

**TOWN OF WOLFEBORO
BUDGET COMMITTEE
November 27, 2018
Minutes**

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

Staff Present: Becky Merrow, Town Manager, Deb Zabkar, Finance Director, Lee Ann Hendrickson, Administrative Secretary, Mary DeVries, Economic Development Committee, Jim Pineo, Fire Chief.

Chairman MacDonald called the meeting to order at 6:38 PM at the Great Hall.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Becky Merrow stated the Chairman of the EDC recently resigned.

John Burt questioned consultants; BR&E.

Mary DeVries replied Business Retention and Expansion survey; noting such was previously however, there are action items that continue to need addressing by the Committee.

Bob Tougher questioned the year to date expenditure on advertising.

Deb Zabkar replied \$2,500.

Bob Tougher noted in 2017 \$4,842.50 was expended and year to date is \$2,500.

It was moved by Bob Tougher and seconded by Bob Moholland to decrease Advertising 01-46520-562 from \$6,000 to \$5,000.

Discussion of the motion:

Mary DeVries stated there are two outstanding items that haven't been invoiced yet and spending on the Special Events Committee that hasn't been paid.

John MacDonald asked what would be cut if the amount of funding was decreased.

Mary DeVries stated the Committee has been marketing tourism, relocation and expansion of businesses and supporting the Special Events Committee.

Linda Murray stated the Special Events Committee has privately raised \$1,000; noting \$500 of the EDC's budget supports the Last Night event.

It was moved by Bob Tougher and seconded by Bob Moholland to decrease Advertising 01-46520-562 from \$6,000 to \$5,000. John Burt, Robert Loughman, Bob Tougher, Bob O'Brien, Bob Moholland, Steve Johnson voted in favor. John MacDonald, Brian Black opposed. The motion passed.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Jim Pineo stated the Town's Emergency Management Plan was adopted by the BOS and approved by the State; noting the Town recently received reimbursement from a State grant in the amount of \$4,500 for the completion of the plan.

FIRE/RESCUE

John MacDonald questioned the number of employees Chief Pineo supervises.

Jim Pineo replied 11 full time and 1 part time employees and noted the Department has a call staff of 10; noting recruitment and retention of call staff has been difficult. He stated the Department has gone into the schools and is now on their second student intern.

John MacDonald questioned the discrepancy between the Fire Chief and Police Chief's salaries.

Jim Pineo stated he made an agreement with the previous Town Manager and BOS as to what his wage would be.

John MacDonald verified every employee receives some length of service stipend.

Bob Tougher questioned the status of the ambulance service contract.

Becky Merrow stated the contract is not final; noting there is no disagreement with the fee for service rather, they are continuing to discuss the location of the staging of the second ambulance.

Bob Moholland stated he feels the service is expensive and does a disservice to the taxpayers. He stated he doesn't think the Town is looking into the cost and noted the Town has firefighters that are EMT certified.

Jim Pineo stated it is a very difficult topic to take on; noting a lot is based on assumptions of return from insurance companies. He stated he feels the Town gets a decent level of service from the ambulance service. He stated the right time to discuss the matter is when the Public Safety Building is discussed because the Town does not currently have the facility to support an ambulance service.

Bob Moholland stated he feels the Town needs to look at the issue and/or pay a consultant to do such because he feels the Town is overpaying.

Becky Merrow stated the Committee would have to direct the BOS to do such or set aside money for consultant fees.

Bob Tougher stated he feels it's a retainer fee to have two ambulances available 24 hours/day.

Speaking of his own experience, he stated he was shocked that ambulance services is not considered an in-network provider.

Steve Johnson asked what has been done previously.

John MacDonald stated Brian Lord provided the service previously.

Jim Pineo stated it is a huge undertaking if the topic is to be discussed further; noting such is a multi-year discussion.

Robert Loughman asked if Mr. Pineo is saying the Town couldn't have their own service.

Jim Pineo stated he is uncomfortable answering such without reviewing numbers and noted the Town would have to purchase two ambulances.

John MacDonald stated the cost for the service ten years ago was \$275,000 and the cost today is \$271,000.

Referencing hydrant fees, Becky Merrow the Water Rate Model Assumption and reviewed how the rates are established; noting 20% of the operating budget is taken to offset the hydrant fee.

John MacDonald asked how the rate is determined.

Becky Merrow stated the consultant set the water rate.

John MacDonald stated the Department requested \$318,317 and questioned why the BOS increased the funding to \$363,791.

Jim Pineo stated his request reflected 17.5% and was set prior to BOS review.

John MacDonald asked who sets the rate; noting first he is told the consultant and now is being told the BOS.

Becky Merrow stated the BOS said they would like to get closer to 20%.

It was moved by John MacDonald and seconded by Steve Johnson to decrease Outside Services, 01-42200-380 from \$363,791 to \$324,450.

Discussion of the motion:

Bob Tougher reviewed the history of hydrant fees and the percentage related to such.

Bob Moholland asked who makes up for the \$17,000 cut.

