

**BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**October 14, 2014**

**Call to Order:** 6:49 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Martha Sumner, *Chair*  
Kristin Lewis Savage, *Vice Chair*, arrived 6:57 p.m.  
Tricia Holt, *excused*  
David Gerns  
Darrell Britton  
Dennis Heffernan  
Jack Paone, *excused*  
Charles Fowler  
Dean Nifakos  
John Sherman, *Selectmen Ex-Officio*

Also Present: Sean Fitzgerald, Town Manager

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Police Lt. William Baldwin

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*D. Heffernan moved, second by D. Gerns to approve the minutes of the September 30, 2014 meeting. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 5-0-2 (Fowler and Britton abstaining).*

**BUDGET PRESENTATIONS:**

**Emergency Management – Lt. William Baldwin, Emergency Management Director**

W. Baldwin explained the Emergency Management Budget proposed line items for the 2015 budget:

Level Funded Budget Line Items:

- |                         |              |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| • Part-time Positions   | \$ 10,000.00 |
| • Training              | \$ 1,000.00  |
| • Office Supplies       | \$ 400.00    |
| • Equipment Maintenance | \$ 150.00    |
| • Emergency Supplies    | \$ 500.00    |
| • Equipment Purchase    | \$ 10,000.00 |

Increased Budget Line Items

- |                        |             |
|------------------------|-------------|
| • Telephone (+\$2,300) | \$ 3,300.00 |
|------------------------|-------------|

Decreased Budget Line Items

- |                          |           |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| • Postage (-\$200)       | \$ 300.00 |
| • Mileage Travel (-\$44) | \$ 400.00 |

W. Baldwin offered that the bottom line budget request for the Emergency Management 2015 budget is \$26,050.00 (increase of \$2,056).

*It was noted in the handout that this amount has been approved by the Board of Selectmen (BOS).*

Discussion:

W. Baldwin noted that following about his 2015 budget request:

- Phones for the Department are now on a data plan, thus the increase in that line
- They were ready to move forward with training and equipping members of the CERT (Citizen's Emergency Response Team)
- With more internet communications the postage line has been lowered
- There has been an inventory of the Emergency Management Center and there are many items that will need replacing

There was a brief discussion regarding improvements to telecommunications shared with Atkinson as well as the repeater equipment that will be installed as part of the Hillcrest (Snow's Brook) development. W. Baldwin noted that good communications is the key to effective emergency management.

***K. Lewis Savage moved, second by D. Heffernan to accept for consideration the Emergency Management Budget in the amount of \$26,050.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 8-0-0 U/A.***

**Water Department – John McArdle, Fire Chief/Water Superintendent**

J. McArdle explained the Water Budget proposed line items for the 2015 budget:

Level Funded Budget Line Items:

• Telephone	\$ 660.00
• Electric	\$ 11,500.00
• General Supplies	\$ 200.00
• Equipment Repairs	\$ 500.00
• Vehicle Maintenance	\$ 200.00

Increased Budget Line Items

• Payroll Temporary (+\$1,500)	\$ 14,570.00
• Engineering (+\$9,000)	\$ 17,000.00
• Waterline Repairs (+\$4,000)	\$ 8,500.00
• Equipment Maintenance (+\$200)	\$ 4,400.00
• Fuel (+\$400)	\$ 2,800.00
• Equipment Purchase(+ \$2,300)	\$ 3,400.00

Decreased Budget Line Items

- Uniforms (-\$285) \$ 640.00
- Mileage (-\$200) \$ 50.00

J. McArdle offered that the bottom line budget request for the Water Department 2015 budget is \$64,420.00 (increase of \$18,915).

*It was noted in the handout that this amount has been approved by the Board of Selectmen (BOS).*

Discussion:

J. McArdle noted that following about the 2015 Water Department budget request:

- There was an anticipated need for more volunteer hours available with the planned continuation of the Route 125 redevelopment project
- There are less people needing uniforms
- With the Route 125 redevelopment project there will be more of a need for engineering review of the waterline improvements
- The electric line is reconciled at the end of the year through the finance office
- The mileage line is reduced as there will be less of a need to reimburse for use of personal vehicles
- The repairs line is to cover finding and repairs of unanticipated leaks
- It was noted that there have been expenditures out of the equipment repairs line in the amount of \$1,800.00, but it were incorrectly coded. This will be corrected
- There was a cost increase of the contract with the equipment maintenance vendor
- Fuel line is increased with the anticipated extra work from the Route 125 redevelopment
- The department continues to replace protective bollards around hydrants and therefore there is an increase in the equipment purchases line

K. Lewis Savage noted that the equipment repairs line was overspent at \$1,800.00 yet was level-funded for 2015 at \$500.00. She asked the Chief if he was comfortable with this number.

