

Town of Plaistow ♦ Budget Committee

145 Main Street ♦ Plaistow ♦ NH ♦ 03865



BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

November 13, 2018

Call to Order: 6:31 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Bob Hamilton, *Chair Elect*
Lisa Lambert, *Vice Chair Elect*
Katie Ingalls, *Budget Committee*
Laurie Milette, *Budget Committee*
Sam Cafiso, *Budget Committee*
Dennis Heffernan, *Budget Committee*
Jay DeRoche, *Budget Committee*
Greg Taillon, *Budget Committee*
Dean Nifakos, *Budget Committee, excused*
Francine Hart, *Selectman Ex-Officio*

Also in attendance:

Kathleen Jones, Chief of Police, Mark Pearson, Town Manager, and Greg Colby, Finance Director

Agenda Item 3: Pledge of Allegiance

B. Hamilton led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. Hamilton offered that D. Nifakos will be on a work related leave of absence for the next six (6) to eight (8) weeks and will not be in attendance for the BC meetings during that time.

Agenda Item 4:

Review/Approval of Budget Committee Minutes October 23, 2018:

- *G. Taillon moved, second by S. Cafiso, to approve the minutes of the October 23, 2018 Budget Committee Meeting. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 8-0-1 (D. Heffernan abstaining).*

Review/Approval of Budget Committee Minutes October 30, 2018:

The Committee decided that the review of the October 30, 2018 BC Meeting Minutes would be postponed until the next meeting to give members more time to review them.

Agenda Item 5: Budget Related Public Comment:

Agenda Item 6.1: Chief Jones providing answers to questions the BC has submitted:

*** Presentation and discussion lead by Kathleen Jones, Chief of Police*

It was discussed that Chief Jones would come back at a later meeting to discuss staffing trends, call volume, and analysis of manpower, as additional research needs to be completed to be able to answer the BC questions relating to these topics.

Questions Submitted to Chief Jones:

1. Request for an update on other options than a County Prosecutor:

Chief Jones offered that she and Captain Morgan are working on a Request for Proposal (RFP) for prosecution services at the direction of Portsmouth.

M. Pearson offered that there will be a continuation of the prosecutor until there is a decision made by the BOS. Then a notice is required to be given to the County Attorney's office. A portion of 2019 will start off as is currently in place until the BOS makes a decision on the Request for Proposal (RFP) and then a transition will be made.

There was a discussion about the County Prosecutor budget increasing every year for the past three (3) years. It was discussed that there was a decrease in the number of towns that were working with the County Prosecutor, which contributed to the increase. However Plaistow is only responsible for seventy-one percent (71%) of the cost of the total program.

2. How many full-time and part-time dispatchers does the Police Department have? Are the dispatchers covered under the Union contract? Do the part-time dispatchers receive benefits such as sick days, health insurance, and retirement?

Chief Jones offered that the Town has five (5) full-time staff members and one (1) part-time staff member. All of the dispatchers are currently under the Union contract. The part-time dispatchers do not receive benefits.

3. What hours does Plaistow dispatch for Atkinson? How many hours per week? On holidays, does Plaistow dispatch for Atkinson for the full twenty-four (24) hour day?

Chief Jones offered that Plaistow Police dispatches for Atkinson sixteen (16) hours per day, Monday thru Friday. During the day shift they have their own dispatcher. On weekends Plaistow dispatches twenty-four (24) hours per day. The Fire Department dispatches twenty-four (24)

hours per day, seven (7) days per week. This equates to one hundred twenty eight (128) hours per week for Police dispatch and one hundred sixty-eight (168) hours per week for Fire dispatch. On holidays, Plaistow dispatches for Atkinson twenty-four (24) hours per day. If a holiday falls on a Monday thru Friday, and their dispatcher wants the day off, Plaistow will pick up the dispatching for the day shift as well.

4. What revenue does Plaistow receive yearly for dispatching for Atkinson? The contract with Atkinson was decreased when the last dispatch contract was negotiated; Has the new contract been decreased as well?

Chief Jones offered that in 2018, Atkinson paid \$38,149.39 for dispatching services. A contract has been agreed upon with Atkinson for five (5) years from 2019-2023 at a rate increase of 2.8% each year. In 2023 Atkinson will pay a total of \$43,797.89.

It was discussed that this is the first time that there has been a five (5) year contract with Atkinson, previous contracts were only three (3) years.

5. Has Plaistow reached out to other towns for dispatching?

Chief Jones offered that the Town has reached out to other towns in the past. However, previously the dispatching equipment was old and needed a complete upgrade. The dispatching equipment has been replaced with the newest technology and the cost will be budgeted over the course of the next five (5) years, from 2019-2023.

