

# *Town of Plaistow ♦ Budget Committee*

145 Main Street ♦ Plaistow ♦ NH ♦ 03865



## **BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING**

**December 11, 2018**

**Call to Order:** 6:35 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's Ex-Officio, excused*  
Peter Bracci, *Selectman's Representative Alternate*

Also in attendance:

Greg Colby, Finance Director, Mark Pearson, Town Manager, Chief Kathleen Jones, and Captain Brett Morgan

### **Agenda Item 3: Pledge of Allegiance**

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

### **Agenda Item 4:**

#### **Review/Approval of Budget Committee Minutes for November 27, 2018:**

- *J. DeRoche moved, second by S. Cafiso, to approve the November 27, 2018 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 8-0-1 (P. Bracci abstaining).*

#### **Review/Approval of Budget Committee Minutes for December 4, 2018:**

*It was decided that the approval of the December 4, 2018 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes would be postponed until the next meeting because many members of the Committee have not had a chance to review the minutes.*

## **Agenda Item 5: Budget Related Public Comment:**

B. Hamilton stated that there was no one in attendance for Budget Related Public Comment.

## **Agenda Item 6a: Presentation of Research on Police Department Staffing Level Comparisons:**

### ***Power point presented by Chief Kathleen Jones and Captain Brett Morgan***

Chief Jones offered recognition to Captain Brett Morgan for his hard work in helping to gather and compile the researched information for the presentation.

There was a review of the following information:

#### Current Police Department Structure:

1 Chief	3 Detectives
2 Captains	1 School Resource Officer
1 Lieutenant	7 Patrol Officers
3 Sergeants	1 Part-Time Officer

There was a discussion that the Lieutenant position will not be filled once the current Lieutenant retires. The duties of this position have changed such that they are now more in line with that of a Sergeant. The Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) proposal that will appear on the 2019 ballot will reflect the change and will adjust the pay to be in line with a Sergeant instead of it being a separate pay grade.

It was discussed that there have only been two (2) Detectives since 2016 and the Part-Time Officer position has been vacant since 2016.

There was a brief discussion to review the hierarchy of positions.

#### Benefits of the Part-Time Officer Position:

There was a discussion that the Part-Time Officer is trained and functional as a solo officer, but is ready to step into a full-time position if one becomes available. The transition from part-time to full-time officer just requires sending the officer to the full-time academy. This reduces down time to only sixteen (16) weeks instead of having to start at the beginning of the process of recruiting, testing, screening, and training which can take up to eighteen (18) months to complete. This position allows the officer to get through the field training program at a part-time rate of pay, reduces forced overtime for full-time officers, and allows for a preview of the officers quality of work to see whether they will ultimately work out in the department.

It was discussed that due to a cut in this budget line item it is not probable that the Part-Time Officer position will be able to be filled in 2019.

### The Town's Residential Population:

There was a brief discussion that Plaistow's population has not changed much since the 2010 census. The concern is not with the number of residents but rather the handling of the additional demand placed upon the department by the transient population being brought in by the Town's large commercial presence available to outside communities.

### The Population of Surrounding Towns:

There was a review and comparison of the surrounding towns' change in population showing 2010 and 2017 estimated figures from the US Census Bureau for:

Plaistow	Kingston
Atkinson	Newton
Danville	Sandown
Hampstead	Haverhill, MA

### The Town's Commercial Population:

It was discussed that of the seven hundred (700) commercial storefronts listed with the Town, five hundred thirty (530) are currently occupied and available to residents and surrounding communities.

It was also discussed that Timberlane School District itself brings in approximately three thousand (3,000) additional people every day on top of the current resident population.

### The Town's Traffic Counts:

There was a review of the most recent population traffic count averages conducted by the NH Department of Transportation for Plaistow in regard to traffic coming in from surrounding communities.

### The Traditional Patrol Allocation and Recent Changes:

It was discussed that the Traditional Patrol Allocation for the past twenty-five (25) years has been:

2 Day Shift Patrol Cars	7:45am - 3:45pm
2 Evening Shift Patrol Cars	3:45pm - 11:45pm
2 Midnight Shift Patrol Cars	11:45pm - 7:45am

It was discussed that in 2000 "split cars" were introduced which allowed for periods of three (3) car coverage during busier times, typically Wednesday through Saturday from 7:45am - 1:45 am.

Unfortunately, when someone leaves or reallocation of the Department is needed, “split cars” are the first to go, bringing the Department back to the Traditional Patrol Allocation that it has had for the past twenty-five (25) years.

It was discussed that there is typically one (1) officer per patrol car unless field training is taking place.

