

**BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**October 29, 2013**

A workshop was opening at 6:32 pm.

**ROLL CALL**

Kristin Lewis-Savage, Chair  
Martha Sumner, Vice Chair  
Tricia Holt  
Ben Sadewicz  
David Gerns  
Gayle Hamel  
Darrell Britton  
Dennis Heffernan  
Barry Weymouth, *Excused*  
John Sherman, Selectmen Ex-Officio

Also Present: Sean Fitzgerald, Town Manager

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mike Dorman.

**BUDGET PRESENTATIONS:**

**Inspections Department Budget – Presented by Mike Dorman, Chief Building Official**

M. Dorman explained the Inspections Department's proposed line items for the 2014 budget:

Level Funded Budget Line Items:

• Permanent Positions	\$ 88,515.00
• Back Up Inspector	\$ 300.00
• Telephone	\$ 2,040.00
• Data Processing	\$ 975.00
• Training & Conferences	\$ 2,210.00
• Supplies	\$ 700.00
• Postage	\$ 500.00
• Gasoline	\$ 2,300.00
• Books & Periodicals	\$ 45.00
• Consultant - Electrical	\$ 5,500.00

Increased Budget Line Items:

- Dues & Subscriptions (+\$30.00) \$ 230.00
- Increase is for Support Staff Association Dues
- Vehicle Maintenance Supplies (+\$315.00) \$ 565.00
- Department truck will need transmission flush

- Vehicle Repair (+\$550.00) \$ 1,050.00
- Department truck will need brakes and steering work
- Equipment Purchase (+\$149.00) \$ 150.00
- New office desk chair may be needed
- Consultant – Plumbing (+\$500.00) \$ 4,500.00
- Wash item 100% of fee collected at permitting
- Increase is based on actuals

M. Dorman noted that the 2014 request for the Inspections Department budget was \$109,580.00, which is an increase of \$1,544.00.

Discussion:

M. Dorman noted that the Data Processing line may be changed once the new invoice is received.

J. Sherman requested that the line item descriptions be updated.

D. Britton asked if there was any in-house maintenance done on the department truck. It was noted that it is all done at a local service shop.

There was discussion about the number of permits being up over some recent years. It was noted that there were six (6) new housing starts in 2013. It was also noted there has been an increase in some of the permitting fees.

***T. Holt moved, second by M. Sumner, to accept for consideration the Inspections Department Budget in the amount of \$109,580.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 U/A***

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

**Recreation Department Budget – Presented by Recreation Director, Christina Cruz and Recreation Commission Chair, William Coye**

C. Cruz explained the Recreation Department's proposed line items for the 2014 budget:

Level Funded Budget Line Items:

- Overtime \$ 3,653.00
- Uniforms \$ 3,200.00
- Postage \$ 200.00
- Equipment Maintenance \$ 2,050.00
- Grounds keeping \$ 5,280.00
- Summer Recreation Program \$ 31,595.00
- Community Trips \$ 500.00
- Community Transportation \$ 6,000.00
- Plaistow Pride \$ 1.00
- Senior Programs \$ 4,000.00
- Senior Trips \$ 8,680.00
- Senior Transportation \$ 8,500.00
- Community Events \$ 6,500.00

- Baseball/Softball League \$ 14,680.00
- Little League Baseball \$ 0.00
- Now combined with Baseball/Softball
- Youth Baseball \$ 2,000.00
- Softball \$ 0.00
- Now combined with Baseball/Softball
- Non-Holiday Events \$ 0.00
- Now combined with Community Events
- Umpires Baseball/Softball \$ 4,000.00
- Holiday Events \$ 0.00
- Now combined with Community Events

#### Increased Budget Line Items

- Part time staff (+\$2,189.00) \$ 43,208.00
- Adjustments to Summer Recreation Staff
- Telephone (+\$960.00) \$ 3,960.00
- Three staff cell phones, two landlines and an alarm line at PARC
- Electric at Recreation Fields (+\$1,914.00) \$ 4,935.00
- Increase based on actuals
- Concerts (+\$2,000.00) \$ 8,480.00
- Sunday Concerts may be added at the beginning and end of the season

