

Minutes
Nottingham Selectmen's Workshop
October 24, 2012

6:05 PM Chair Bonser opened the workshop.

Members Present: Mary Bonser, Hal Rafter and Mark Carpenter.

Others: Charles A. Brown, Town Administrator, Dawn Wirkkala, Secretary, Maureen Mann, Chief Gunnar Foss, Don Cinfo

General Business and Department Reports:

Chief Foss answered Mr. Carpenter's questions about how many citations the department has issued reviewing from 1/1/2011 to 10/18/2011 there were 96 citations and 1300 warnings, and 1/1/2012 to 10/18/2012 were 220 citations and 1700 warnings, a significant increase. Chair Bonser asked about the severity of the citations and Chief Foss reported there are going to be more accidents this year, and possibly even more severe because of the number of walkers, horse riders, and it is just a matter of time before a tragedy happens; people should be aware and drive more carefully.

Mr. Carpenter asked if the Master Plan Committee was correct about submitting a request for slower speed limits on Routes 152, 156, and 4. Chief Foss stated he feels the speed limits are appropriate in most areas on the State Routes, but people aren't necessarily going to be aware of any change of limit and it might not make a difference. A previous decision by the Selectmen set town speed limits at 25 miles per hour. Chief Foss stated there is a safety concern with having an officer on Route 4 after dark, as it is dangerous for the officer because of the road, traffic and driving conditions.

Chief Foss stated he reviewed with his officers any acceptable overage for driving speeds to come to a common consensus for the department.

Chief Foss stated his budget amounts may need to be adjusted to reflect actual amounts closer to the end of the year, which gives a more accurate picture for estimates for the next year. The salary increase is 2% for higher paid officers up to a 4% for lower paid officers, in effort to reflect the exemplary work they have completed during the year. Nottingham is within the low to middle pay ranges in comparison to surrounding towns with salary rates, and is unwilling to state that Nottingham officers are underpaid, but is lower than other surrounding towns. None of the officers have verbally expressed discontent with the salary, but are conscious about how much they work and they are able to work details to help increase their annual salary amounts.

Chief Foss stated he would like to sit down with the Board at a later date to determine appropriate pay scale amounts for the officers, to remain competitive and give them an applicable living wage for the type of work they do. The officers are also aware of the value of the benefit package they are receiving. Chief Foss stated he was refusing any COLA in order for his staff to possibly receive one.

Chair Bonser stated the health insurance benefits have gone up approximately 19.1% and any COLA may need to be adjusted.

Chief Foss reviewed the overtime line is being reduced by \$3000.00 as less court time has or will be needed. The 2012 Overtime line is still questionable now because of the time of the year; holidays and seasonal situations.

Chief Foss reported any increase or decrease isn't known yet for the County Attorney. Dues and Conferences allow access to specific legal area research for issues that may not be considered common and does not anticipate any increase or decreases. There is a small decrease in the publication costs due to fewer publications purchased, this follows decreases in the last couple of

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years, and provides law books to all officers, except the Chief who uses one set that is left in the office.

There is no increase to the training line. Most training requested for officers will utilize non-State of NH methods for different training options. Fire arms training continues, and while ammunition prices have gone up, the amount needed is being purchased, and training has also shifted from real ammunition to paint balls for an economical option.

The testing line is necessary and remains the same, but is only used when a new officer is hired; if there are no new hires the money isn't used.

Uniforms and Uniform Cleaning has been reduced, but again if a new employee is hired they will need to be outfitted.

Chief Foss stated he would like to hire another part-time officer as one would be greatly utilized to fill in the empty slots, but in order to maintain a responsible budget, other areas are more important.

There is an increase in the service contract for the computer maintenance fee. Chief Foss stated unfortunately there isn't any room for negotiation. A plan has been put into place to maintain the existing office PC's, hardware and software, to extend computer life with the expectation for replacing only one PC later in the year.

Chief Foss reported the estimate for the new cruiser has come in better than expected, possibly reducing the cruiser line by approximately \$2300.00.

Chief Foss reported there is an increase for the Highway Safety Grant putting remote access equipment into two or three of the vehicles. The total price will be offset by a planned fifty percent amount from a grant, but the actual amount will be determined more toward the end of the year.

Chief Foss stated he will be over the 2012 budgeted gas amount of \$20,000.00 actually spending closer to \$24,000.00 and agreed with Mr. Brown about what will happen for 2013 and planning increases because of the unexpected.

Mr. Carpenter asked about saving for the future of a town alliance for heating oil. Mr. Brown stated the Town is locked in for 2013; Mr. Carpenter stated it should be reviewed for next year.

Mr. Carpenter asked about earning capabilities of the department by offering gun training. Chief Foss stated the training has been offered before but there was little interest and participation.

Mr. Carpenter asked for consideration of possible ways and alternatives for a use fee or use tax to help offset some of the increase in costs that are not controllable, such as gasoline; to try and utilize the skills of the officers to possibly earn additional funds.

Chief Foss reviewed that there were no changes to the Emergency Management budget; some supplies were ordered to reduce the highway emergency road supplies expenses, as those items, cones and signs, aren't only used by the Highway Department.

Representative Candidate Introduction: Maureen Mann introduced herself as a candidate for State Representative.

Mr. Brown stated a major issue in town is the Pawtuckaway and Lamprey River and potential change of draw down. Chair Bonser reviewed some information from a resent presentation by Mr. Cedarholm, a Durham engineer. Mr. Carpenter asked Ms. Mann to review 2008 HB1353.

