is fire station and fire house software. Mr. Gilbar noted that the workstation in the watch room is a non-dedicated file server. That software resides on that file server, so it is accessible by all other workstations, including the file server itself. This situation has created some problems, but it is being used.

Ms. Connolly asked for an explanation for the requirement of site licenses. Mr. Gilbar explained that in order to use any type of software you have to take out a license for the number of users that will be using the software, even though it is on one workstation.

Ms. Black asked for further information on Item 110-442, Vehicle Rental. Chief Bradley answered that it is for the Chief's car, and that this is the third and final year of the lease. Mr. Gilbar noted that it includes the interest on the lease. He added that the Department will own the vehicle at the end of the lease; it is a lease/purchase.

Ms. Black questioned the increase in Item 110-615, Food and Meals. Chief Bradley explained that this item is for when he attends New Hampshire Fire Chief's Association monthly dinner meetings, the cost for which averages from \$12 to \$17 for the meal. It also is for occasional out-of-town guests and dignitaries for lunch expenses. Chief Bradley stated that he was not diligent last year with regard to putting in for reimbursement for food and meals expenses.

Mr. Nelson asked for an explanation of the increase in Item 110-830, Meetings and Conferences. Chief Bradley explained that the Board established a policy several years ago that a major conference could be attended every other year. As last year was not funded, he is requesting to attend the International Association of Fire Chiefs' Conference this year which will be held in Louisville, Kentucky in September.

Dept. 120 - Fire Department - Suppression

Ms. Black noted that the Fire Department budget shows the highest percentage of increase of any department in the Town. Adding up the increases in this Department over the past three years, including this budget, results in a 27% increase excluding the new engine and the new roof on the Etna station.

Mr. Manchester asked for an explanation of new incentives. Chief Bradley explained that new incentives are for people that are not necessarily qualified under the incentive program now, but may take training in the future and qualify for an increase in salary under the incentive program.

Ms. Connolly asked for a definition of a PASS device. Chief Bradley answered that it is a personal safety device that is attached to each fire fighter's set of breathing apparatus which makes it easier to locate them in the event of trouble. If the device is not moving for a period in excess of 45 seconds, it will make a noise indicating that there may be a firefighter trapped, down or having a problem.

Ms. Black asked for an explanation of the stay-over program. Chief Bradley stated that the stay-over program is a program that has had a mixed level of participation over the years. There is a small amount of money budgeted whereby on an occasional basis one of the call firefighters can move into the firehouse, be part of the night shift, participate in activities and be compensated at their level of pay.

Ms. Black asked if this person takes the place of someone working overtime. Chief Bradley answered that they do not take the place of someone working overtime; they typically utilize the stay-over program at a time that might be anticipated as being a busy weekend.

Mr. Walsh noted that they had tried to keep the other department's budgets under a 3% increase. Assuming this department were to increase by 3%, that would mean an increase of \$30,000 rather than the \$57,000. Mr. Walsh stated he had looked at Item 120-140, Overtime Services as one item which might be decreased. He suggested that the Department take measures to bring the Fire Suppression budget back at a \$30,000 increase, and indicate to the Board where the cuts were made.

Mr. Nelson indicated that one of the items that throws the budget out from last year is the \$60,000 increase in capital reserve. Mr. Gilbar stated that in order to keep the overall tax rate within a certain percentage, there was cutting done in operating expenses during the course of budget deliberations, and the only item left to substantially reduce the budget with was the capital reserve.

Mr. Walsh noted that there was still \$100,000 in reserve having made two replacements totalling over a half million dollars in a five year period. He would like to review the entire reserve question.

Ms. Black stated that another item to consider on the capital budget is that the maintenance department will be reviewing all of the engines, their requirements and life span, and that the replacement schedule may change. She suggested looking at the budget to find places to cut as well, without relying on targeting reserve every year.

Mr. Gilbar indicated that they had looked at cutting the overtime budget, but the problem is that potential upcoming retirements will create additional overtime. There are also a number of employees who have been with the department many years that have the maximum vacation time.

Mr. Gilbar stated that several situations in last year's budget created a \$120,000 overtime usage. There are several older employees who get injured or have health problems, and coverage has to be provided for those situations.

Ms. Black asked how many days the department is staffed with four people during the year. Chief Bradley stated he could not answer exactly, but sensed that it is close to 50 percent of the time when the Department is not at full staff. Procedures are when an ambulance is sent out with a three person staff on duty, two are sent on the ambulance, one is left in the station and two people on call are called back. Staffed at a four person level, when an ambulance call is received two people go out on the ambulance, two are left in the station, and none are called back in.

