

**OFFICE OF SELECTMEN
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MOULTONBOROUGH, NH 03254**

Selectmen's Budget Meeting

December 9, 2011

MINUTES

Selectmen: Selectmen: Joel R. Mudgett, Chairman; Edward J. Charest; Betsey L. Patten; Russell C. Wakefield; Carter Terenzini, Town Administrator.

Absent: Jim Gray (with prior notification)

ABC: Jean Beadle, Ed Marudzinski, Barbara Sheppard, Russell C. Wakefield

Absent: Kathy Garry, Alan Ballard, Tom Randell (all with prior notification)

CALL TO ORDER: Joel called the meeting to order at 10:05 A.M.

Police Department: Sgt. Peter Beede (Acting Chief) was present to address any questions. Jean Beadle asked about the increases in the Overtime & Part-time increases. The answer was that (a) a variety of grants from the state have all been increased so the OT is increased correspondingly and (b) there has been a rebalancing of where certain full and part time positions (particularly Dispatchers) have been placed with end result being pretty level over last year. The Sgt. went on to explain that Court Overtime (Adult Court) has been way up due to many more folks challenging DUIs and other citations. There was a discussion of the changing grades as officers moved to MPO, they became Certified (vs. non-certified) and what step the new Chief might come in. The TA will re-run the detail sheet under a new scenario.

As to the requested polygraph that the TA had not recommended, Joel said he understood the nicety, but asked if we could live without it. Sgt. Beede said that there would be no cost savings to us. Belknap County, Tilton PD, Laconia PD have all volunteered to help us and the savings would flow to them. Russ asked if they charge us and learned that at this point they do not. The Sgt. said the ability to do the exams would be nice, but he can live without it. Jean Beadle asked how many exams we do per year and learned it was 10 – 20 although it would go up if we had the local capacity. Betsey asked if we would we really use it and learned it would be used for our criminal investigations and backgrounds. The TA suggested that even if we were being charged by others we need to weigh the cost of the machine and future upgrades and certifications, the initial 400 hour training, the loss of time on our schedule as these exams are being done and the like. It was his sense this simply would not offset a line item for buying the exams if need be. After a discussion the consensus was to support the Town Administrator's recommendation to not fund this request. In addition the consensus was to move the dollars specifically allotted for Detective training to overall department training.

Sgt. Beede continued that he had been approached by the Prosecutor to increase his weekly stipend from \$100 to \$200. The consensus was to not increase the recommended line item of \$100/week. Discussion then turned to the Canine who is now 8-9 years old with an expectation he will hit his life expectancy within 1 to 2 years. He explained the Gilford dog is experiencing several medical issues and it looks like that department will discontinue this program. Joel felt this (continue/discontinue) would need to go back to the Town and Betsey agreed, the Board needs to have an open and early discussion with the Town. Jean Beadle asked and learned there had been 13 requests for the use of the dog this year which

has been limited as he is assigned to the Detective and would get more use if he was assigned to a Road Officer. In a discussion of costs it was learned that the program costs roughly \$25,000/year and about 200+/- hours of training takes the officer "off the schedule".

Russ asked if we should be charging for fingerprints. After a brief discussion the Consensus was to do a survey of other towns' practices and come back with a staff report. We would not charge for volunteers or employee applicants with the Town or SAU and look at varying levels of income if we charge all or just non-residents. With that, attention was turned to the proposed rates for Off-Duty Details (Page 135). The Sgt. noted we now charge \$45/hour and we are actually losing money if a cruiser is involved. He proposed a new billing rate of \$50/hour for an officer. The Officer gets paid \$35/hour and the department would make \$7.50/hour. The Cruiser rate would be \$10/hour and we would profit by \$2.50/hour. These are still below averages and it gives the hiring entity an option of having only an officer or an officer and cruiser. Russ asked how an officer gets to the assignment without a cruiser and learned they use their personally owned vehicle. Sgt. Beede gave as an example of Camp Robindel which might need a stationary detail, whereas the NH Electric Co-op working on Route 25 would want a cruiser for visibility. There was discussion as to whether we should go to the higher average rates and the Sgt. said he didn't want to increase the billing rate all at once. Joel felt it was best to increase it a little bit at a time and wanted to make sure the Police Chief retains the right to dictate a cruiser if he believes it is needed. There was further discussion as to how to proceed as these fees are sometimes subject to a public hearing and sometimes not (with a suggestion being made to make this a part of the budget hearing process).

The TA turned the Board's attention to the issue of looking at a revolving fund to process off duty details, grant monies, and COBRA payments so they are not part of the budget where they can be expended whether or not the income is received. He also pointed out how a spike in COBRA payments can force us to curtail other projects mid-cycle to cover those expenses. The Consensus was to look at such a revolving fund over the coming year.

The TA pointed out we have had two part-time dispatchers resign. He will advertise after January 1 to supplement the two names remaining on the current hire list. The Sgt. spoke to the desire to add a "practical" to the initial testing. Joel asked if we would learn anything from an exit interview and learned that one of the resignations was for a part time person to take a full time job elsewhere. The Sgt. pointed out we didn't have dispatch until 2003 and the TA suggested we needed to go back to the basics of exactly how much local coverage we wanted. The reality might be that we can't do this with all part-time people. The session closed with the distribution and review of the current clothing inventory and allowance system.