B. Hamilton asked if the Committee had any questions.

There was a discussion that Atkinson has their own dispatcher Monday thru Friday from 8:00am to 4:00pm. After 4:00pm Atkinson forwards their calls to Plaistow. If an Atkinson call comes in, the Plaistow dispatcher will radio out to an Atkinson police cruiser. Atkinson does not have a “walk-in” service or anyone at a desk during the times that Plaistow is dispatching.

There was a discussion that now that Plaistow has “state of the art” equipment, dispatching is more efficient and offers a wider range. Therefore, this will make it easier to reach out to and service outside communities to help offset costs. It may also open up the possibility of introducing longer contracts, such as five (5) years, which will allow Plaistow to better estimate offsetting revenues in the budget.

There was a brief discussion about outside grants that have been received in the past that have helped with the replacement of some equipment.

6. Have comparable towns been identified to allow for measurement on whether the Plaistow Police Department has the correct level of manpower?

Chief Jones offered that this question will be answered at a later date once some research can be completed.

7. How does Plaistow’s call volume per police officer compare to similar towns?

Chief Jones offered that this question will be answered at a later date once some research can be completed.

8. What is the cost breakdown of Plaistow police officers working at Pollard School and Timberlane Regional High School? What is the offsetting revenue from the other three (3) communities?

Chief Jones offered that there is one School Resource Officer (SRO) for Timberlane High School. There is an officer assigned there on a full-time basis. There is not a School Resource Officer (SRO) for the Pollard School. However, there is a Leads Program offered which is an eighty (80) hour program, one (1) day per week, that last for ten (10) weeks. There are no direct offsetting revenues collected from the outside communities. However, they do help with the cost of the School Resource Officer (SRO). Last year Plaistow received approximately \$74,000 in reimbursements toward the School Resource Officer (SRO).

L. Lambert asked if the \$74,000 included benefits.

Chief Jones responded by stating that it does include benefits.

9. The Police Department CBA budget line item is \$4,000; Nothing has been paid out in at least four (4) years from 2015 to 2018 YTD (year to date). How many officers are now signed up for classes?

Chief Jones offered that each year a survey is completed. This year two (2) officers will be continuing their education: One (1) to complete a Bachelor's Degree and one (1) to complete a Master's Degree.

Any officers that ask for educational reimbursement over \$500 fill out a two (2) year training agreement after the course is complete. If an officer leaves before the two (2) years are up then they are required to pay back what they received for reimbursement pro-rated over the course of twenty-four (24) months.

There was a discussion about the retention of officers. It was stated that approximately 75% stay, while others may have reasons why they have to leave.

There was discussion that the cost of education includes the academy, Town training, and the cost of uniforms.

There was discussion as to where Plaistow ranks with other towns. It was discussed that like size town cannot be compared without in depth analysis because there are many conditions to consider such as:

- Plaistow may have more calls due to geography and commercial vs. residential areas.
- Border communities may have different needs.
- There may be a difference in the population of schools.

L. Lambert asked if requesting outside information from other communities is charged to the Police Department.

Chief Jones offered that requesting outside information is not charged to the Police Department.

10. What is the breakdown of Police Department personnel and the number of years that they have been employed with the Town?

Chief Jones presented a chart of the Police Department personnel including officers, dispatch, crossing guards, etc. and the number of years that they have been employed with the Town.

There was a discussion on whether or not Chief Jones felt that there was an adequate number of personnel for coverage for a Town the size of Plaistow. Chief Jones expressed her opinion that she did not feel the Police Department is sufficiently staffed.

11. Is the cannon that was located in front of the Safety Complex a ceremonial replica or an authentic historical cannon? What is the known history of the cannon? Why was the cannon moved to the firing range? Who authorized and subcontracted the movement of the cannon?

Chief Jones offered that the cannon is a replica that was built by a Plaistow resident and donated to the Town. The cannon was moved because it was not wanted on the Town Green as bees were accumulating in it. Chief Jones stated that she authorized the movement of the cannon to the firing range.

13. What is the inventory of Police Department vehicles?

Chief Jones presented a chart showing all of the vehicles currently held in the entire Police Department fleet.

There was a brief discussion of how the vehicles are acquired and how long they remain in service. It was discussed that forfeiture vehicles are not owned by the Town, and cannot be sold by the Town. They were acquired through a seizure in a drug related case. The Marshals would sell the car at auction and the Town would receive a percentage of the proceeds which would go into a Forfeiture Fund. Any voluntarily surrendered vehicle proceeds would go into the General Fund.

It was also discussed that there is not a set amount of time that a vehicle can be used in the fleet. The vehicles can be used for as long as the Town would like until they need to be replaced.

Chief Jones asked if the Committee had any additional questions.

14. What was the cost of repairs to cruisers due to accidents this past year and has this increased the Town's insurance?