#### Decreased Budget Line Items

- Director's Salary (-\$3,598.00) \$ 35,360.00
- Current Director's Salary
- Director Training (-\$250.00) \$ 700.00
- State and LGC Conferences

- Supplies and Equipment (-\$32.00)                      \$    3,900.00
- Picnic tables and Basketball System
- Mileage and Expense Reimbursement (-\$221.00)    \$    1,000.00
- Commuting to training and offsite pick-up and delivery
- Summer Transportation (-\$2,000.00)                \$    8,000.00
- Busses for off-site activities
- Youth Disbursement (\$-\$500.00)                    \$    1,000.00

C. Cruz offered that the bottom line budget request for the Recreation Department is \$211,382.00

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

Discussion:

D. Britton noted the large increase in the electrical line. He asked if there was something being done differently to cause the increase.

C. Cruz noted that she had taken the average of recent bills and multiplied it by twelve (months).

J. Sherman offered that the concession stand was open more frequently.

S. Fitzgerald added that lights had also been installed on the new shelter. He noted that they were LED lights so they would have a lesser impact on the billing.

There was discussion regarding the summer concerts and whether or not attendance numbers were kept. It was noted that attendance varied with the different bands and that the possibility of offering different bands was being explored. It was also noted that some of the bands bring their own following with them and others take a few years to build a following.

There was discussion about whether or not there was consideration to relocate the concerts to the PARC. It was offered that there was discussion about doing so, along with creating other music festivals and events. It was noted that PARC was busy with sporting events from early spring until July. It was also noted that the Baptist Church runs their Ice Cream Social in conjunction with the Summer Concerts at Pollard Park.

There was discussion about the basketball system equipment. It was noted that it would be installed at Smith Field (Ingalls Terrace).

There was discussion regarding the summer recreation program. It was offered that there was discussion of changes that would bring improvements, such as a splash park and walking trails, to PARC that would keep the program home based and mean fewer trips off-site. It was also noted that there were discussions to develop a strategic plan to expand the facilities at PARC on land already owned by the Town.

It was noted that there was still \$5,000.00 shown for tent rentals. It was noted that the newly constructed shelter was supposed to eliminate the need for renting tents. It was noted that the tent rental should be \$1,500.00 to provide some additional coverage for the kids.

D. Britton asked if the overtime line was for the director, questioning if C. Cruz was on salary.

C. Cruz replied that she was not on salary.

J. Sherman noted that this was one of the departments that generated a good amount of revenue for the Town.

***G. Hamel moved, second by D. Gerns, to take under consideration the Recreation Department budget in the amount of \$211,382.00. There was no discussion on the motion and the vote was 8-0-1 (Lewis-Savage abstaining).***

**Discussion with Emergency Management Director Lt. William Baldwin**

K. Lewis-Savage noted that the Emergency Management budget had already been reviewed and accepted for consideration but there were some questions so Lt. Baldwin was invited back to answer them.

W. Baldwin explained that the Emergency Management Department is always evolving to meet the needs of the Plaistow community in the event of an emergency whether man-made or natural. He noted that preparation was essential to that goal. The Emergency Operations Management (EOM) Plan was finally complete and will soon be presented to the Board of Selectmen for adoption.

W. Baldwin offered that the EOM Plan was a guideline for the Town to meet different kinds of emergency situations in an orderly fashion and catalogues the available resources. He added that there would be a public version of the plan available online after it has been adopted. Lt. Baldwin noted that for security reasons it wouldn't be prudent to post the full technical version of the EOM Plan.

W. Baldwin noted that the Emergency Management Department had been able to secure \$58,000.00 in grant monies and was in the process of applying for approximately \$200,000.00 more. He offered that one of his goals for the department is the establishment of a Citizen's Emergency Response Team (CERT); noting he would like to have an information night in November.

K. Lewis-Savage recalled that \$25,000.00 per year, for five years, had been added to the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) for the CERT team.

