

**TOWN OF WOLFEBORO
BUDGET COMMITTEE
November 15, 2021
APPROVED MINUTES**

I. Call To Order

Chairman MacDonald opened the meeting at 6:08 pm at the Wolfeboro Public Library.

Members Present: John MacDonald, Chairman, Bob Tougher, Vice-Chairman, Steve Johnson, Bob Moholland, John Burt, Bob Loughman, Matt Plache, Brian Black, Members, Brian Deshaies, BOS Representative, Linda Murray, BOS Alternate Representative.

Member Absent: Tom Bell, Member (excused).

Staff Present: Kathy Carpentier, Finance Director, Tom Zotti, Fire Department, Lee Ann Hendrickson, Administrative Assistant.

II. 2022 Budget

AMBULANCE SERVICES

No changes.

FIRE/RESCUE DEPARTMENT

John MacDonald asked if the start date for the Deputy Chief position is 1/1/2022.

Tom Zotti replied yes.

John Burt questioned the increase in part-time wages.

Tom Zotti stated part-time wages are associated with the call members and is hoping to add to such.

John MacDonald confirmed the addition of three full time staff over the next three years.

Tom Zotti stated he is proposing to add one position per year. He reviewed his memo, dated 11/15/2021.

John MacDonald questioned the total score of the ISO rating.

Tom Zotti stated the Town's rating is a 4/4Y.

Steve Johnson stated the ISO is one measure of response time and it is his understanding that it is not a driver and questioned whether there is a deficit in staffing. He stated he is not in favor of three new staff positions and requested the full ISO report.

Bob Moholland questioned the number of firefighters.

Tom Zotti replied eleven full time firefighters and nine call firefighters.

Bob Moholland questioned the number of firefighters per shift.

Tom Zotti replied three line personnel per shift Monday – Friday (day shift).

Bob Moholland stated the ISO rating (noting such is used throughout the country) does drive insurance rates and feels that a 4.73 out of 15 is poor. He stated the Town has an extremely lean Fire Department in comparison to other towns and does not have a lot of apparatus. He stated mutual aid can fail and stated he is in favor of the request for additional positions.

Brian Black asked the Chief to articulate what the taxpayers would gain by adding the positions.

Tom Zotti stated the increase in positions would allow the Town and the Department a larger margin of safety. He stated the Department has a number of tasks that have to be done per incident. He stated in the interest of safety and efficiency, the tasks can be done concurrently if there were additional personnel and noted it is not unusual to respond to a medical incident at one location and a fire alarm at another location (noting such occurred yesterday). He stated he is currently trying to determine the number of concurrent calls.

Brian Deshaies stated since 2019 the Fire Department's total labor costs have increased 3.98% per year (3-year average).

Brian Black asked if grant money is available to assist with the cost associated with the additional positions.

Tom Zotti stated he began to pursue a federal grant however; the grant only covers the hourly rate base salary; noting at the end of three years the funding would cease and the Town would then own three new positions. He stated onboarding three new people at one time is difficult.

Matt Plache agreed with Mr. Moholland's comments. He stated he spoke with Chief Zotti and noted the department personnel has not increased over 15+ years however, the number of calls and building permits have increased.

John Burt stated the Police Department has a rating based on the number of their responses and asked if the Fire Department has a comparison rating.

Tom Zotti stated the Department had 1503 calls last year and is on pace for 1500 calls again this year.

Bob Tougher agreed with Matt Plache and Bob Moholland. He stated the grant may be worth applying for and recommended a warrant article for the position.

Bob Loughman stated the Department's budget is up 2% and noted he is in favor of the proposal.

Linda Murray stated the BOS asked Chief Zotti to adjust his budget in other areas if the position were to be approved and requested Chief Zotti to explain such.

Tom Zotti stated overtime wages (Kelly days) were recalculated and reduced by \$16,000 from the analysis that had been done. He stated there was also a reduction in tools. He stated the increase of firefighters decreases the work week from 48 hours to 42 hours; noting there would no longer be Kelly days.

John MacDonald asked if the Kelley days is part of the union contract.

Tom Zotti replied yes.

Matt Plache confirmed that the budget as proposed currently reflects the reduction of overtime wages and confirmed that additional overtime wages would need to be added back into the budget if the position is not approved.

John MacDonald asked whether vehicle maintenance could be reduced.

Kathy Carpentier stated the Town Manager and BOS reduced the line by \$8,450.

Bob Loughman questioned the substantial increase in building maintenance.

Tom Zotti stated there are paint issues on the cement blocks (discovered after the building was power washed).

John MacDonald questioned professional development.

John Burt stated the line has been under spent over the years.

Steve Johnson asked if it is anticipated that this year's funding appropriation will be spent.

Tom Zotti replied yes.

Kathy Carpentier stated the request was decreased by the Town Manager by \$6,405.

It was moved by John MacDonald and seconded by John Burt to decrease 42200-820 from \$20,000 to \$16,000.

Discussion of the motion:

Brian Black asked what specific training was cut by the Town Manager.

Tom Zotti stated there was no specific training cut; noting the funding request was reduced from \$26,405 to \$20,000.

Bob Tougher confirmed the EMT training is mandatory for firefighters and the AEMT training is optional.

Roll call vote: John MacDonald – yes, John Burt – yes, Bob Tougher – yes, Brian Black – yes, Bob Moholland – no, Steve Johnson – yes, Bob Loughman – no, Matt Plache - no. The motion passed (5-3).

Public Safety Building

Bob Loughman questioned building maintenance.

Tom Zotti stated the building maintenance in the Fire/Rescue budget addresses the substation.

Steve Johnson questioned the cost to rent two copiers and asked if the cost of copiers has been researched.

Kathy Carpentier stated it has not been investigated since her employment and noted that the Public Safety Building is on a different contract than other departments.

Emergency Management

No changes.

CAPITAL OUTLAY

Ladder 1 Tools **\$35,350**

Tom Zotti stated some of the tools were ordered out of this year's budget; noting the original capital outlay funding request was reduced.

Steve Johnson asked if the equipment is replacing existing tools that have cords.

Tom Zotti replied no and stated the existing tools will be phased out.

John Burt asked the number of times the tools are currently being used now.

Tom Zotti replied a couple of times per month.

John MacDonald requested clarification regarding which tools will be purchased.

Tom Zotti replied the cutter, spreader, windshield tool kit and scene light kit.

Boat Rehab

\$54,360

Kathy Carpentier stated the BOS removed the boat rehab capital outlay and postponed such until next year; noting that Chief Zotti felt it was more important to purchase the tools.

III. Other Business

Referencing the Default Budget and Operating Budget, Bob Tougher stated he would like to identify which items are from the General Fund and which items are from the Enterprise Funds. He stated he spoke with Kathy Carpentier about such.

IV. Consideration of Minutes

The Committee tabled such to November 29, 2021.

V. Public Comment

None.

REVISIT ITEMS

- Fire Department Capital Outlay – Ladder 1 Tools

It was moved by Steve Johnson and seconded by Bob Loughman to adjourn the November 15, 2021 Budget Committee meeting. All members voted in favor. The motion passed.

There being no further business before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 7:22 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lee Ann Hendrickson

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