Jim Pineo stated such is made up of Water Treatment Plant, Water Distribution and Capital Services.

Brian Black asked why the motion is based on a fixed number and not on 17.5%.

John MacDonald stated he sensed concern from the Committee members therefore, he thought he would keep the figure the same.

Becky Merrow stated the rate is set so there is a small profit and noted there would be less profit as a result of the reduction.

John MacDonald disagreed.

Paul O'Brien stated the Department submitted an increment of \$17,550. He stated there is a need that justifies the increase; noting if the need is not satisfied the revenue has to go up or the expense has to go down. He questioned the justification of \$17,550.

Becky Merrow replied based on the consultant's figures (Underwood Engineers).

Linda Murray stated the consultant uses the American Waterworks Association's information to justify the rates. She stated there will be less money to purchase capital items.

Bob Tougher stated the Town has 260 hydrants; noting almost the entire business community is on Town water and sewer and by reducing funding the businesses will be penalized. He stated he believed 17.5% was a compromise.

John MacDonald asked Linda Murray if the BOS could live with \$324,450.

Linda Murray stated they will have to.

John Burt stated he wants something done prior to next year to establish a set rate.

It was moved by John MacDonald and seconded by Steve Johnson to decrease Outside Services, 01-42200-380 from \$363,791 to \$324,450. All members voted in favor. The motion passed.

John Burt questioned the increase general operating supplies.

Jim Pineo stated the increase is related to hose replacement; noting such was removed from capital outlay and placed in the operating budget.

John MacDonald questioned the increase in machinery and equipment.

Jim Pineo replied such is related to the purchase of one set of stabilization struts.

Robert Loughman asked if such would be a one-time expense.

Jim Pineo replied yes.

PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING

Jim Pineo stated there is an increase in electricity due to additional illumination for the existing camera system; noting vandalism had occurred.

Capital Outlay

01-49619-250 Thermal Imaging Technology Boat 1; \$17,000

Jim Pineo stated there is an increase in the number of boaters on the lake and an increase in the number of people on the vessels. He expressed concern if a person goes overboard and the Department doesn't have the technology needed for the rescue. He stated the cost includes the installation of thermal imaging technology on Boat 1, 2 joystick operators, DVR recorder, monitor and mount and will be used for shoreline searches and detect fuel leaks in the lake.

John MacDonald stated Marine Patrol has the thermal imaging cameras and asked why the Town needed their own.

Jim Pineo stated there could be issues with accessing Marine Patrol.

John MacDonald asked if the purchase could be put off one year.

Jim Pineo replied yes, however, if it's put off for one year then it would be included in the boat rehabilitation capital project request.

Brian Black recommended exploring grants for the purchase of the equipment and asked if there is a Fireman's Association that the Town's people could donate to.

Jim Pineo stated there is a Relief Association however, it is more geared to family of a person who is injured and not for the purchase of equipment. He stated that to his knowledge there are no grants available however, would explore further.

Bob Tougher asked if the boat is on the CIP.

Jim Pineo replied yes.

It was moved by John Burt and seconded by Steve Johnson to decrease Thermal Imaging Technology Boat 1 01-49619-250 from \$17,000 to \$0. All members voted in favor. The motion passed.

Consideration of Minutes

November 8, 2018

It was moved by Robert Loughman and seconded by Bob Tougher to approve the November 8, 2018 Budget Committee minutes as submitted. All members voted in favor. The motion passed.

November 14, 2018

It was moved by Bob Tougher and seconded by Bob O'Brien to approve the November 14, 2018 Budget Committee minutes as submitted. All members voted in favor. The motion passed.

Other Business

Medical and Dental Expenses

Deb Zabkar provided the Committee with revised figures to medical and dental expenses.

It was moved by John Burt and seconded by Bob Moholland to decrease medical and dental expenses by \$54,577. All members voted in favor. The motion passed.

Police Department Vehicle Purchase/Lease

John MacDonald stated the Department has historically leased then purchased cruisers every 3-4 years and has now learned that the Police Chief requested the BOS to start up a \$100,000 capital reserve account for the purchase of cruisers. He asked why the Town is changing their policy. He stated the Department currently has 11 cruisers and does not feel the need for additional cruisers.

John Burt stated in 2010 the Department had 7 vehicles; noting such is a 50% increase in the number of vehicles since that time.

Brian Black stated one car had to be added when the Department got the dog and another car was dedicated to the detective. He noted the Department was donated a vehicle.

John MacDonald recommended the Town continue leasing vehicles and noted there is still one more year on the current lease-purchase agreement. He stated he doesn't understand why all of a sudden it is a crisis and will not support the warrant article to establish a capital reserve account.

Bob Tougher stated the Department has enough vehicles. He noted the Department's budget is up \$166,128 (8.78%) and stated such is not reasonable.

It was moved by John Burt and seconded by Steve Johnson to adjourn the November 27, 2018 Budget Committee meeting. All members voted in favor.

There being no further business before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 8:11 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lee Ann Hendrickson

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