

Minutes
Nottingham Budget Committee Meeting
November 20, 2014

Members Present: Chet Batchelder, Korey Ferland, Michael Koester, Doug Poulin, Gene Reed, Jackie Snow, Jeff Wheeler, Donna Danis – BOS Representative,

Excused Absences: Anthony Dumas, Miska Hadik, Peter Perron – School Board Representative

Other in Attendance: Secretary Dawn Wirkkala, Chris Sterndale, Mary Bonser, Gunnar Foss, Jaye Vilchuck, John Fernald

Chair Batchelder called the meeting to order and introductions were completed.

TOWN DEPARTMENT HEADS 2015 BUDGET:

Police Department: Chief Foss stated Mr. Sterndale would review the proposed salary changes. He is requesting more hours for the additional part time officer in order to cover those officers who are out on leave in an effort to reduce the number of over time hours currently being used.

New PC's and a department server are needed; existing machines are older, using the no longer supported Windows XP and need replacement. There is an increase in the (vehicle) Equipment Procurement/Maintenance; the previously used vendor who installed vehicle equipment retired and the new company does charge more for the service.

Chair Batchelder asked about the salary increase for the Administrative Assistant and if it will continue coverage for two people. Mr. Foss stated the Administrative Assistant salary is for two people, the regular full time employee and the part time employee that provides front desk coverage when the full time person is out on leave. The part time position provides much needed assistance to the officers and does not leave the front desk vacant.

Mr. Sterndale reviewed the Town plan for salary and benefit changes for employees. Chief Foss stated Mr. Sterndale has done significant research on police officer salary rates and benefits in comparison to Nottingham pay rates. The department experienced a loss of an employee this year to another town for an additional \$1.00 per hour. The current changes should help encourage employee retention. Hired employees sign a three year contract to stay with the department.

Mr. Reed asked if the listed salary amounts also include the cost for benefits. Mr. Sterndale stated they don't, benefit expenses are listed separately within the Personal Administration section of the budget.

Chair Batchelder asked if recruitment is for academy trained personnel, or does the department paying for Police Academy or community college training. Chief Foss reviewed characteristic and training methods between the state police academy and community college and offered his support of the training received at the academy.

General discussion took place about the number of officers that might be best for the department. Chief Foss stated eight officers would be ideal and hopes that the additional hours provided by the part time officer will help provide relief to the number of hours being provided by the current full time officers. However, he can eventually see the part time officer moving to a full time position. Chief Foss stated it is his goal to have coverage 24 hour a day for 7 days a week, but there may be times when there is only one officer on duty.

Chief Foss stated he works with a wonderful group of officers, who all go above and beyond the call of duty to complete their job duties and keep Nottingham citizens safe.

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Chief Foss reviewed the Emergency Management budget, stating he is including an additional \$4750.00 for the program that will provide the school faster and direct contact from the teacher to the police officers during an emergency. Mr. Poulin stated the program may help provide some additional security for the school, as hiring a resource officer is very expensive. Mr. Sterndale stated these funds do have off setting revenue with a grant. Chief Foss stated this is a one time expense. Mr. Sterndale stated this will provide the Town with a current emergency plan, which could be needed when federal reimbursement might be requested.

Fire Department: Chief Vilchok reviewed the department currently has two full time fire fighters, there was a recent loss to the Town of Merrimack because of the additional salary amount and over-time hours larger departments are able to provide.

There is a shift in amounts between the full time and part time salary accounts, for both the 2014 expenses and proposed 2015 budget, which will cover the additional part time hours expected with fewer full time employee. These amounts will shift if additional full time staff is hired. The department needs coverage Monday through Friday from 6 am to 8 pm and Saturday and Sunday coverage 8 am to 6 pm.

Mr. Sterndale reviewed how Nottingham salaries compare with other municipalities salary amount for all Town positions; Nottingham has overall lower salaries, although it provides greater benefits. The salary changes being proposed will adjust how employees are compensated. There will be an initial salary increase, an additional recommended 1% COLA and an increase to the employee costs for benefits.

