

**OFFICE OF SELECTMEN
6 HOLLAND STREET
PO BOX 139
MOULTONBOROUGH, NH 03254**

Selectmen's Budget Meeting

November 5, 2010

MINUTES

Selectmen: Joel R. Mudgett, Chair, Karel A. Crawford (arrived at 10:15 a.m.), Edward J. Charest, James F. Gray, Betsey L. Patten; Carter Terenzini, Town Administrator.

ABC: Jean Beadle, Alan Ballard, Ed Marudzinski; Barbara Sheppard, Karel Crawford Selectmen's Representative (arrived at 10:15 a.m.); Kathy Garry (absent w/prior notification)

1. **Financial Report FY 2010 3rd Quarter:** Heidi Davis, Finance & Personnel Director, presented the expenditure and collections account status as of 09/30/2010 (cash basis) noting most seemed on track. In adding to items of previous note (general Insurance, Human Services, and VNS Overtime) she noted that Recreation overtime and part-time accounts were over expended, as the Department dealt with a staff illness, and that Building Permit revenues lagged at 39% of projections over the 75% time elapsed.
2. **FY 2011 Town Administrator's Recommended Budget & Legislative Package:** The Town Administrator gave a Power Point overview of the budget and legislative package he was recommending for FY 2011. In a head-to-head comparison of operating and capital expenses it called for a \$0 and 0% increase over the sections of the budget he was able to influence (i.e. those numbers do not include the Library). Major cost drivers were:
 - a. Step increases for those eligible (\$60,000);
 - b. A reserve for a 1.5% COLA (\$30,000);
 - c. Increased pension costs forced upon us by the state (\$50,000);
 - d. Deferred maintenance at Playground Drive and equipment at Long Island Beach (\$30,000);
 - e. Private plowing contractors per recently adopted NH DOT rates (\$20,000);
 - f. Increased assessments for Ambulance and Fire Dispatch Services (\$15,000).

There was only one item that delivered immediate savings to offset those increases which was in the area of contracts and benefits (\$100,000). Therefore we had to look at how to "force" additional savings by:

- a. Eliminating a retiring PD officer (\$75,000);
- b. Moving PD Dispatch to the County (\$65,000); and
- c. Staffing the Fire Tower on Class 3 Days only (\$50,000).

The Town Administrator reminded the Board of his previous proposal to eliminate the Recreation Revolving Fund putting about \$150,000 of cash into the general fund immediately and \$20,000 annually thereafter. He finished with a series of saving items he thought the Board should also consider over the coming year;

- a. Provide for Fire Mutual Aid while moving Fire Dispatch to Carroll County (\$90,000);
- b. Explore Regional Code Enforcement services (\$35,000);
- c. Explore a merger of the SAU Athletic and Town Recreation Programs (\$35,000)

- d. Discontinue the Police K-9 program upon retirement of the dog (\$22,500); and
- e. Monitor health insurance and change the benefit platform as needed (Step 1 of \$30,000).

The Town Administrator closed by walking the board through the various documents in the budget book. He said it would be available as a counter copy for the public over the next few weeks. Betsey asked that the sections related to capital expenditures be sent along to the CIPC.

3. **Fire & Emergency Services:** Chief Bengtson said that while he understood the recommendation to eliminate the Fire Tower Observer's position in favor of another means of covering the Class 3 day, this position did give him 70± days of availability in the winter. He was opposed to even that cut due to loss of coverage. The chief added that he will definitely need the part-time clerical position to back him up and noted that the plan to cover the Fire Tower, while maintaining coverage in Town, will become dependent upon call in staff. This is not always available and assured. Joel asked how many area towns now have full-time staff and the Chief reviewed those he knew. Joel asked how many people can go to the Fire Tower and know what they are doing. The Chief responded that the full-timer can, but part-timers would need some training. There was a lengthy discussion of the loss of added coverage of those winter days that the Fire Tower Observer would not be available. It was noted the position did not require an EMT certification so we were paying a heavy price for each day of limited availability. There was discussion of the Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid formula (population + property assessment + fixed 20,000) and how we were paying almost as much as Laconia which had substantially more calls and the merits of belonging to this group. Chief Bengtson spoke to the merits of the thermal imager which he had requested (\$4,800) but was not recommended. There was lengthy discussion on the replacement of the Fire Boat which was not over 25 years old and had never been designed for actual fire use (\$163,000).