Ms. Black asked for an explanation of why it is different for the three man shift than for the four man shift. Chief Bradley answered that they are reducing it down to a level where it is uncomfortable. For ease of operations, the dispatcher pushes the tone, announces for coverage, and the two on-call firefighters come back to the station. By contract, the employees that are called back are paid a minimum of one and one-half hours of time at time and a half.

Mr. Nelson wished to mark Item 120-140, Overtime Services, for further review.

Ms. Black wished to mark Item 120-390, New Personnel, for further review.

Mr. Nelson stated that the Selectmen may come back to the Department and ask them to cut \$27,000 from the Fire Suppression budget; he noted that they know where it is appropriate to make the cuts. Mr. Walsh indicated that a \$27,000 decrease in the Fire Suppression budget would bring it to a 3% increase.

Dept. 130 - Fire Department - Fire Prevention

Ms. Black noted that each year books and subscriptions in every department increase. Ms. Black asked for a further explanation of the amount budgeted in Item 130-670, Books and Subscriptions. Chief Bradley noted that this year his department will be updating some of the code books. \$425 a year is spent on a subscription to a service for the National Fire Protection Association for updating the codes.

Ms. Black asked if the codes ran parallel to the BOCA codes in the code office. Chief Bradley answered that the BOCA codes deal with building, mechanical and plumbing codes versus fire codes.

Ms. Black asked if there was a library set up whereby this material is readily available, cataloged and used. Chief Bradley answered that the materials are available in his office or in Captain Frankenfield's and Captain Whitcomb's office.

Mr. Nelson asked for an explanation of Item 130-180, Education. Chief Bradley stated that \$1,000 is budgeted for attendance at a sprinkler code seminar. He noted that Captain Frankenfield had attended a fire code seminar recently led by NFPA instructors to learn the ins and outs of the code. Captain Frankenfield came back from the seminar and instituted a program within the Department and the Town whereby there is now decent control over the installers of fire alarm systems, and testing of alarm systems on a regular basis. Chief Bradley feels that if this sprinkler code seminar is similar to the fire code seminar, it will be money very well spent.

Dept. 140 - Fire Department - Hazardous Materials

Ms. Black questioned the purchase of as yet unidentified hazardous materials-related equipment under Operational Equipment. Chief Bradley explained that this is a line item used for replacement of materials. Mr. Gilbar will rewrite that definition for next year's budget. Captain Whitcomb stated that some of the costs are recoverable, and some cannot be traced to a source and are not recoverable.

Dept. 150 - Fire Department - Fire Alarm

Ms. Black questioned the cost of \$2,500 for having 10 fire alarm boxes painted. Captain Frankenfield explained that the boxes cost \$50 each to be painted; the item should read that \$2,500 includes the painting of 10 fire alarm boxes.

Dept. 160 - Fire Department - Fire Training

Ms. Black asked how training aids such as slides, etc. are being used. Captain Doolan stated that slides and transparencies are taken of new construction, and are ever changing. He invited the Selectmen to the station to view the videos and slides.

Ms. Black asked how the training aids are accessed. Captain Doolan stated the aids are available to anyone who wishes to use them for training, etc.

Ms. Black asked if all firefighters look at the new transparencies so they are aware of changes. Captain Doolan answered that they view the transparencies if they attend training sessions, but he knows of no mechanism by which he can require them to do that.

Referring to Item 160-810, Education, Ms. Connolly stated that the activities in the narrative seem familiar and wondered if they had been moved from another area. Captain Doolan noted that in 1996 the education account was funded at \$4,000, in 1997 it was reduced to \$3,000 and in 1998 it was reduced to \$500, a choice he feels the Selectman made. He indicated that they had requested the item be level funded, and that \$3,000 was budgeted initially. Mr. Gilbar stated that \$2,500 was cut. The Selectmen gave the administration a percentage figure to take out last year, and this was the account that was cut.

Captain Doolan indicated that these funds are used to send people to weekend fire schools and the National Fire Academy.

Ms. Black requested that all 810 education accounts be run for the entire fire department to arrive at a total education cost for the department. **Ms. Black wished to mark Item 160-810, Education, for further review.**

Ms. Black asked if there are any firefighters who have not attended any educational courses for five years. Chief Bradley answered that he does not believe there are any firefighters who have not attended courses for five years. Captain Doolan noted that ISO, which is the group that bases fire insurance rates for the entire community, looks at fire training records. He stated that there is not a member of the Hanover Fire Department that has not attended some training sessions for even a period of six months.

Mr. Walsh emphasized that none of the Selectmen think they know how to make the decisions the Fire Department has to make. The Selectmen's job is to figure out at what level the community can afford various services, such as the library, fire and police.

