

Minutes
Nottingham Selectmen's Workshop
October 29, 2013

8:07 AM Chair Rafter opened the budget workshop.

Members Present: Hal Rafter, Mark Carpenter and Mary Bonser

Others: Charles A. Brown – Town Administrator, Dawn Wirkkala – Secretary, Janet Horvath Recreation Director, Paul Colby Building Inspector, John Fernald Road Agent

Department Budget Review:

Recreation Department: Mr. Brown stated the budget appears to be fine and Ms. Horvath presented additional supporting information regarding salaries.

Ms. Horvath stated much of the budget remained the same as the prior year. Her one major request is some type of additional security for the Town Beach to help address an increase use of the beach by non-Nottingham residents and vandalism; the port-a-potty was flipped for the first time in 14 years. The damage appears to be taking place after hours in the dark and it is making the duties of the morning staff more difficult as they try to correct or repair any damage done. Information has been received about implementation of a combined annual Recycle Center and Town Beach sticker which may help the use situation, but vandalism still needs to be addressed.

General discussion took place about how damage might be taking place, by walking around the gate or driving a boat across the lake and including preventative security methods. Ms. Horvath stated she discussed the option of a private security officer with the Police Chief; one can be hired during the day, police patrol can be increased, and other security measures to prevent vandalism were suggested.

Ms. Horvath stated she would also like to consider adding a land line phone and/or electricity to the Town Beach for further safety and consistent communication with the beach staff. They are currently using hand held radios and personal cell phones, but they are not always reliable and have inconsistent service. Mr. Carpenter asked about the private land line and cell phone company providers, and suggested installing a localized micro-cell/booster option to increase cell phone coverage at the beach. It was stated Verizon Wireless cell service appears to work best, but it can also be inconsistent. Mr. Carpenter stated Comcast may be able to provide the booster, but they are also providing security options as well, which might become or be considered part of the franchise agreement.

Ms. Horvath asked to include a \$729.00 AED defibrillator unit at the Town Beach per the safety recommendations. The unit would be at the Town Beach during the open season and at the Old Town Hall during the closed season.

The Salary line was increased at 3% as recommended and it also includes an hourly rate of \$14.00 for the Assistant Director position. The increase in salary for the Assistant position is based on feedback collected during the prior interview process and other recreation departments, which will help with the effort to try and retain someone for a longer period of time.

Ms. Horvath stated the Office Supplies budget was reduced as both Recreation positions had the computers replaced in 2012.

Mr. Carpenter asked about advertising. Ms. Horvath stated she has advertised for hiring purposes in multiple newspapers, but she also uses free options such as websites and NH Craigslist. Mr. Carpenter asked about and suggested using the privately created Town of Nottingham Facebook pages as an additional method of providing or requesting information; there has also been a request to provide a ListServe for email communication. Ms. Horvath stated Recreation does have an email

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newsletter with approximately 150 members and does not want to create a Nottingham Recreation Facebook page. There has been a lot of discussion between Recreation Departments about Facebook, with mixed reviews, with some Recreation Departments deleting their accounts because of excessive negativity. Mr. Carpenter suggested having a Town account which is a member of the private Town of Nottingham page, as a method of communicating information.

Mr. Brown stated the Recreation budget is straight forward and he doesn't have any concerns. Chair Rafter stated it appears communication is the largest problem for Recreation which can be addressed. The Selectmen requested that Mr. Brown review options for improving communication at the beach.

Mr. Carpenter asked about Ready Rides. Ms. Horvath stated the request for 2013 funds letter will be sent to the Town soon. Nottingham is the largest user of the service so far, have fewer registered drivers in Nottingham but more are being sought. The Selectmen agreed the funds are paying for the number of services provided, which is nice to see. Mr. Carpenter stated he would be following through on his private donation and encouraged others to do so as well.

Building Inspector Budget: Mr. Colby stated his overall budget has a small increase. Salary was increased by the 3% but the overall operating budget reduced. The part-time salary has been reduced to match what has been spent in the prior few years and the filing cabinets were purchased. Mr. Colby stated he has received requests for alternative methods of communication, he is officially requesting to upgrade his cell phone service to include text and email. He would like to purchase a phone at this time, as the company is providing a .99¢ sale and start the services now; there are enough 2013 funds available to pay for the request.

Motion: by Ms. Bonser, second by Mr. Carpenter to upgrade the Building Inspector's cell phone and plan during the 2013 budget cycle.

Vote: 3 – 0 in favor.

Mr. Colby stated training and mileage has been slightly increased. The State offices will not offer as much free training in 2014 as in prior years. Mileage will increase because of the significant number of new building and housing permits expected with the new sub-divisions; adding approximately 80 new lots.

