

**TOWN OF WOLFEBORO
BUDGET COMMITTEE
November 28, 2016
Minutes**

Members Present: John MacDonald, Chairman, Bob Tougher, Vice-Chairman, Luke Freudenberg, Selectmen's Representative, Brian Black, Bob O'Brien, Bob Moholland, Steve Johnson, John Burt, Robert Loughman, Members.

Member Absent: Harold Parker, Member.

Staff Present: Dave Owen, Town Manager, Pete Chamberlain, Finance Director, James Pineo, Fire Chief, Lee Ann Keathley, Secretary.

Chairman MacDonald called the meeting to order at 6:39 PM at the Great Hall.

Chairman MacDonald informed the Committee that Harold Parker is currently working on the transition team for Governor Sununu and has requested that his absences from the meetings be excused.

The Committee agreed to such.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Emergency Management

No changes.

Public Safety Building

No changes.

Fire/Rescue

John MacDonald asked if the department is fully employed with call members.

Jim Pineo replied no. He noted his goal is to bring on three employees in the next year; noting that there are currently 6 call members however, only 4 are fully trained.

Bob Tougher questioned the status of the ambulance contract.

Jim Pineo stated the contract was renewed last year for two years beginning 1/1/16.

Bob Tougher reviewed the history of increases to the hydrant fee (outside services) and stated that based on that history, he feels \$345,000 is high and recommended reducing it to \$300,000; noting the average has been 15-16%.

It was moved by Bob Tougher and seconded by John Burt to decrease Outside Services 01-42200-380 from \$345,000 to \$300,000.

Discussion of the motion:

Dave Owen stated the BOS level funded such knowing the Budget Committee's sensitivity to the issue. He stated the Committee raised issues regarding such in 2014; noting information from the Town's consulting engineer was provided to the Committee as to the methodology used to determine the percentage rate. He stated the Town has been using that methodology for over ten years; noting the fee relates to the allocation of fire protection to the water fund and not fire hydrant fees. He stated 20%

is allocated to the cost of the service. He stated the percentage range varies amongst different communities and noted that if the funding is reduced that a rate increase would have to be considered; noting the amount of the funding request was built into the current rate.

John MacDonald stated the 20% is not based on logic rather, it is based on what the BOS choose to set the rate at. He noted the fee doesn't apply to the maintenance, cost or number of hydrants.

Dave Owen stated the AWWA suggests that the cost associated with fire protection be 5%-40%; noting the Town is at 20%.

Bob Tougher stated this issue has been an ongoing discussion for the past five years; noting the history shows the Town has been charging 15-16%.

Dave Owen stated the goal of the Town has always been 20%.

Bob Tougher stated he understands it could have an impact on the rate however, feels that \$300,000 is a fair approach to address the Committee's concern and an adequate appropriation.

Brian Black expressed concern in that the Committee feels the 20% is an arbitrary number however, the reduction of the appropriation is also an arbitrary figure. He stated he would be more comfortable if the figure was based on a formula such as number of hydrants, length of pipe, etc.

Steve Johnson confirmed that a reduction in the appropriation does not benefit the Town.

Robert Loughman requested a more scientific approach to establish the amount of the appropriation.

Brian Black recommended the Committee retrieve a 10-15 year appropriation history and table such until receipt of the information.

Dave Owen stated the Town has figures back to 2010.

John MacDonald stated he has reviewed the records and noted many years are unavailable. He recalls the amount being \$50,000 at some point during his 23 years on the Committee.

Luke Freudenberg stated that if the Committee is going to go from one arbitrary number to another, he would like to see more hard evidence to support the request.

It was moved by Bob Tougher and seconded by John Burt to decrease Outside Services 01-42200-380 from \$345,000 to \$300,000. Bob Tougher, Robert Loughman, Bob Moholland, John MacDonald, Steve Johnson voted in favor. Brian Black, John Burt opposed. Bob O'Brien abstained. The motion passed.

John Burt questioned postage, specifically certified mailing.

Jim Pineo stated such is related to the decommissioning of the municipal fire alarm system; noting the department will be notifying subscribers via certified mail of such. He stated it is cost prohibitive to maintain the system and would be recommending private vendors to contract the service.

