



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

375 MAIN STREET • NEW LONDON, NH 03257 • WWW.NL-NH.COM

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, December 2, 2020

7:00 PM

Via Zoom

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Robert Prohl, (Chair) Joe Cardillo (Vice Chair), Jerry Coogan, Chris Lorio, John Raby, Lyndsay Harkins, John Cannon (Selectmen's Representative) **ABSENT:** Lauren Chadwick Snow, Mark Christensen, Michael Williams

STAFF PRESENT: Kimberly Hallquist, Town Administrator; Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer

OTHERS PRESENT:

Nancy Rollins, Board of Selectman
Jay Lyon, New London Fire Chief
Emily Cobb, New London Police Chief
Lou Botta, Emergency Management Director
Bob Harrington, Public Works Department
Nathan Sheon, CERT Coordinator
Steve Ensign, Chair, Board of Firewards

Welcome

Chair Prohl called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and read the Zoom authorization information.

Approve Budget Committee Minutes of September 9, 2020

IT WAS MOVED (Joe Cardillo) AND SECONDED (John Raby) to approve the minutes of the September 9, 2020 meeting. Roll call vote: Joe Cardillo: yes, John Raby: yes, Lyndsay Harkins, Chris Lorio: yes, Jerry Coogan: yes, John Cannon: yes, Rob Prohl: yes. THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Selectmen's Report

Selectman Cannon provided the following report: The Selectmen finished their budget review this past Monday night. The projection is up 6.9% with a projected 2021 rate being \$4.73 versus 2020's rate of \$4.30. There are no new full-time positions added. A large portion of this is related to the Recreation Director's position salary being left in there as well as a \$95,000 request from the Outing Club. There is no commitment to fund both positions, but it is easier to leave it in than to add it in at a later date. More information is needed, and this will be discussed again at the next Board of Selectmen's meeting.

FY2022 Budget Review

Police

Chief Emily Cobb presented her FY2022 budget. Chair Prohl asked about computer support. Chief Cobb responded that there was an initiative to find a new IT vendor as the existing vendor was not meeting the needs of the town. IT Officer Michael Williams was instrumental in helping the town select a new company and the transition was made over the past several weeks. This new company will help meet the needs of the entire town, not just the Police Department. The cost was divided among several different departments.

It was pointed out that overtime has been overspent and training has been underspent for many years; Chief Cobb explained that most likely this was due to timecards not being completed accurately so training hours were not shown in the training line. Chair Cobb revised her budget to combine the overtime and training line items for a budget amount of \$50,000.

Mr. Cardillo asked if there should be an increase in the New Cruiser line item. Chief Cobb agrees that they should increase it next year. They normally pre-order the cars but this year, due to COVID they were not making the Dodge Charger that they usually buy. Instead, they bought a Tahoe, in order to get it at a reasonable price, they traded in a former Police Chief Ed Anderson's pick-up truck and saw a revenue of \$12,000.

Mr. Cardillo also asked about possibly reducing the gasoline line item. Chief Cobb stated they may be able to travel to attend trainings again in July of 2021 so this will increase gas usage. There will be more training requirements put on police departments as well. It is hard to predict the price of gas and she already reduced it by \$1,500.

Chair Prohl discussed the K9 contribution of \$3,000. He asked if this will be staying at this level or increasing in the future. Chief Cobb explained that she worked with the Canine Officer to review the dog's needs and she tried to keep it at a reasonable level. Chief Cobb stated they still do fundraising and there is an option to contribute to the canine fund in every issue of *Municipal Matters* which has been very successful. Chief Cobb noted that she also applies for grants when the opportunity arises.

IT WAS MOVED (Joe Cardillo) AND SECONDED (John Raby) to accept the Police Department budget in the amount of \$1,268,813. Roll call vote: Joe Cardillo: yes, John Raby: yes, Lyndsay Harkins: yes, Chris Lorio: yes, Jerry Coogan: yes, John Cannon: yes, Rob Prohl: yes. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Dispatch Services

Chief Cobb stated she did the same thing in this budget as she did for the Police Department budget and combined the training and overtime line items. Training wages are at the same rate as overtime.