There was another brief discussion regarding the Town’s lack of population growth since 2010. However, surrounding towns are still growing and utilizing the commercial offerings that are located in Plaistow.

It was discussed that the Department has made the following changes to the Patrol Allocation within the past month, starting in November 2018:

2 Day Shift Patrol Cars	7:45am - 3:45pm
1 Day “Split” Car	11:00am - 7:00pm
2 Evening Shift Patrol Cars	3:45pm - 11:45pm
1 Evening “Split” Car	7:00pm - 3:00am
2 Midnight Shift Patrol Cars	11:45pm - 7:45am

\* 1 “Cover” Officer works a combination of 12:00 - 8:00pm and Traditional Midnight Shifts

#### The Benefits Associated with the Recent Changes to the Patrol Allocation:

It was discussed that the benefits that the change in the Patrol Allocation has made is that it allows for three (3) patrol cars to be on duty from 11:00am - midnight, seven (7) days per week. It also allows for the occasional fourth patrol car from noon - 8:00pm. Unfortunately, these benefits come at the cost of only having one (1) patrol car between 3:00am - 7:45am.

It was discussed that surrounding towns will back each other up if additional assistance is needed.

C. Jones offered that the change in the Patrol Allocation was done due to a study of coverage needs within the past six (6) months based upon the number of calls for service during certain periods of the day.

C. Morgan offered a review of the “Calls for Service” based upon a three (3) year average from 2015-2017. He also offered a review of the current “Calls for Service” figures and data comparisons for 2018.

It was discussed that the number of shoplifting related calls was one of the biggest factors in the decision to change the Patrol Allocation.

### Police Department Comparisons:

There was a discussion that the Police Department numbers that were compared to Plaistow were from the following towns:

Amherst	Kingston
Atkinson	Milford
Epping	Newton
Exeter	Pelham
Hampstead	Raymond
Hooksett	Windham

C. Morgan offered that the foundation for the comparison of departments was based upon a survey that was sent out in early 2018 aimed at researching prosecution options. It was stated that the survey was sent out statewide and twenty-nine (29) were received back.

C. Morgan recommended that when looking at the comparisons that more weight should be given to the number of arrests rather than the number of calls for service.

### Staffing and Activity Level Comparisons:

C. Morgan offered a review of Staffing and Activity Level Comparisons which showed figures for each town for:

- Number of Full-Time Officers
- Number of Part-Time Officers
- Reported Calls for Service based upon a three (3) year average.
- Number of arrests based upon a three (3) year average.
- Patrol Allocations

C. Morgan offered that Amherst has an almost identical staffing and organizational structure to Plaistow and Epping has similar manpower, call volume, and number of arrests.

C. Morgan offered that Atkinson was included due to their close affiliation with Plaistow and the fact that three (3) officers have left the force to go to Atkinson since 2011.

### Arrests per Full-Time Officer:

C. Morgan offered a review of the number of arrests per Full-Time Officer per town. The average is 20.2 arrests per year with Plaistow's average being a bit higher at 28.7 arrests per year.

Why is this all relevant?:

C. Morgan offered that staffing, call volume, wages, and retention are all connected and that a change in one (1) will affect another.

Police Department Position Turnovers:

C. Morgan offered the following regarding at what time frame in their careers people have left the Department going back eighteen (18) years, from 2000 until now:

Within 1-2 years of service	2
Within 2-3 years of service	2
Within 3-4 years of service	1
Within 4-5 years of service	3
Within 6-10 years of service	0
With 10+ years of service	2

C. Morgan offered that ten (10) people have left for other agencies since 2000 and eight (8) of those ten (10) represent a failed investment by the Town.

C. Morgan offered that of the ten (10) people who have left since 2000, three (3) have gone to Atkinson and three (3) have gone to Salem. The remaining four (4) people left to go to Exeter (1), Hooksett (1), Manchester (1), and MA State Police (1).

Police Department Longevity:

0-5 years	4
6-10 years	5
11-15 years	1
16-20 years	5
20+ years	2

C. Morgan offered that of the two (2) people within the 20+ year range, Chief Jones has announced her retirement at the end of 2018 and Sergeant Porter is currently eligible to retire at any time. Also of the five (5) people in the 16-20 year range, four (4) of them will be eligible to retire within two (2) years.

Police Department Wage Comparisons:

C. Morgan offered a review of the 2019 Comparison of Wages per town for Patrol Officers. The chart also showed 2019 County and State averages. It was stated that the 2019 figures for Plaistow are based upon the assumption that the proposed Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) is going to be passed.