J. McArdle replied that he was and the amount budgeted was the typical costs to repair two (2) lines.

There was a discussion over the large increase in the engineering line and how it related to the redevelopment of Route 125. It was noted that the Department would need to consult with their engineers well in advance of the project's start to make sure they are ready to move as soon as the State starts. It was noted that the dramatic engineering cost increase was related to the phase and complexity of the required design review.

There was a discussion of a potential Warrant Article that would allow for monies collected fire suppression waterline fees towards repair costs and what that process would be. It was noted that funds are in the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan), but could easily be removed if other monies become available.

There was discussion about the water truck and that the purchase came in at budget. It was noted that some additional equipment for the truck was in the 2015 budget.

There was additional discussion on engineering review costs related to the work that will be done in conjunction with the Route 125 redevelopment project. It was noted that costs increase based on the phase of review as well as when actual construction begins.

There was a discussion about the payroll increase. It was noted that this was a straight pay position and if the employee received any benefits they were derived from other budgets. Chief McArdle explained that this is a part-time, on-call position and availability can be an issue. He noted that he would like to have the money available in the budget to cover any available personnel.

S. Fitzgerald noted that the budget is 100% funded by fees collected from those who are connected to the fire suppression line.

D. Britton asked if the budget is not spent does the money come back to the Town.

J. McArdle replied that it cannot be spent by the Town. There was a brief discussion on the process for spending monies from the collected fire suppression fees. It was noted that the fire suppression system might be able to be set up as a local utility and then the Board of Selectmen would be able to make decisions as to how the collected fees may be spent. Currently to spend money out of this capital reserve account takes a vote at Town Meeting. This would make funds more readily available to respond to a catastrophe.

***K. Lewis Savage moved, second by D. Britton to accept for consideration the Water Department Budget in the amount of \$64,420.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 8-0-0 U/A.***

**Fire Department – John McArdle, Fire Chief**

J. McArdle explained the Fire Department Budget proposed line items for the 2015 budget:

Level Funded Budget Line Items:

• Dues	\$ 1,700.00
• Supplies	\$ 700.00
• Books & Periodicals	\$ 200.00
• Building Maintenance	\$ 200.00
• Vehicle Maintenance/Supplies	\$ 15,420.00
• General Supplies	\$ 6,750.00

Increased Budget Line Items

• Permanent Positions (+\$25,140)	\$ 98,053.00
• Telephones/Communication (+\$12)	\$ 4,044.00
• Data Processing (+\$1,110)	\$ 6,615.00
• Medical Services (+\$360)	\$ 3,580.00
• Events & Activities (+\$1,000)	\$ 2,650.00
• Permanent Positions FF (+\$4,830)	\$ 138,754.00
• Part-time Call Firefighters (+\$30,412)	\$ 163,222.00
• Overtime Firefighters (+\$2,256)	\$ 33,815.00
• Training (+\$34)	\$ 40,673.00
• Dues – Hazmat (+\$200)	\$ 6,800.00
• Vehicle Repairs (+\$1,000)	\$ 5,000.00
• Equipment- Bunker Gear (+\$590)	\$ 8,740.00
• Books & Periodicals (+\$750)	\$ 4,065.00
• Part-time Forest Fire (+\$50)	\$ 200.00

Decreased Budget Line Items

• Uniforms (-\$2,950)	\$ 7,500.00
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• Irregular and Varied (-\$280)	\$ 1,440.00
• Mileage and Expenses (-\$500)	\$ 500.00
• Equipment Maintenance (-\$3,750)	\$ 7,690.00
• Gasoline (-\$359)	\$ 13,641.00
• Equipment (-\$8,854)	\$ 16,935.00

J. McArdle offered that the bottom line budget request for the Fire Department 2015 budget is \$588,887.00 (increase of \$51,051).