John MacDonald questioned machinery and equipment; noting the BOS decreased such.

Jim Pineo stated he had requested a thermal imaging camera and a RAD 57 (a device that measures the level of carbon dioxide in a person's bloodstream) however, the BOS asked if he could hold off on the purchase of the camera for one year.

John Burt reviewed the history of appropriations vs. expenditures from 2010-2015 for the Fire Department; noting the budget has been under expended by an average of \$74,000.

Dave Owen stated surpluses roll over and become part of the unreserved fund balance; noting a portion of such is used to offset the tax rate.

John Burt stated departments should not be budgeting to purposely have money left over. He noted the budget is up by \$90,000 this year.

Pete Chamberlain stated the Fire Department's discretionary spending is down.

Jim Pineo stated that historically, the overtime budget has not been expended however, this year it has been expended in order to meet the needs of the community.

PUBLIC SAFETY CAPITAL OUTLAY

01-49617-734 Emergency Operations Plan update; \$4,500

Jim Pineo stated the last update to the Emergency Operations Plan was done in 2010; noting such is recommended to be updated every four years. He stated he is proposing a third party contractor conduct the update and noted the Town would receive reimbursement from the State through a grant once the plan is completed.

01-49617-735 Fire Department Office Relocation; \$10,000

Jim Pineo stated his office and the office of the administrative assistant is located on the second floor; noting the proposal includes the relocation of the two offices to the first floor. He stated the current location of the offices creates significant difficulties for handicap people and the elderly navigating the stairs. He stated the proposal includes minor electrical upgrades and carpeting.

Bob Tougher questioned whether the proposal is a worthwhile investment given the proposed building renovation project planned for 2022. He questioned the frequency of handicap visitors; noting he is reluctant to support the request.

Jim Pineo stated projects often do not occur as planned and noted the request is not excessive. He stated there are issues with the main entry door to the building and radio transmissions within the building; noting the proposal would also address the latter.

Dave Owen noted there are operational benefits for the Chief and his assistant to be downstairs with the other staff such as improved communication.

John Burt agreed the relocation would provide better access to the public and Police Department.

Brian Black stated there is heavy traffic due to the 24 hour/day work environment and that the carpet will need replacing by the time the larger project occurs in 2020.

John MacDonald recommended decreasing the request to accommodate the carpeting and radio transmissions issue; noting the decrease would not include the lighting upgrades.

Bob Moholland stated that the building has to be maintained however, remain mindful of the fact the building is out of date and will be replaced.

It was moved by John MacDonald and seconded by Brian Black to decrease 01-49617-735 Fire Department Office Relocation from \$10,000 to \$5,500. John MacDonald, Brian Black, Bob Tougher, John Burt, Bob O'Brien, Robert Loughman, Bob Moholland voted in favor. Steve Johnson opposed. The motion passed.

01-49617-760

Rescue Equipment Upgrade

Jim Pineo stated each year the federal government sets aside funds for grant funding to fire departments. He stated he has identified a project for such; auto extrication equipment. He stated the equipment is 20 years old and will not effectively cut apart a vehicle; noting the cost for such is \$120,000 however, a 5% matching gift is required. He stated that if the grant is not awarded, the funds would be go to the General Fund.

Bob Tougher asked if the grant has been applied for.

Jim Pineo replied yes.

Consideration of Minutes

November 7, 2016

It was moved by Bob Moholland and seconded by Robert Loughman to approve the November 7, 2016 Budget Committee minutes as submitted. All members voted in favor. The motion passed.

November 10, 2016

Correction: Page 4, 2nd paragraph (motion); strike "All members voted in favor. The motion passed."

It was moved by Bob Tougher and seconded by Robert Loughman to approve the November 10, 2016 Budget Committee minutes as amended. All members voted in favor. The motion passed.

It was moved by Bob Tougher and seconded by Bob Moholland to adjourn the November 28, 2016 Budget Committee meeting. All members voted in favor.

There being no further business before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lee Ann Keathley
Lee Ann Keathley

****Please note these minutes are subject to approval and amendments at a later date.**