J. Sherman offered that when the CIP Committee was reviewing the request they were working with the information that initial equipment start up for CERT members would be approximately \$5,000.00 per person and the Team would consist of 25-30 members. He noted that this was the first year that Emergency Management was included in the CIP and the number established a place for them in the document. J. Sherman noted that Lt. Baldwin was not available during the CIP review process. It was understood the numbers would shake out over the course of the budget process and the CIP Committee wanted to show support for the CERT.

S. Fitzgerald noted that each CERT member would have a tablet for information and communications.

W. Baldwin added that the tablets were costly because of the software and information they would need to have to be effective as a training and emergency operations tool. He added that additional equipment such as identification cards, jackets; binders and identification patches were included in the requested amount. Lt. Baldwin added that the number was an estimate and would be adjusted as actual costs were known. He added that he would be aggressively pursuing any available grants to defray these costs.

K. Lewis-Savage noted that many grants required a match from the Town and expressed concern that there wasn't enough allocated to match a larger grant award.

S. Fitzgerald offered that Homeland Security has been working with the Town with many of these grants. He noted there were options to meet match requirements for grant awards and that each grant would be reviewed individually. S. Fitzgerald noted that using monies from the Unexpended Fund Balance could be considered by the Board of Selectmen and/or regional consideration could be explored for larger grants.

There was discussion of the availability and distribution of Emergency Management grants with each state getting an amount to disburse to the cities and towns.

There was additional discussion of the need for a CERT program. Lt. Baldwin pledged to search for applicable grants and get better numbers for equipping the volunteers. It was understood that there needed to be some number in the budget to be able to establish this team and keep it going.

There was discussion regarding the types of grants that are available and how they are portioned out.

There was discussion regarding the recent growth of the Emergency Management budget over the past few years. It was noted that emergency management has changed in the time dating back to the ice storm of 2008.

M. Sumner asked if Lt. Baldwin felt that his 2013 budget would be spent out. He confirmed that he thought it would come close.

**Police Department – Presented by Steve Savage, Police Chief**

S. Savage explained the Police Department proposed line items for the 2014 budget:

**Level Funded Budget Line Items**

• Pre-Employment Screening	\$ 2,000.00
• Training	\$ 4,500.00
• Dues & Subscriptions	\$ 500.00
• General Supplies	\$ 10,000.00
• K-9 Supplies	\$ 2,000.00
• Office Supplies	\$ 8,500.00
• Postage	\$ 1,200.00
• Jail Maintenance	\$ 1,500.00
• Books & Periodicals	\$ 1,000.00
• Unanticipated Expenses	\$ 500.00
• Expense Reimbursement	\$ 1,500.00
• Officer Overtime	\$141,278.00
• Officer Uniforms	\$ 30,250.00
• Gasoline	\$ 49,000.00
• Vehicle Maintenance/Repair	\$ 19,000.00
• School Crossing Guard	\$ 16,387.00
• ACO Medical Services	\$ 500.00
• ACO Wildlife Control	\$ 150.00
• ACO Kennel Repair & Maintenance	\$ 500.00

**Increased Budget Line Items**

• Administrative Salaries (+\$246.00)	\$342,672.00
• Increases are related to changes in longevity	
• Prosecutor (+\$1,058.00)	\$ 36,340.00
• This is a contractual increase	
• Collective Bargaining - Education (+\$1,500.00)	\$ 2,500.00
• Union Collective Bargaining Agreement	
• Rentals & Leases (+\$3,000.00)	\$ 4,644.00
• Leases for copier and postage machine	

- Equipment Purchase (+\$7,000.00)                      \$ 23,115.00
- Annual purchases of computer upgrades
- Replacement of office equipment
- Part Time Officers (+\$5,096.00)                      \$ 29,596.00
- New ACO hire
- Coverage for court time and training
- Capital Equipment (+\$18,871.00)                      \$ 62,929.00
- Dispatch Salaries (+\$624.00)                      \$216,449.00
- This is a contractual increase
- Part Time Dispatch (+\$3,555.00)                      \$ 8,555.00
- Dispatch Uniforms (+\$750.00)                      \$ 5,200.00
- Initial uniform set up for new employee