C. Morgan offered that a Plaistow officer is eligible to test for Master Patrol Officer in year eight (8). If successful their rate of pay would be \$28.52 per hour and if unsuccessful it is \$26.91 per hour.

C. Morgan offered that the chart shows that as an officer progresses through their career, many of the comparison towns quickly outpace Plaistow in terms of hourly wages. By the time an officer finishes their three (3) year training agreement with Plaistow they could leave and be making more money with eight (8) of the ten (10) agencies compared. A Plaistow officer reaches their maximum wage by year eight (8).

C. Morgan offered a review of the 2019 Comparison of Wages per town for Sergeants.

#### Is the Police Department Adequately Staffed?:

C. Morgan offered that manpower and wages are the only things that can be controlled. Plaistow can improve retention by making sure that manpower and wages stay in line with what other departments are offering.

C. Morgan offered that Plaistow officers are among the busiest of the departments compared and unfortunately relatively low when it comes to wages.

C. Morgan offered that as calls for service and arrests rise, if manpower declines the Department will suffer, resulting in:

- The reduced ability to respond to resident requests or needs
- The reduced ability to conduct directed patrols
- The reduced ability to accommodate requests for employment fingerprinting or process motor vehicle registrations
- The reduced ability to conduct community programs

#### Police Department Cycles of Low Retention:

C. Morgan offered that if one (1) person leaves the force it leads to:

- Fewer officers handling the same amount of calls for service or arrests
- More forced overtime to cover vacancies
- Frustration and dissatisfaction within the Department
- Additional personnel may also decide to look for positions somewhere else.

C. Morgan offered that in the time that it takes to train and get a new officer up and running, another officer may have already left. It takes approximately eighteen (18) months and costs an average of \$36,000 to hire, outfit, and train a new officer.

C. Morgan offered some statistics on FBI staffing averages. Plaistow is in line with the 2017 national average for number of sworn personnel based upon the Residential population. However, Plaistow is below the national average for communities with fewer than ten thousand (10,000) residents. Plaistow is not adequately staffed to handle the additional transient population brought in by surrounding towns.

#### What does the Police Department Currently Need?

- There is an immediate need to fill two (2) vacancies, one (1) Full-Time Officer and one (1) Part-Time Officer.
- There is a need to hire two (2) new Full-Time Officers to better accommodate the current needs within the new Patrol Allocation.
- There is a need to commit to hiring (2) new Full-Time Officers within the next two (2) years to bring the Town in line with the New England staffing average.
- There needs to be a realistic overhaul of the current wage scale.

B. Hamilton reiterated concerns about the Town's population remaining relatively stagnant since 2010 and the Town's aging population. He offered a comparison of Salem's Commercial revenue versus Plaistow, where Plaistow's Commercial revenue is significantly lower.

#### **Agenda Item 6b: BC discussion of how this year's budget process could be improved next year:**

There was a discussion regarding the budget process in previous years and what the BC Members liked about this year's streamlined budget process.

B. Hamilton asked the BC Members to think about and offer any suggestions or changes that could help streamline the budget process even more next year.

M. Pearson offered a review of the new streamlined budget process running from September through November.

#### **Agenda Item 6c: Preparation and Public Notification of the Budget Committee's January 8, 2019 Public Hearing:**

There was a discussion that the Public Hearing will be presented in the form of a Power point presentation.

#### **Agenda Item 6d: Presentation to review the estimated increase that the average Plaistow homeowner will see in their 2019 Municipal Tax Bill if all of the Warrant Articles and the current 2019 Operating Budget are passed by Plaistow voters in March 2019:**

##### ***Power point presented by Greg Colby, Finance Director***

G. Colby gave each Committee member a copy of the following handouts:



- “Summary of Presented Warrant Articles - Budget Committee - December 11, 2018”
- “Estimated 2019 Tax Rate - As Presented to the Budget Committee - December 11, 2018

Upon reviewing the handouts, G. Colby offered that if all of the Warrant Articles are approved the voted appropriations (MS232) would total \$11,008,895.00. This would increase the Town portion of the 2019 tax rate by 3.41%, with the understanding that Warrant Article D-CBA-Town Hall is the only figure outstanding.

B. Hamilton asked if the Committee had any questions.

#### **Agenda Item 6e: Presentation of the 2019 Warrant Articles Version II:**

*Power point presented by Greg Colby, Finance Director*

B. Hamilton offered that if any member of the Committee feels uncomfortable regarding anything stated in a Warrant Article that he recommends that they abstain from voting.