Mr. Nelson stated that there is \$500 in the education budget this year, and this item will probably run over budget. He added that all the Selectmen care about is the bottom line, and urged Captain Doolan to speak to Chief Bradley to convince him that the \$500 is inadequate.

Ms. Black asked what type of electrical upgrades were being done at the main station. Captain Whitcomb explained that they are lighting fixtures which are now 25 years old in the Hanover Station. Replacement is occurring only as it is required.

Regarding replacement of the second floor windows, Captain Whitcomb noted that this replacement has been ongoing for several years. The windows are casement windows that open to the weather, and the elements have caused them to rot. He added that each year for the past five years a couple of windows have been replaced.

Dept. 551 - Main Station

Ms. Black wished to list Item 551-411, Heat for further review.

Dept. 560 - Etna Station

Ms. Black noted that there is a request for installation of access to the second floor of the Etna Station; she indicated that there are plans to turn the second floor of the Etna Station into a room in the future, and asked why all of the work was not done at that time. Captain Whitcomb stated that this was a request from the Etna division, and added that although the space could be used for storage this year, it could be deferred.

Ms. Black stated that she would prefer to see an overall plan for the space before a new staircase is installed where they might not want it once plans are set for the room.

Mr. Nelson asked if there was a pressing need for storage. Captain Whitcomb answered that they could always use storage, but that would not be the top priority at this time.

Ms. Black wished to list Item 560-430, Building Repair and Maintenance, for further review.

Dept. 620 - Insurance and Bonds

Ms. Black asked for an explanation of Item 620-529, Other Insurance. Mr. Gilbar answered that it represents administrative costs for unemployment, which is self-insured.

Dept. 640 - Employee Benefits

Ms. Black noted that the figures in this department can change if health care providers are changed, but the budget is based on the current provider.

Mr. Nelson indicated that fringe benefits paid to the 18 people in the fire department average \$17,200 per person. Mr. Gilbar noted that the severance benefits are a separate item, so that figure would be \$16,300 rather than \$17,200.

Dept. 645 - Compensation Adjustments

There was no discussion of Department 645 - Compensation Adjustments.

Dept. 720,730 - Capital Projects

There was no adjustment of Departments 720 and 730 - Capital Projects.

Mr. Nelson made a proposal to have the fire department and administration come back with a budget that is \$21,000 less than the budget as presented, with a prioritized wish list of the items that were cut to make up the \$21,000.

AMBULANCE FUND

Mr. Nelson noted that Lyme and Norwich were to be charged \$2.50 more per capita; he asked if the income from Hanover as well as Lyme and Norwich is included in revenue. Mr. Gilbar answered that the income from Hanover is included, but will not increase as Hanover is already absorbing additional costs of the fund.

Dept. 110 - Emergency Medical Services

Ms. Connolly asked why the transmission was being replaced on a vehicle which is scheduled to be replaced the following year. Captain Whitcomb stated that they suspect the transmission could fail due to the mileage of the vehicle and the hours that it is used. They would not plan to repair the transmission unless it becomes absolutely necessary.

Ms. Black indicated that although the rescue wagon is only two years old, it is already in need of new tires. Captain Whitcomb explained that it will need new tires by next year; the rescue wagon gets a lot of in-town use which causes excess wear and tear on the tires.

Mr. Nelson asked why fringe benefits were not in this fund. Mr. Gilbar answered that they would have to be supported by the fire fund, as there is not enough revenue to cover them. There would have to be a subsidy shown from the fire fund.

Mr. Nelson asked if the ambulance fund is a part of the general fund. Mr. Gilbar answered that the ambulance fund is a special revenue fund. He added that there has been discussion in the past about combining the ambulance fund and the fire fund, or eliminating the special revenue fund status and putting them into the general fund.

Mr. Walsh questioned Item 093-320, Service Charges. Mr. Gilbar indicated that it represents billbacks from the ambulance runs. Mr. Walsh stated that is exactly why this needs to be an enterprise fund even if it is running a deficit, and to continue to look at service charges against the market place.

Mr. Nelson stated that he would rather have this as an enterprise fund running a deficit and not necessarily raise the rates, but be aware that the general taxpayers are subsidizing it rather than hiding it to make the budget balance.

Ms. Black asked what the per capita charge is for Hanover. Chief Bradley answered that Hanover's per capita charge is \$9, whereas other towns are \$11.50.

Mr. Walsh suggested that conversation regarding benefits be in relation to next year's budget, that \$2.50 per capita be kept this year, and that these items be possibly changed next year with careful thought.

Ms. Black asked for an explanation of an auto time/volume cycled ventilatory resuscitator. Chief Bradley answered that it is a mechanism by which an oxygen bottle is hooked up and will automatically ventilate a patient.