Chair Bonser reviewed the suggested change to statute, stating Nottingham understands the difference for sharing water between communities versus allowing more control over a private corporate withdrawal. Ms. Mann was told of the October 30 NH DES meeting in Nottingham.

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Mr. Carpenter asked Ms. Mann what she felt her duties were as a State Representative. Ms. Mann stated her first goal is to represent the citizens of the communities who elected her, and then to help with state oversight in the areas that are shared and dealt with as a large state group,

Mr. Rafter stated the reduction in state aid and downshifting of costs on education and retirement is a major concern. Ms. Mann stated downshifting shouldn't happen. Mr. Carpenter stated there should be cuts, but without maintaining the mandate. Ms. Mann suggested towns should consider the possibility of combining local services between communities to try and reduce overall costs for areas such as libraries, police, and schools.

Chair Bonser thanked Ms. Mann for coming.

Solid Waste/Recycle Budget. Mr. Brown stated he adjusted salary lines with a 1.5% COLA.

Mr. Brown stated there is a slight decrease in the mowing costs. There would also be another slight decrease in the landfill testing, which will continue for another 22 years. Mr. Brown stated there is one more test this year but would contact the tester to see about a better estimate or a lower cost and fewer tests for future years.

Mr. Rafter asked about reducing the solid waste fees. Mr. Brown reported the amount has been reduced slightly in the last few years, but it is a changing amount. Mr. Cinfo stated he is trying to eliminate as much of the recyclables from the solid waste to reduce the overall costs.

Chair Bonser asked about the pay as you throw program. Mr. Cinfo stated he is supportive of the idea as it will make people think more about what they are throwing away, therefore reducing solid waste expenses. Mr. Carpenter stated the Board should look at all methods of saving and annual stickers for the vehicles could be considered as a method of minor income. Mr. Brown stated he has heard from communities that have shifted to the program have saved significant money in their budgets. It was stated the Selectmen can vote to make a decision about the program and it was undecided whether the Selectmen would make the decision or give the citizens the options. The issue would be further discussed at a later date.

Mr. Brown reported the Household Hazardous Waste was paid by grant funds this year, but it is unknown if the grant will cover this in 2013.

There is an increase in equipment maintenance to match what was spent for 2012.

More dues and conferences will be required for 2013 for required retraining and recertification. Mr. Cinfo stated the NRRRA training is very helpful and provides new ideas that can be and are used.

Mr. Brown reported the slight increase in the construction fees.

Mr. Cinfo stated next year a yard trimmer will be needed which causes an increase in the equipment line. Mr. Carpenter stated if money was available now, the trimmer should be purchased this year. Mr. Brown will research which trimmer would be best and Mr. Carpenter had a contact with experience.

Mr. Brown stated the decrease on the fuel line is a split of heating and equipment fuel; heating fuel has been moved to the General Government Building line and the remaining line is for equipment fuel only.

Mr. Carpenter distributed information about a proposal to change the Recycle Center hours from 5 days to 3 days, indicating there is an approximate \$50,000.00 savings by removing two of the days and reduction of the number of full time employees; this would put Nottingham more in line to other local communities with days of operation. Mr. Cinfo stated he agrees with the proposal, but

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after additional consideration feels all the employees should remain at current levels to continue helping with the outside oversight of what is actually thrown away.

Chair Bonser stated she had concern about utilizing both changes at the same time. Mr. Carpenter stated he doesn't agree; given all the increases and other areas needing additional funds, can the Selectmen honestly not consider methods of saving property tax dollars.

Chair Bonser stated if there is truly the thought about making these drastic changes notice to the general public should be completed as soon as possible. Further review of the change with the Budget Committee will give a better understanding of how the suggestions will be received.

Mr. Cinfo stated he does not have a problem making a shift to a part time employee.

Mr. Carpenter stated Mr. Cinfo has always been honest and objective regarding the change in hours and in general, and has never heard him act in a way that is selfish. Mr. Cinfo has stated the right thing for the town would be to switch to 3 days a week.

Mr. Rafter stated he isn't concerned with Mr. Cinfo, but finding an eventual replacement.

Chair Bonser stated she agrees with Mr. Carpenter about Mr. Cinfo. However, she is concerned about the recent hiring of a new full time employee and the change so quickly to his position. Mr. Carpenter stated the two decisions don't have anything to do with each other; this is a cost saving measure the Town should consider.

It was stated part-time workers cannot remain covered by the Town health insurance, unless the Selectmen change the full-time number of hours but that could have larger across the board cost impact as other part-time employees may be eligible for insurance.

The Selectmen would review possible cost cutting measures at the Recycle Center at a later meeting.

Mr. Rafter suggested if this is really considered, it should be a Thursday through Saturday type of schedule as a better option.

General Business: Mr. Brown reviewed the performance evaluation of Ms. Wirkkala and recommended a \$0.50 raise.

Motion: by Chair Bonser, Mr. Carpenter seconded, to approve the wage increase for Ms. Wirkkala.

Vote: 3 – 0 in favor.

Mr. Brown reported Jo-Ann McInnis in the Planning and Zoning Secretary position is doing very well and training is planned through the available resources.

OUTSTANDING MINUTES:

Motion: by Chair Bonser, second by Mr. Rafter to approve the minutes of the October 9, 2012 meeting as amended.

Vote: 2 – 0 in favor. Carpenter abstained.

ADJOURNMENT: Having no further business,

8:45 PM **Motion:** by Rafter, Carpenter second to adjourn.

Vote: 3 - 0 in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Wirkkala