Chief Jones offered that there have been two (2) accidents this past year:

1. 2016 Ford Explorer, cost of repairs: \$3,575.86, not at fault accident, insurance paid.
2. 2017 Ford Explorer, cost of repairs: \$4,864.58, at fault accident

M. Pearson offered that the Town has a \$1,000.00 deductible and that it is not currently known if there was an increase to the Town's insurance but that he would follow up with the Committee with an answer to that question..

Chief Jones asked if the Committee had any questions.

M. Pearson offered to the Committee that the date scheduled for Chief Jones's retirement is December 31, 2018.

Agenda Item 6.2: Consideration of proposed options of of upcoming department budget reviews and approvals:

B. Hamilton offered that the budget process has been changed to streamline and make the budget review process more efficient and less time consuming. In the past it used to take four (4) to five (5) weeks to present the budgets from each department head.

The new process is as follows:

1. October 1st the Town Manager budgets were presented by G. Colby, Finance Director and M. Pearson, Town Manager to the BOS as a Power point presentation.
2. October 31st the BOS budgets were presented by G. Colby, Finance Director and M. Pearson, Town Manager to the BC as a Power point presentation.
3. December 4th the warrant articles will be presented by G. Colby, Finance Director to the BC as a Power point presentation.
4. January 8th will be a Public Hearing and the 2019 operating budget and warrant articles will be presented by G. Colby, Finance Director and M. Pearson, Town Manager also as a Power point presentation.

Agenda Item 6.3: Review of the Department Budgets: Part I:

Executive:

B. Hamilton offered that the Executive Budget has decreased due to telephone and computer expenses being moved to the newly created Other General Government category.

There was a discussion about the cost of the servers causing an increase to the budget and the cost being spread out over three (3) years. The purchase was a necessity in order to keep the Town Hall running smoothly.

It was discussed that the servers are expected to last longer than three (3) years and that upgrades are available.

It was discussed that the Fire Department server was upgraded through the use of Bond Funds.

It was discussed that overall the Executive Budget went down approximately \$100. Therefore it is considered level funded.

Town Clerk:

B. Hamilton offered that the Town Clerk Budget is up \$4,000. Increase due to the Deputy and the assistant.

M. Pearson offered that there was a retirement in the department which caused some position restructuring.

G. Colby offered that there is increased activity and training going on within the department.

M. Pearson offered that there is cross training taking place for the Tax Collector and Town Clerk. The goal is to always have the appropriate amount of staffing in both offices. On Monday nights there is only one (1) person available in the building. Therefore one (1) other person needs to stay in the building for safety reasons.

- ***G. Taillon moved, second by S. Cafiso, to approve the Town Clerk Budget for \$118,410.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).***

Elections:

B. Hamilton offered that the Elections Budget is down \$6,000.

B. Hamilton asked if the Committee had any questions.

- ***G. Taillon moved, second by D. Heffernan, to approve the Elections Budget for \$12,185.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).***

Finance:

B. Hamilton offered that the Finance Budget is up \$10,000.

It was discussed that the professional audit increased the budget by approximately \$5,000.

G. Colby offered that the previous auditor made an error and that actuarial studies were more extensive.

- ***D. Heffernan moved, second by L. Lambert, to approve the Finance Budget for \$179,032.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).***

Assessing:

B. Hamilton offered that the Assessing Budget is down \$3,300 due to a part-time position not being filled.

F. Hart offered that on September 17, 2018 the BOS approved the purchase of the assessing contract and assessing software. Therefore, the Assessing Budget line item will change once the actual costs are determined.

Tax Collector:

B. Hamilton offered that the Tax Collector Budget is down \$1,400.

- ***G. Taillon moved, second by D. Heffernan, to approve the Tax Collector Budget for \$48,185.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).***

S. Cafiso asked for clarification and offered that he believed that the votes should include the amount of the budget line item. The Committee agreed and backtracked to include the appropriate budget amounts for each vote.

Legal:

B. Hamilton offered that the Legal Budget is down \$20,000.

M. Pearson offered that the Legal Budget is a moving target in the sense that the budget is a best guess as a conservative estimate that the Town hopes not to exceed.

- ***D. Heffernan moved, second by G. Taillon, to approve the Legal Budget for \$55,000.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).***

Human Resources/Personnel:

B. Hamilton offered that the Human Resources/Personnel Budget is up \$104,000.

M. Pearson offered that the Human Resources/Personnel Budget is the largest single budget that the Town has because it includes medical benefits, retirement, etc.

Planning:

There was a brief discussion about increases in health insurance costs, the current health insurance carrier, the possibility of looking into other carriers come April, and any offsets to increasing costs.

There was a brief discussion about the mileage expense for training.