The group recessed for lunch at 12:35 p.m. and reconvened at 1:00 p.m.

4. **Police Department:** The Chief began with a review of his personnel request and note (1). With the recent promotions the personnel received raises of \$.49+ and were making less money than one of his master patrol officers. When the last corporal was promoted he received a \$2+ raise which did go beyond the 105% rule under the Thornton Study, but not by much. The Chief asked the Board to reconsider the Thornton Lite rule that was applied in determining how people got placed on a step when being promoted or reclassified.

Chief Dawson then discussed the Town Administrator's recommendations under which the Police Department loses an officer. He acknowledged that he too hears the same complaint the Board does; that there are too many officers. However, he felt this was a step back. Previously, staffing had been referred to in terms of an officer per thousand ratio and he thought it was important to bring the Board a better analysis. He had tasked Sergeant Fulton with carrying out a Bartell Study which is a zero based work force study related to coverage needed for actual incidents and patrolling desires. Sgt. Fulton went through the study which concluded that the correct staffing was about 20 officers. The Police Chief made clear he was not asking for this recommended number. Karel asked for a definition of Call for Services; the Sargent said it was any call into the Dispatch Center. He noted the study had been based upon figures which extracted administrative, the Good Morning program and similar types of calls.

If the Board decided it needed to eliminate an officer he would be forced to pull the School Resource Officer (SRO) out. Joel suggested that this would be a hard sell and the Chief would need to show better numbers. Joel also said there will be a bit of a contest going on if the Chief does that. The Townspeople voted they wanted an SRO. Alan Ballard asked if the SRO position fits in nicely with the Town’s lower volumes during the school year and is then available when volumes move up in the summer. The Chief agreed to some extent and reviewed what he saw as other staffing needs which could not be covered with one less officer. Karel asked if the part-timers help out. The Chief said the part-timer who left the department did do that. He said they have a maximum of 1,300 hours under statute and he was maxed out frequently. He pointed out the issues of getting reliable part-timers trained and then keeping them on the schedule.

Chief Dawson proceeded on to the issue of dispatch. The Town Administrator had proposed a cut to 56 hours (from 110) of in-house time or “lobby hours”. The Chief understood the concept of using County dispatch, but says they can’t handle us at present. The County initially had said yes, but have since backpedaled on that saying there are some things they need to get done first (a fourth consolle) before they can take on more than our 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. shift. Betsey said that given what the Town pays the county at \$180,000 currently for our portion of Dispatch, she would have something to say about this as part of the County Delegation. Sgt. Fulton said that right now we’d be “walking all over them” and we would not be able to hear each other and other departments would get crowded out as well. Sgt. Fulton noted that we hope to have the repeater up by January 1st and we are meeting again on November 15th to pursue the total transition. There was a lengthy discussion of current and various proposed staffing schedules.

Carter said he had included enough hours to get us to April 1st for the transition. He added that if we needed to go longer we would need to add hours. If the Board wanted more “lobby time” we would need to add those hours as well. He did say that whatever the Board chose to do there needed to be a consistency of the time. The Chief said that the State Police does do back-up dispatch for the Town already, and at times the 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. does not work out well so he was looking forward to that change. The Chief stated that the proposed budget eliminates one full time position and the benefits, which he said he could live with, but he did believe it was important to do in-house dispatch for about 80 hours a week. Karel said that uniform hours were important during business days while the weekends might not be as important. Joel agreed.

The chief was asked to submit the various proposals he had for Dispatch hours, at which point he left the meeting. The Board continued in discussion and the Town Administrator was asked to secure a schedule of patrol officers as well. There was discussion of the departments to be covered on November 19th with the Administrator hoping the Board would be prepared to address the Fire position and Dispatch hours at that time.

The Meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Approved

Date
Respectfully Submitted
Carter Terenzini