Breathing Apparatus has been reduced because of the additional testing and repairs that were needed in 2014 for the equipment.

Vaccination/Testing has been reduced for 2015, with the current effort to vaccinate all department employees. Approximately 50% of staff has taken advantage of updating their vaccines at this time.

Equipment/Office has increased with the replacement of three department computers, which were purchased several years ago and the amount also include additional updates to software. Mr. Sterndale reported the Town is requesting to purchase a higher number of computers than considered before, but these are units that should be replaced. He will seek options for bulk computer purchase if all units are approved, as well as bulk software licenses for Microsoft products.

Chief Vilchok reported the department made their last payment in 2014 for the 2009 fire truck, providing additional savings in 2015. Discussion took place about the life cycle of vehicles used by the department. There is the expectation that the 2009 Fire Truck will be used by the department until 2029, providing 20 years of use.

Two portable radios will be purchased and maintenance is being planned for the radio repeater equipment.

Hydrant maintenance was not completed as planned in 2014, as original installation paperwork was missing at a state office, and the expense has been moved to 2015. There is the hope to encumber some of the 2014 funds for replacement. Mr. Sterndale stated he is trying to continue moving the plan ahead, but getting an after the fact permit is proving to be more difficult than expected, as well

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as the inability to complete the work during winter months. Mr. Sterndale stated the work can be completed next summer and the permit should be in place by that time.

Ambulance: Chief Vilchok stated he is expecting a \$2000.00 reduction in the Advanced Life Support (ALS) services; the first two years were an estimate for the payment program and it has been fine tuned. There is also a reduction for Medical Supplies, as fewer are needed.

Expenses for operating the ambulance are completely covered by offsetting revenue with the ambulance billing reimbursement.

Chief Vilchok reviewed his warrant articles, which included a new Utility Truck and the annual request of \$50,000.00 into the fire apparatus capital reserve fund. The Utility Truck will allow the department the ability to tow both pieces of supplemental fire equipment when it is needed, eliminating the reliance on a personal staff vehicle. Purchasing the Utility Truck is an increase of approximately \$9000.00 more than the annual fire truck payment, creating an overall minimum increase in the 2015 budget. Chief Vilchok explained he this would be the only vehicle purchase in 2015, and he hoped it could be a one-time cash payment.

Chief Vilchok reviewed the boat was purchased in 2014 and it has been used for a few occasions in 2014.

Mr. Reed asked if a truck bid has been received. Chief Vilchok would provide copies of the currently available estimated dealer cost information and includes the needed paint, lighting and equipment. Chief Vilchok stated he believes the diesel vehicles hold up better than gasoline vehicles; they provide a better vehicle option. Mr. Reed asked if used vehicles are an option. Chief Vilchok stated only new has been considered, and the amount listed includes all the necessary vehicle equipment.

Highway: Mr. Fernald reviewed the department typically has three full time employees, including himself, but he has worked most of the year with only two. The number of part time employees can vary between the summer and winter seasons, but more employees are typically used in the winter months for plowing. Part time employees are occasionally used during the summer, but the amount is paid from the Shim and Seal coat salary account. Mr. Fernald stated he makes an effort to try and save the part time salary for winter plowing, but both part time and over time expenses are where they should be.

Mowing was completed at the Marston Property during 2014, but there was less mowing than anticipated because of the overage in Hired Equipment Plowing from early 2014. Some tree clearing also took place.

Hired Equipment Plowing pays to hire plowing services for municipal building parking lots, school areas and they provide additional assistance for some for some of the smaller pond and back roads. The original plan was to utilize the loader to plow municipal spaces, but it is used more at the sand/gravel pit.

Hired Equipment typically includes rental of any needed road repair equipment, such as a sweeper. However, little was done for 2014 because of the overage in hired plowing.

Equipment Parts was over spent in 2014 and increased for 2015. After a discussion with the Selectmen it was determined that keeping equipment longer could cause higher than normal repair

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expenses and a review of how long vehicles were kept compared with their repair expenses will be taking place. Vehicle equipment, parts and maintenance have typically been overspent in order to keep the vehicle in running condition, which is very expensive for these types of vehicles. Actual estimates for the repair amounts have not been budgeted for in the past, funds were shifted from other highway accounts to account for the difference.