Fire & Emergency Services Department: Chief Bengtson was present to review this budget. Jean Beadle asked when the 2nd Firefighter/EMT came on board and learned it was this August 1st. She also asked about the Fire Tower request (\$5,000) vs. recommended (\$0). The Chief explained that it was his recommendation that we discontinue our coverage noting that cell phones have put a means for almost anyone to report an emergency almost anywhere. When we met with our fire tower partners there had been a proposal for a Plan B to provide this coverage through a new non-profit under the auspices of the Lakes Region Conservation trust. We had indicated we would request up to \$5,000 for a true fire watch operation, but made it clear it was not our job to make this come together. The TA said the plan had not yet come together and he had moved the money to a special warrant article to buy time to see what developed. The Selectmen are holding a public hearing on this on 12/15.

Ed Marudzinski asked about the Hepatitis B vaccine in other employee benefits (\$11,000) and if that is a change. The Chief said it was something we should have been doing all along as our people report to medical calls. It is an initial series of 3 shots then a confirmation test. After this only new hires will need the vaccine. The TA said it was a budgetary change (add), but not a statutory or best management practice change. Ed Marudzinski asked if we have disposed of our old fire boat yet and learned that it will be placed in the next auction. The Chief touched upon the Capital requests he had made of \$50,000 for the fire truck repair and \$15,000 to refit a DPW pick-up for a utility vehicle. Russ asked about a more equitable fire dispatch formula with Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid. The Chief replied that the board of directors is looking at a more user based formula noting our high property values drive a portion of our fee. He added that the LRMFA is conscious of our position. Russ asked how conscious they might be if we pulled out. Joel said that Belknap County pays it for their member towns so those folks are not as conscious of the dues as they just don't see it. He continued that it (the Town's not seeing the real impact) is unfortunate but it's been the problem. Chief Bengtson said that changes are going on and this year's budget was driven lower (3.6%) by a significant effort. He noted that Belknap does pay half, but there are member towns that are not in that County. The TA said that one fear in leaving them has been the loss of mutual aid and he did note that we do get value added services. The Chief spoke to those values (such as hazmat teams). Joel acknowledged it was good service, but did feel this was something we needed to look at every year. The Chief said that we are not alone in our position (call basis) as Sandwich is in same boat. Betsey noted this has been looked at, she understands the basic unfairness, but that's the system and the Town Meeting has supported our membership. The TA suggested that we need to look at what we pay for all of our dispatch services (county, police and fire) more holistically with the Chief stating he would need to be assured the level of services the MFR would get would be on par with that now being received.

Discussion turned to Emergency Management where the Chief addressed the effort to move from a table top exercise to a field exercise (\$10,000+/- not yet budgeted). It would push us on our weaknesses to see how we have improved upon those. We're looking to do it all out of pocket fearing that the requirements for a grant may actually cost more money in the end and can have a long lead time to obtain the money. Betsey asked if the rules are the same and learned the process was, but there was a series of reports we do not have to file under a self-funded approach.

The Chair recessed for lunch at 12:25 P.M. and reconvened the meeting at 1:05 P.M.

Public Works: Scott Kinmond was present and gave an overview of his budget request (essentially flat overall). He also gave an overview on the reductions in the use of sand and salt to date (down by about 1/3) the latest proposals which he hopes will further reduce that usage (to 50%) and the offsetting costs and environmental benefits. When reviewing the costs to repair two steel dump body's, the TA noted that while some question the new practice of buying stainless steel dump bodies, this was an example of how higher capital costs can actually produce lower life cycle costs.

Scott continued that the Transfer Station budget was actually lower than 2011's (reduction of one full time benefit package) with he and the TA noting the only way left to further reduce costs would be to explore a private contract for operations. The TA said that we have probably wrung out the last of what we can and are probably at the right mix of full and part time positions. He estimated \$150,000 of savings from a private bidder which could then be applied to other needs while still realizing an overall \$50,000+/- of savings. Ed felt there would be a loss of customer service with the TA stating that there is nothing that says you can't still get good service with a private vendor.

Joel asked the Highway Agent how he thought we did overall on some of the Town's "work force" projects. Scott said that overall he thought it went well though some thought it took too long. He acknowledged he was lucky to have a guy who would come and go in keeping with his needs. The TA pointed out that some had complained they did not get a chance to "bid" on the project, but had failed to sign up in the spring for the standing list of contractors. He encouraged the Selectmen when hearing from disgruntled contractors to remind them of this opportunity and the Town's procedure.

Ed Charest asked what our annual profit/loss was at the Transfer Station and learned it was \$350,000±. Jean Beadle asked if we have talked to the school about cycling our trucks through them when they need a new one. Scott felt that one of the issues might be that their truck may run afoul of the pattern that lower use can sometimes actually yield higher maintenance (citing the former Transfer Station truck example). The TA said that if we can get them into the fleet cycle it would be more efficient citing an example of where one truck might go through Highway for its first five years of high use, another division for the next five for lower use, and then finally the last five in a low demand summer/seasonal use.

The Context Sensitive Solution road policy was reviewed with Scott giving kudos to the Town Planner for a great job. He appreciated having someone with a transportation background to work with. He noted that this builds on our input process and gets the neighborhoods involved in the early, early stages. The consensus was to move to formalize the policy as presented.

The Public Works Manual was reviewed with Betsey commenting that it seems to have a town manager flavor. The TA said he had not even read the Highway Agent's draft so that was not his direction. The Highway Agent responded that the TA is his liaison with the Board and while sometimes with previous TA's he was not sure all of his items got through to the Board, but this was not the case now. The TA asked for final comments from the Selectmen by 12/16 so it could be set for a hearing on the agenda of the 2nd meeting in January.

With the budget presentation now done the Selectmen agreed it did not need a full workshop on 12/16 and would reschedule it to 4 p.m. on 12/15.

ADJOURNMENT: With there being no further business the Chair adjourned the meeting at 2:40 p.m.

Approved

Date
Respectfully Submitted
Carter Terenzini, Town Administrator