

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING – JANUARY 12, 2010

A meeting convened at 7:33 PM in Town Hall.

Members in attendance: Bothwick, Creighton, Croft, Kenney, Martin, Putnam, and Sullivan

Others present: Town Accountant, Town Administrator, BOS Chair, and one citizen

Mr. Bothwick presided.

FIRE – Chief Paskalis joined the meeting.

Budget - The requested budget has no increases for full time salaries, reflects one retirement, one going out on disability, and includes contractual essentials. The Chief anticipates one new hire. In light of a possible override the question was asked whether a budget should include the anticipated contractual increases if there is no new union contract? Voters should be made aware of this.

Money received from ambulance runs pays the billing company. Two paramedics must be on ALS, and when there is only one fire department paramedic on duty, it is necessary to pay for an outside paramedic. The need to do this is decreasing, as retirees are replaced with paramedics. Last year the billing company collected over \$175,000.

The emergency management notification system is reduced to \$4,500 through a new vendor. Suggestions were made to include an insert in the water or property tax bill to sign up for the service, and that for each primary phone the household pay \$1 for the service.

Capital Items

Ambulance - The ambulance is over 10 years old. It is used daily for trips to many hospitals. The Chief is considering purchasing a 2008 ambulance with 4,000 miles from Hamilton. The vehicle needs about \$25,000 worth of work to make it a fire vehicle. The vehicle may go out to bid in February. The trade in estimate of the current Manchester ambulance is less than \$15,000. The Chief would like to keep it as a back up if an additional ambulance is purchased. If one ambulance is out on a run and there is a need for a second ambulance, another town will get the transport fee. Other reasons to keep it are that fees offset the costs of maintenance, and most communities have a back up ambulance. A suggestion was made to keep the ambulance for one year and determine after that whether it is worthwhile, and to possibly downsize the rolling stock to accommodate the new vehicle.

Insulated garage doors – Springs and motors are no longer made for the current doors, and they are not energy efficient. Occasionally the doors close on their own. A recommendation was made to identify other items that would make the building more energy efficient.

Breathing apparatus – There is a need to meet the new standard, and the price of these upgrades is $\frac{3}{4}$ the cost of new equipment. Chief will apply for a federal grant next year. He suggests this project can be phased. The fire safety equipment is 11 years old, and the life span is 15 years.

He priority list is ambulance, breathing apparatus, doors.

The DPW Director is going to provide some ADA access to the building.

POLICE – Chief McKeil joined the meeting.

Police budget – The salary portion includes contractual adjustments, and a reduction in incentive pay due to staffing changes. The state amount of the educational incentive will be reduced in 2011 and will continue to decrease. If an officer is hired after 7/1/10 they are not eligible for the Quinn bill and those currently eligible will be frozen at their current level. One officer is on extended voluntary military leave, and the budget supports his educational incentive and health insurance. This position will need to be filled.

A regional communication center will not eliminate the dispatcher salaries. A request for this will be on the warrant. The Sheriff will be meeting with both Chiefs. The BOS has requested that the Chiefs look at a combined service.

Harbormaster budget – The salaries include a request to increase the administrative assistant to 16 hours. Increasing mooring fees would fund this. Poor record keeping history caused the department to not collect \$15,000. Due to increased enforcement there are more citations, record keeping, etc. A suggestion was made to utilize students needing to fulfill community service or SCORE to assist with the necessary paperwork.

Capital Items

Replace cruiser – A memo from the Chief defending the need for this request was reviewed. The Police Chief will provide the maintenance log for this vehicle.

Harbor boat outboards – The waterways improvement fund can fund the replacement of twin outboards.

Harbor boat electronics upgrade – These may be funded by increasing the mooring fees. A new engine uses less fuel and oil. A suggestion was made to get quotes for the electronics and that department employees can do some of the work.

MINUTES

The minutes of 9/27/09 were amended by Mr. Putnam and UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED.

The minutes of 10/26/09 were UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED.

OTHER BUSINESS

Labor counsel will be at the BOS meeting on January 19.

The electronics that run the water treatment plant shut down, and employees were able to get them running again. The company who makes them is out of business. It will cost \$115-200,000 to replace them and will need to be included at Special Town Meeting. The plant can run off of the Lincoln Street system until next fiscal year, but some money will need to be spent to shore up this facility.

Weekdays the DPW mechanic will do scheduled repairs on all town vehicles. If it is necessary to make weekend repairs it is less expensive to outsource rather than pay the minimum four hours overtime.

Mr. Bothwick, Mr. Herbster, the BOS chairman, and the Town Administrator met with the School on January 8. At their recent 1/11 meeting there was discussion about reducing the budget. 9.9% is level funded with salaries, SPED, and insurance increases.

The meeting adjourned at 10:24 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Sabella
Clerk