Ms. Black asked if all employees in the department are at a level of training to operate that particular piece of equipment. Chief Bradley answered that not all are trained at the present time, but he would anticipate that ten out of sixteen would be trained in the near future.

Under Contractual Services, Mr. Nelson asked for an explanation of \$1,200 for payments to towns under mutual aid. Chief Bradley explained that this is for when Hanover is tied up and unable to respond to a call, they use either Care Plus in Lebanon, Hartford, or Upper Valley in Fairlee to cover Hanover's service area. These companies would then bill the Town of Hanover.

Ms. Black asked if there is a legal problem if someone goes out on an ambulance call and is not qualified to use a certain piece of equipment. Chief Bradley responded that he does not believe that is an issue. It is his understanding and advice that the people they employ work to their particular level of training.

Ms. Black asked if there is any other equipment that certain levels of employees are not trained to use. Chief Bradley answered that there are some people who are not trained to do IV therapy. The goal is to upgrade everyone to a minimum of intermediate, with a long-term goal to be a full paramedic service.

Mr. Nelson wished to list Item 110-960, Equipment Reserve, for further review.

Dept. 620 - Insurance and Bonds

There was no discussion of Dept. 620 - Insurance and Bonds.

Dept. 730, 760 - Capital Projects

There was no discussion of Depts. 730 and 760 - Capital Projects.

FIXED CHARGES

Dept. 610 - Debt and Interest

Mr. Gilbar will have a debt schedule prepared for the Selectmen.

Dept. 620 - Insurance and Bonds

There was no discussion of Dept. 620 - Insurance and Bonds.

Dept. 640 - Employee Benefits

Mr. Nelson noted that on an average, benefits of \$13,500 are given to each general fund employee. Mr. Gilbar stated that departments with a higher rate of long-term employees have higher costs of benefits. Another variable is how many employees are eligible for family plans with regard to the health insurance.

Ms. Black suggested that Dept. 640 - Employee Benefits be put on a list for Selectmen's discussion before the next budget year.

Mr. Nelson asked if benefits are to be included in the wage and classification study which will be undertaken. Mr. Walsh suggested that the study specifically include benefits in its analysis.

Mr. Nelson noted that 13% of the time the Town's employees are not working, but are getting paid. This would include vacations, holidays, personal days and sick days.

Ms. Black stated that it is important to be competitive with the College and the Hospital, and suggested that they be included in the wage and classification study for comparison purposes.

Ms. Black indicated that the police department has said that 75% of their days are covered with personnel that they have, rather than using overtime. She would like to know the percentage of days covered in the fire department with the personnel that they have.

Mr. Walsh stated that the increase in the Section 125 points, basically health benefits, is \$120,000. The rule of thumb is that \$40,000 equals a 1% increase in the tax rate; this would result in a 3% increase in the tax rate to begin with, and attempting to manage the rest of the budget to bring in a tax rate at under a 2% increase.

3. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

There was no administrative report.

4. SELECTMEN'S REPORTS

Ms. Connolly

Ms. Connolly reported that the Planning Board had worked on a driveway adjustment and a site plan review for the new Dartmouth College library.

Ms. Connolly also reported that she had received a letter from Bob Norman; his proposal was voted on by the Planning board, and he will present his proposal to the Selectmen at a future meeting.

Mr. Nelson

Mr. Nelson had no report.

Mr. Manchester

Mr. Manchester had no report.

Ms. Black

Ms. Black reported that surveys for the Communities Facilities Task Force were being printed and should be ready to go out at the end of the week.

Mr. Walsh

Mr. Walsh had no report.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to come before the meeting.

6. ADJOURNMENT

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

Mr. Walsh MADE THE MOTION to go to non-public session to discuss a matter which might affect the reputation of an individual. Ms. Connolly SECONDED THE MOTION and the Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO GO TO NON-PUBLIC SESSION TO DISCUSS A MATTER WHICH MIGHT AFFECT THE REPUTATION OF AN INDIVIDUAL.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

SUMMARY

- 1. Ms. Connolly MADE THE MOTION to adjourn the meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Walsh SECONDED THE MOTION and the Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN.**
- 2. Mr. Walsh MADE THE MOTION to go to non-public session to discuss a matter which might affect the reputation of an individual. Ms. Connolly SECONDED THE MOTION and the Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO GO TO NON-PUBLIC SESSION TO DISCUSS A MATTER WHICH MIGHT AFFECT THE REPUTATION OF AN INDIVIDUAL.**

Respectfully submitted,


John Manchester, Secretary

These minutes were taken and transcribed by Nancy A. Richards.