**G. Colby reviewed the following:**

##### **A) Operating Budget: General Fund:**

G. Colby offered that there will be one change to the bottom line budget which will include entering the default budget figure.

- *D. Heffernan moved, second by L. Lambert, to approve Warrant Article A- Operating Budget - General Fund in the amount of \$9,932,197.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 6-0-3 (L. Lambert, L. Milette, and P. Bracci abstaining).*

Vote: recommended by the BOS (0-0-0) and BC (6-0-3).

##### **B) Operating Budget: Water Department:**

- *L. Lambert moved, second by J. DeRoche, to approve Warrant Article B - Operating Budget - Water Department in the amount of \$78,910.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).*

Vote: recommended by the BOS (5-0-0) and BC (9-0-0).

##### **C) CBA: Police Union:**

- *L. Lambert moved, second by J. DeRoche, to approve Warrant Article C - CBA - Police Union in the amount of \$38,388.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).*

Vote: recommended by the BOS (5-0-0) and BC (9-0-0). Majority vote required.

**D) CBA: Town Unit:**

- *There was no vote on this Warrant Article as a final figure is still pending.*

Vote: recommended by the BOS (0-0-0) and BC (0-0-0). Majority vote required.

**E) Public Works Facility Garage: Phase II:**

- *J. DeRoche moved, second by G. Taillon, to approve Warrant Article E - Public Works Facility Garage: Phase II in the amount of \$350,000.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).*

Vote: recommended by the BOS (4-1-0) and BC (9-0-0). Majority vote required.

**F) Contingency: RSA 31:98a:**

- *L. Lambert moved, second by D. Heffernan, to approve Warrant Article F - Contingency: RSA 31:98-a in the amount of \$85,000. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).*

Vote: recommended by the BOS (4-1-0) and BC (9-0-0). Majority vote required.

**G) Create/Transfer to Fire Department Radio Capital Reserve Fund:**

- *D. Heffernan moved, second by K. Ingalls, to approve Warrant Article G - Create/Transfer to Fire Department Radio Capital Reserve Fund in the amount of \$15,000.00 and to name the BOS to act as agent to expend from said fund. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 8-0-1 (P. Bracci abstaining).*

Vote: recommended by the BOS (4-1-0) and BC (8-0-1). Majority vote required.

**H) Expendable Trust Fund Deposit: Highway Department Equipment:**

- *L. Lambert moved, second by G. Taillon, to approve Warrant Article H - Expendable Trust Fund Deposit: Highway Department Equipment in the amount of \$70,000.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 7-2-0 (L. Milette and S. Cafiso opposed).*

Vote: recommended by the BOS (4-1-0) and BC (7-2-0). Majority vote required.

**I) Capital Reserve Fund Deposit: Fire Department Apparatus:**

- *J. DeRoche moved, second by L. Lambert, to approve Warrant Article I - Capital Reserve Fund Deposit: Fire Department Apparatus in the amount of \$100,000.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).*

There was a discussion that the next purchase will be a Rescue 2 vehicle which consists of both an ambulance and a rescue vehicle.

Vote: recommended by the BOS (4-1-0) and BC (9-0-0). Majority vote required.

**J) Capital Reserve Fund Deposit: Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA):**

- *D. Heffernan moved, second by J. DeRoche, to approve Warrant Article J - Capital Reserve Fund Deposit: Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) in the amount of \$42,400.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).*

Vote: recommended by the BOS (5-0-0) and BC (9-0-0). Majority vote required.

**K) Capital Reserve Fund Deposit: Police Department Management Information Computer System (MICS):**

- *L. Lambert moved, second by G. Taillon, to approve Warrant Article K - Capital Reserve Fund Deposit: Police Department Management Information Computer System (MICS) in the amount of \$25,000.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).*

Vote: recommended by the BOS (5-0-0) and BC (9-0-0). Majority vote required.

**L) Capital Reserve Fund Deposit: Buildings/Building Systems:**

- *S. Cafiso moved, second by G. Taillon, to approve Warrant Article L - Capital Reserve Fund Deposit: Buildings/Building Systems in the amount of \$10,000.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).*

Vote: recommended by the BOS (4-1-0) and BC (9-0-0). Majority vote required.

**M) Capital Reserve Fund Deposit: Library:**

- *L. Lambert moved, second by J. DeRoche, to approve Warrant Article M - Capital Reserve Fund Deposit: Library in the amount of \$40,000.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).*

There was a brief discussion that the funds are to be used for maintenance and repairs that are needed for the library.

Vote: recommended by the BOS (4-1-0) and BC (9-0-0). Majority vote required.