Mr. Carpenter asked about the part-time salary line and vacation use. Mr. Colby stated he is using his vacation time, but the part-time help during his vacation hasn't been using the amount budgeted; the number of hours are specifically proposed to cover a reduced number of necessary coverage hours needed during the Building Inspector's time off.

Highway Department Budget: The Selectmen were impressed with the overall \$26,000.00 budget reduction. Mr. Brown stated the budget remains similar to the prior year and includes the 3% salary increase.

Mr. Fernald stated the cost of salt has gone down and there is no loader expense, Equipment Parts was slightly increased to help with vehicle repairs, both full-time and part-time salaries were increased at 3%, and most other account lines were level funded.

Mr. Brown stated there could be some concerns with the 2013 budget if bad weather comes early. Mr. Fernald stated the weather is something that can't be planned but he will do the best he can with the resources available.

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Discussion took place about highway vehicle replacement and Mr. Fernald stated vehicles should last approximately 10 to 12 years, and the 5 year warranties pay for themselves with needed repairs. Newer equipment and vehicles are more electronically complex and must go to the dealer for repairs. In prior year vehicles and equipment has been kept too long, causing higher maintenance expenses, and he will start to stick to a more frequent replacement plan. Mr. Fernald stated he would be meeting with the CIP Committee to review the replacement plan and will discuss seeking replacement of equipment during the 2015 budget cycle.

Mr. Fernald discussed a possible plan for using more hired equipment for snow plowing and purchasing smaller vehicles and more equipment. The next truck that would be considered for purchase would be a smaller 4-wheel drive truck to work on some of the smaller roads around the lake. The Selectmen may need to consider an alternate vehicle and equipment plan after he retires.

Ms. Bonser stated Mr. Fernald has maintained the roads really well; there is a pride in workmanship. Mr. Fernald stated the Town's people have been very supportive in budgeting for road maintenance.

Mr. Carpenter asked if there should be a plan to consider paving more of the dirt roads. Mr. Fernald stated he would not consider more paving because of the increased cost of asphalt; the state of NH is having a difficult time maintaining asphalt roads because of the higher costs. The ratio between dirt and paved should remain the same for a while; the dirt roads are easy to maintain as maintenance and improvement work continues putting them in better condition; he might consider paving steeper hills, but not much else. Mr. Carpenter stated expenses are expected to continue to rise and there won't be a return on investment if more paving takes place; dirt roads are cheaper to maintain. The Selectmen agreed paving more roads will become more expensive to maintain, in addition to adding to the speeding and traffic problems that have already been noted.

Chair Rafter asked about the prior discussion of using less salt. Mr. Fernald stated he will try but it is hard to balance salt use with the high level of traffic and having people on the roads at all times of the day – morning, noon and night. Calls have been placed into the PD at 11 pm about a road being icy and a significant reduction of salt causes more of the icing problem.

Mr. Carpenter stated he is impressed that Nottingham uses much less salt in comparison to surrounding communities and there were no other feasible alternatives provided to currently keep the roads safe. Chair Rafter stated salt use will depend on the weather. Ms. Bonser agreed.

Mr. Fernald stated the State of NH is reviewing salt levels, from a contamination stand point, and limits may be set about how much can be used and alternative products suggested; however no one knows what kind of contamination will come from those newer alternatives.

Mr. Fernald stated shim and overlay amount was increased 5% to address the road length of Lincoln Drive and Berry Road, an approximate road length of 6400 feet. The budgeted 2013 per foot cost were also used for the 2014 budget.

Land Classification Maps: The Selectmen met with Kyle Pimental from Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC) and Mr. Colby to review the possibility and expected cost to upgrade the land maps located on the wall in the Town Office hall way. Discussion took place about the availability of current data, being able to update the maps on an ongoing basis, paying to be an annual member of SRPC in comparison to the services provided and/or used, and possible savings

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by continuing payment on an hourly basis and paying for the maps separately instead of being a annual due paying member.

Discussion also took place about the types of land classification overlays that could be included and the multiple options SRPC has to "customize" the maps in comparison to using the UNH GRANIT system. SRPC can assist with printing specifics and help maintain boundaries and identifiers with new sub-divisions and any new parcels going into conservation. Ms. Bonser asked about SRPC staffing and if enough is available to complete the requested tasks. Mr. Pimental stated this is currently the strongest group he has seen since he has been employed; the past few years has seen some turn over but staffing is currently steady.

After discussion the Selectmen requested the SRPC to submit a quote to update the maps with the updated elevation overlay before they made a decision to be a paying dues member or to remain on a per hour payment agreement.

Warrant Articles: Mr. Brown provided the Selectmen with a copy of the draft warrant articles.

ADJOURNMENT: Having no further business,

9:46 AM **Motion:** by Ms. Bonser, second by Mr. Carpenter.

Vote: 3 – 0 in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Wirkkala