*It was noted in the handout that this amount has been approved by the Board of Selectmen (BOS).*

Discussion:

J. McArdle offered the following in support of the Fire Department 2015 budget request:

- He would like to hire an administrative assistant. The request is based on increased administrative needs of the department. The new hire would be charged with running the “business side” of the Fire Department. The increase in the permanent positions line is reflective of a May/June hire
- It was noted by J. Sherman when this operating budget was reviewed by the Board of Selectmen there were only three (3) members and the Board would be doing more review with all five (5) members.

There was a discussion regarding the roll up costs, benefits and insurance of a new position hire. It was noted that the current administrative responsibilities were being handled by firefighters when they are not on a call. This was making it difficult to keep up with the paperwork. It was also making it difficult to keep personnel on the fire department.

J. Sherman noted that the Selectmen understood this requested position to be as an office manager position.

K. Lewis Savage added it would also make it so there was someone there during normal business hours and when the firefighters were on a call.

- Uniform line was decreased as most of the department was outfitted with Class A uniforms last year
- Data Processing was increased due to an communications agreement with Atkinson on the Hogg Hill Tower
- Medical Services was increased as they had a new vendor to do pre-employment physical. It was noted that the type of evaluation that was being done was much better as well
- Irregular and Varied was decreased as there were less personnel needing to get their CDL licenses There may be a future increase in this line
- Mileage was decreased as more staff was using the command vehicle
- Events was increased because this is the Fire Departments 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the Chief would like to plan some special commemorative events

Permanent Positions was being increased to either increase the firefighter pay rate or offer more hours  
There were also requested increases in the call firefighter rates as well as the firefighter overtime

There was discussion regarding potential changes in how call firefighters are scheduled and compensated. There have been issues with staffing under the current system, particularly on weekends.

- Dues is increased as that number is based upon population
- Training was only slightly increased

- Equipment maintenance and repairs are cyclical in nature based on the life cycle of the equipment. The Department tried to level out replacement of all equipment
- There are no plans to replace any major pieces of equipment at this time
- The Department is in the final phases of updating the bunker gear
- Books and Periodicals is increased at the Department is now working with the Elder Affairs Committee on Fire Prevention with the growing at risk senior population
- It was noted that Part-Time Forest Fire Wardens are reimbursed in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter

D. Britton asked how many calls there have been.

J. McArdle noted that there had been 833 calls year-to-date and that he anticipated the year end number to be mid-900s.

J. Sherman noted that last year's Town Report showed 888 calls.

There was discussion about what services are charged for. It was noted that in most cases the inspection fee is included in the permitting fee, making it a user-based fee. It was also noted that ambulance services are charged out by the ambulance provider. Those transported by Plaistow will see a bill from a billing agency. It was noted that transport by the Town is a rare occurrence. There is no billing for fire service calls as this is a municipal service.

***K. Lewis Savage moved, second by D. Britton to accept for consideration the Fire Department Budget in the amount of \$588,887.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 8-0-0 U/A.***

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

D. Gerns noted that the CIP Committee had met to review, update and finalize the spreadsheet and associated word document. It was noted that the next Budget Committee meeting would be a review of the CIP.

D. Heffernan noted the next Public Safety Complex Building Committee meeting would be on October 23, 2014.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

There was a discussion of dates for the Budget Committee Public Hearing and Deliberative Session;

Public Hearing: Tuesday, January 13, 2015 (Snow date January 15, 2015). It was noted that the last date to hold a public hearing on the budget is January 20, 2015.

J. Sherman noted that January 13, 2015 was also the last day to submit petitioned warrant articles.

D. Heffernan will check the School Budget Committee calendar for conflicts.

Deliberative Session: It was suggested that Deliberative Session be posted for January 31, 2015, with a snow date of February 3, 2015. It was noted that February 7, 2015 is the last day to hold Deliberative Session. Again the School Budget Committee Calendar will be checked for conflicts.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

It was noted that a number of Budget Committee members would not be available for the October 21, 2014 meeting and there was concern there may not be a quorum. It was noted that the CIP would be presented on the 21<sup>st</sup> and there were no department budget presentations. Since there would be no need to vote the Committee can hold a workshop meeting for the CIP presentation.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Dee Voss  
Recording Secretary