**N) Capital Reserve Fund Deposit: Energy:**

- *J. DeRoche moved, second by S. Cafiso, to approve Warrant Article N - Capital Reserve Fund Deposit: Energy in the amount of \$25,000.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).*

Vote: recommended by the BOS (4-1-0) and BC (9-0-0). Majority vote required.

#### **O) Capital Reserve Fund Deposit: Recreation:**

- *D. Heffernan moved, second by L. Lambert, to approve Warrant Article O - Capital Reserve Fund Deposit: Recreation in the amount of \$25,000.00.*

There was discussion that many Committee members feel that there is currently enough money in the fund. However, it was expressed that the new maintenance plan for the fields is a step in the right direction.

It was discussed that there is currently \$70,986 available in the Capital Reserve Fund for Recreation and \$98,000 in Impact Fees.

B. Hamilton expressed his opinion that based upon the Town's lack of population growth and the percentage of the Town's aging population that the focus should be on the Community Center, not new trails.

L. Milette offered that it may be possible to partner with Conservation which has over \$300,000 in their fund that could possibly help with constructing new trails.

*There was no further discussion on the motion. The vote was 3-6-0 (B. Hamilton, K. Ingalls, G. Taillon, L. Lambert, S. Cafiso, and L. Milette opposed).*

Vote: recommended by the BOS (3-1-1) and BC (3-6-0). Majority vote required.

#### **P) Capital Reserve Fund Deposit: Transportation Infrastructure:**

- *L. Lambert moved, second by D. Heffernan, to approve Warrant Article P - Capital Reserve Fund Deposit: Transportation Infrastructure in the amount of \$25,000.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).*

Vote: recommended by the BOS (5-0-0) and BC (9-0-0). Majority vote required.

#### **Q) Capital Reserve Fund Deposit: Land/Buildings Acquisition:**

G. Colby offered that this warrant article was not supported by the BOS and was be removed.

#### **R) Expendable Trust Fund Deposit: Snow Removal:**

- *L. Lambert moved, second by J. DeRoche, to approve Warrant Article R - Expendable Trust Fund Deposit: Snow Removal in the amount of \$15,000.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).*

Vote: recommended by the BOS (4-1-0) and BC (9-0-0). Majority vote required.

**S) Expendable Trust Fund Deposit: Mosquito Control:**

- *D. Heffernan moved, second by K. Ingalls, to approve Warrant Article S - Expendable Trust Fund Deposit: Mosquito Control in the amount of \$7,000.00.*
- *D. Heffernan moved, second by K. Ingalls, to rescind the previous motion to approve Warrant Article S - Expendable Trust Fund Deposit: Mosquito Control in the amount of \$7,000.00.*

Vote: recommended by the BOS (5-0-0) and BC (0-0-0). Majority vote required.

**T) Pollard Park: Paving and Sidewalk Repairs:**

- *L. Lambert moved, second by D. Heffernan, to approve Warrant Article T - Pollard Park: Paving and Sidewalk Repairs in the amount of \$40,000.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).*

There was a brief discussion that there is a need for repairs due to some reports of tripping and concerns about the width of the walkways for people with disabilities.

Vote: recommended by the BOS (4-1-0) and BC (9-0-0). Majority vote required.

**U) Expendable Trust Fund Deposit: Accrued Leave Time:**

- *S. Cafiso moved, second by D. Heffernan, to approve Warrant Article U - Expendable Trust Fund Deposit: Accrued Leave Time in the amount of \$25,000.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).*

Vote: recommended by the BOS (5-0-0) and BC (9-0-0). Majority vote required.

**V) Long-Term Borrowing: Asset Management Study:**

- *G. Taillon moved, second by S. Cafiso, to approve Warrant Article V - Long-Term Borrowing: Asset Management Study in the amount of \$60,000.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 7-0-2 (B. Hamilton and L. Milette abstaining).*

Vote: recommended by the BOS (4-0-1) and BC (7-0-2). 3/5 ballot vote required.

**TBD) CASA & Keystone Hall:**

G. Colby offered that CASA and Keystone Hall are warrant articles from outside agencies.

**Agenda Item 7: Committee Reports:**

There was a brief discussion that D. Nifakos, G. Taillon, and D. Heffernan will be up for BC re-election in 2019.

J. DeRoche offered that he has spoken with Budget Committee members in another local town and they are not even close to where Plaistow is in their budget process.

**Agenda Item 8: New Business:**

There was no New Business presented.

**Agenda Item 9: Old Business:**

There was no Old Business presented.

There was no additional business presented and the meeting was adjourned at 9:29pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Samantha D. Cote  
Recording Secretary