Mr. Fernald explained the increases seen for the 2015 budget will bring the budgeted amounts closer to actual expenditures.

Mr. Reed asked if the Highway Department, as well as Police Department, have charts identifying vehicle life, similar to what the Fire Department provided; it could help provide for easier identification of highway vehicle history. Mr. Sterndale stated a lot of work is taking place to review vehicles and their maintenance costs and something will be put together for review.

The Culvert account is being reduced. The Signs account remains the same and will replace some signs that have been stolen. Salt increased an approximate 9% because of the supply cost; the amount being purchased remains the same.

Chair Batchelder asked if there is the ability to better estimate the amount of fuel being used, as \$75,000.00 is budgeted but approximately \$65,000.00 was used in 2013 and 2014. Mr. Sterndale stated fuel, both diesel and gasoline are used by the Highway, Police and Fire Departments and finding a method to identify more accurate department fuel expenses is taking place; separation of the fuel expenses is currently taking place only a couple of times a year. Mr. Fernald stated he believes the Highway Department uses an approximate 20,000 gallons per year, depending on the weather and number of road projects.

Mr. Fernald stated while there were no expenses for Engineering/Consulting, the department can make no guarantee that they won't be needed. The Shim and Sealcoat budget has increased to address the increase in material costs.

Mr. Fernald stated he has rounded up the expenses for Highway Construction/Reconstruction and reviewed the 2015 road work plan, which includes proposed work on Lavoie Drive and Freeman Hall Road.

Mr. Fernald reviewed the Highway warrant articles with the purchase of a new dump truck/sander to replace the 1995 truck currently being used. He is currently inspecting new vehicles to determine how they can be used to spread a mixture of sand and salt as well as be used to haul gravel. The capital reserve fund will cover the cost of this vehicle and the old truck will be scrapped and any available parts will be sold for additional offsetting revenue.

Chair Batchelder asked that the balance of the capital reserve funds be presented to the committee.

Approval of Minutes

Motion: by Mr. Wheeler, second by Ms. Snow to approve the November 13, 2014 minutes as amended.

Vote: 6 in favor and 2 abstained

Default School Budget Review

Motion: by Ms. Danis, second by Mr. Wheeler to defer discussion on the default budget.

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Vote: 8 – 0 in favor.

Mr. Koester requested committee members to bring their school budget binders with them to the next meeting and distributed his previous article regarding the default budget.

SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATES:

CIP: Mr. Reed stated a work session has been scheduled.

MPEC: A short summary was provided by NH Listens from the community conversation meeting, which will also be posted on the Town website. The next meeting is December 2nd.

Transportation: Ms. Snow stated a preliminary review of the one submitted bid was completed, questions submitted back to the SAU to clarify the information in the request for proposal.

The committee is still seeking a list of their specific tasks; one was located, reviewed and updated for final review by the School Board. The hope is to clarify who is responsible for specific transportation duties between the SAU and Transportation Committee.

Ms. Danis stated it appears to be a move from a temporary committee to an active ongoing committee. Ms. Snow stated initial concerns were identified to create the committee but additional review indicates there is enough work to continue meeting addressing all the concerns about transportation.

Chair Batchelder stated his goal is to eventually have only one Budget Committee member on the Transportation Committee and other participating members come from the general public.

Mr. Ferland asked if the committee is limited in negotiations by only receiving one bid. Ms. Snow stated she doesn't believe so as they are seeking additional alternative options.

OTHER BUSINESS: None

ROUNDTABLE: None

ACTION ITEMS:

- Town:** 1. Provide balance of capital reserve funds.
2. Email Fire Department Truck estimate.

ADJOURNMENT: Having no further business,

9:12 PM **Motion:** by Mr. Poulin, second by Ms. Danis.

Vote: 8 – 0 in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Wirkkala