Decreased Budget Line Items

- Management Information Systems (-\$104.00)                      \$ 31,418.00
- Equipment Maintenance/Repairs (-\$1,620.00)                      \$ 22,244.00
- One time projects have been removed
- Officer Salaries (-\$18,347.00)                      \$739,628.00
- Reduction is from census changes
- Telephone and Communications (-\$1947.00)                      \$ 18,495.00
- Lines have been dropped
- Dispatch Overtime (-\$5,000.00)                      \$ 15,000.00

S. Savage offered that the proposed 2014 budget for Police Department is \$1,849,050.00.

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

Discussion:

S. Savage noted that 83% of the increase to his department's budget is personnel related costs and \$14,700.00 increase is a less than 1% increase.

There was discussion regarding a communications tower to be erected in the Newton Road area that would hopefully resolve dead spots in the area. It was noted that putting new equipment on the existing water tower would not resolve the problem because the equipment can be installed high enough. It was noted that upgrades to the communications capabilities, including in the area of the high school, would be phased out.

There was discussion regarding the need for health care for the K-9 officer. It was noted that it was very expensive to train a dog for police work and once they are trained it's important to maintain their help. Previous issues such as a twisted stomach were noted in the dogs. It was also noted that there is a dog memorial located at the Safety Complex.

The question was asked if the Animal Control Officer (ACO) received healthcare benefits. It was noted that the ACO was a part time, less than 30 hours position and did not provide benefits. It was further noted that the position was not claimed by the Union representation.

There was discussion regarding the status of the Plaistow Circuit Court. It was noted that Town Officials with the help of Representative Norman Major had successfully lobbied to save the Court when it was on the closure list. It was also noted that the current contract will need to be renegotiated soon and maintaining the Court in Plaistow was an important cost savings and public safety matter.

There was discussion regarding the increase in costs of uniforms. It was noted there had been some turnover in personnel and outfitting a new officer was expensive and those costs are noted throughout the budget.

It was questioned if the department's gas supplies were put out to bid. It was noted that gas is obtained at the pump. It was further noted that conversations were happening regarding obtaining bulk gas at creating a fuel depot for Town vehicles.

There was discussion regarding vehicle acquisition and maintenance schedules. It was noted that vehicles are currently obtained by lease. It was further noted that the Town seemed to cycle between purchasing and leasing police cruisers. It was added that the model of the available cruisers have changed and fitting new cruisers out was expensive because a lot of the equipment cannot be transferred from the existing cruisers. It was noted that the intended cruiser replacement schedule was two (2) cruisers per year. Other department vehicles, including the unmarked vehicles are not included in the replacement rotation schedule but were included in the CIP.

There was discussion regarding some other vehicles that were acquired through grants and from Federal Agencies, including a Hummer, which is used to transport equipment to the firing range. It was noted that the vehicle was also a good emergency management tool as it can be left at the scene of an incident and was a good tactical vehicle.

There was discussion regarding potential changes to the dispatchers schedule to insure adequate coverage. Certain hours will be set aside as inflexible hours to make sure there are no gaps in coverage. It was noted that this could affect the Department's overtime line. Discussions are happening regarding establishing a more regional dispatching system, which is tied into the improvements with the communications towers.

It was questioned if there were provisions in place to prevent officers taking advantage of the Town's educational reimbursement policy and then leaving the job. It was noted that it was always a risk and that training a new officer was costly.

There was discussion regarding the use of trustees and their supervision. It was noted that Plaistow shares transportation of trustees with Atkinson and they do not have access to restricted areas without supervision.

***B. Sadewicz moved, second by T. Holt, to take under consideration the proposed Police Department budget in the amount of \$1,849,050.00. There was no discussion on the motion and the vote was 8-0-1 (Lewis-Savage abstaining).***

#### **Committee Reports**

There were no committee reports at this meeting.

#### **Old Business**

There was no old business discussed at this meeting.

#### **New Business**

There was no new business brought forth at this meeting.

K. Lewis-Savage adjourned the meeting at 8:37 p.m.



Respectfully Submitted:

Dee Voss  
Recording Secretary