M. Pearson offered that for a number of years Town Hall employees within the Union were without a contract. Therefore, there will be a one (1) time good faith merit increase of \$600 given to each Union employee that was without a contract for a total budget figure of \$8,400. There is no longer a bonus structure within the budget. There are performance management rewards offered instead.

There was a brief discussion about Medicare and FICA.

M. Pearson offered that Medicare and FICA are linked to overtime.

There was a brief discussion about the two (2) announced retirements of the Chief of Police and the Fire Chief and the decisions to be made in house in regard to advertising and hiring of new candidates for those positions.

There was a brief discussion about Workman's Compensation.

M. Pearson offered that there have been no significant claims. The Town is yellow almost into green regarding safety. Any safety issues that are brought up by personnel or departments are addressed right away before they can become bigger problems. The goal is to be as proactive as possible.

M. Pearson offered that there were over thirty (30) people who attended the last Safety Meeting.

G. Colby offered that there is a \$125 quarterly charge for a third party administrator to manage the Workman's Compensation Plan. They are paid to track regulation requirements.

B. Hamilton asked if performance management raises have already been given.

M. Pearson responded by stating, yes, that the performance management raises have already been given.

B. Hamilton asked if the Committee had any additional questions.

- ***G. Taillon moved, second by D. Heffernan, to approve the Human Resources/Personnel Budget for \$2,146,865.67. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).***

Planning:

B. Hamilton offered that the Planning Budget is down \$10,875.

G. Colby offered that the MS4 Storm water testing is a negligible increase within Other General Government.

M. Pearson offered that positioning all of the MS4 invoices within Other General Government offered the ability for all budgeted money to be within one (1) line item so that all MS4 invoices could be paid from one (1) place.

M. Pearson offered that he anticipates some changes will be made to the Planning Budget.

B. Hamilton offered that there will be a savings of \$10,000 due to their not being any Impact Fee updates.

G. Colby offered that there will be a Master Plan Fee but no Impact Fees.

Zoning:

- *J. DeRoche moved, second by G. Taillon, to approve the Zoning Budget for \$3,825.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).*

General Government Buildings:

The Committee decided to skip over the General Government Buildings Budget until the next meeting.

Cemeteries:

B. Hamilton offered that there is a warrant article for a Cemetery Special Maintenance Fund. The wording for the Expendable Trust Fund is to keep the cemetery in good repair. He asked if there was a justified need to keep \$2,000 in a petty cash fund?

M. Pearson offered that with the hiring of a new Cemetery Sexton comes new improvements and repairs, such as fixing some stones that have been broken. At some point the Town may be looking at expanding the cemetery or even building a new one. The goal is to give the Cemetery Sexton some available funds to work with for needed repairs.

F. Hart offered that previously the BC approved a \$2,000 line item for the Highway Department to care for the cemetery. The Expendable Trust Fund is very specific for very specific things and may not cover some unanticipated things that may come up throughout the year. It is believed that the \$2,000 amount was just moved over from the Highway Department to the Cemetery Budget.

- *L. Lambert moved, second by G. Taillon, to approve the Cemeteries Budget for \$9,000.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).*

Insurances:

- *D. Heffernan moved, second by J. DeRoche, to approve the Insurances Budget for \$128,966.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).*

Advertising/Regional Associations:

B. Hamilton offered that the Advertising/Regional Associations Budget is up \$205.

- *D. Heffernan moved, second by G. Taillon, to approve the Advertising/Regional Associations Budget for \$25,205.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).*

Cable:

B. Hamilton offered that the Cable Budget is up approximately \$2,400 due to increases for the operators.

F. Hart asked for clarification if the permanent position stands at \$20,000 or \$22,000.

It was discussed that the permanent position stands at \$20,000.

There was a discussion about the Cable Franchise Fee and a contractual Cable Special Revenue Fund.

There was also a discussion that through negotiations with Comcast a percentage of what each home pays for cable is paid to the Town and put into the General Fund. This is separate from the Cable Franchise Fee.

- *G. Taillon moved, second by J. DeRoche, to approve the Cable Budget for \$29,294.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).*

Conflict of Interest:

- *G. Taillon moved, second by J. DeRoche, to approve the Conflict of Interest Budget for \$250.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).*

Other General Government:

G. Colby offered that the MS4 storm water number is not in yet. Therefore the Other General Government Budget figure is expected to change.

Agenda Item 7: Committee Reports:

There were no Committee Reports presented.

Agenda Item 8: New Business:

There was no New Business presented.

Agenda Item 9: Old Business:

There was no Old Business presented.

Next Budget Committee Meeting:

The next Budget Committee Meeting will be Tuesday, November 20, 2018.

There was no additional business presented and the meeting was adjourned at 8:40pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Samantha D. Cote
Recording Secretary