An increase was made in the new equipment line item as this has been overspent each year. She took an average of the past several years and feels \$5,000 is a reasonable amount.

IT WAS MOVED (Joe Cardillo) AND SECONDED (John Raby) to accept the Dispatching Services budget in the amount of \$451,951. Roll call vote: Joe Cardillo: yes, John Raby: yes, Lyndsay Harkins: yes, Chris Lorio: yes, Jerry Coogan: yes, John Cannon: yes, Rob Prohl: yes. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Fire

Fire Chief Jay Lyon present his FY2022 budget. Chair Prohl stated that during the last budget cycle a full-time position was approved. Chair Prohl asked what the status is with hiring for that position.

Chief Lyon stated the application date closed due to the COVID situation and the concerns regarding revenue streams. This delayed the posting of the position, but they currently have six applicants. The Board of Firewards will interview three of them in the next week or so.

Joe Cardillo noted a sizeable jump in overtime. Chief Lyon responded that overtime is based on full-time status. With the anticipation of hiring a second full time person, it will basically double the overtime expenditures as there will be two full-time staff working overtime, as opposed to one one. Calls that come in on off hours and holidays are paid at an overtime rate.

IT WAS MOVED (Joe Cardillo) AND SECONDED (Lyndsay Harkins) to accept the Fire Department budget in the amount of \$566,975 and to accept the Firewards budget in the amount of \$292. Roll call vote: Joe Cardillo: yes, John Raby: yes, Lyndsay Harkins: yes, Chris Lorio: yes, Jerry Coogan: yes, John Cannon: yes, Rob Prohl: yes. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Emergency Management

Emergency Management Director Lou Botta presented his FY2022 budget. Selectman Cannon noted that the Board of Selectmen had concerns about the cost of the climate-controlled storage unit, the CERT team and hazardous material fee (the \$2,000 fee is being waived this year so it was removed from the budget). The Selectmen felt that the climate-controlled container and CERT team appropriations should not be included in the budget.

Emergency Management Director Lou Botta stated they do need the climate-controlled storage unit and this is not a want, it is a need. There is life saving equipment in the basement of the Academy building and this is not ideal.

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) is vital and there is a critical need for this. They have been working at this initiative for the past four years and zeroing out the budget now and then paying for increased costs in 2 or three years does not make sense. The CERT team has been accredited by the state and FEMA and now needs the organization, training and equipment that is required to bring it into fruition. Funding this is going to save lives and it is critical for this town.

Selectman Cannon stated the decision to remove these funds was due to cost and shared his own experience with CERT teams. They generally start out strong but because there is minimal use of them, people get bored and frustrated and move on to something else. It is difficult to rely on volunteers for these very rare occurrences. It is a lot of money for something we may not use.

Selectman Rollins stated they felt that given the significant increase in the budget overall, this was an area that we could forgo for this year. Also, they did not ask for the line to be eliminated, they just zeroed out the request. At some point, they could look at funding the CERT team, but the Selectmen unanimously felt that this was not the time.

Lyndsay Harkins asked for clarification on the dollar amount that Mr. Botta was requesting, and he responded it was \$8,835. Mr. Botta stated for the Selectmen to just do away with the program they have been working on for the past four years is difficult to understand. Ms. Harkins agrees and stated this does a disservice to the contributions he has made to this town. Given his background he is very knowledgeable in this area and he is not asking for a lot of money.

Joe Cardillo recommends the line item be put back in and a place holder in the amount of \$1,000 or \$2,000 be put in. They would not vote on it and will continue the conversation. Mr. Cardillo noted

that the Selectmen weighed in on this and he respects their decision but would like to discuss this further.

Chris Lorio does not feel that using the reasoning that volunteers lose interest is a good argument. He is concerned that the line was zeroed out and he would like to put something back in as a placeholder.

IT WAS MOVED (Rob Prohl) AND SECONDED (Jerry Coogan) to restore \$4,500 to that line item. Roll call vote: Joe Cardillo: abstain, John Raby: yes, Lyndsay Harkins: yes, Chris Lorio: yes, Jerry Coogan: yes, John Cannon: no, Rob Prohl: yes. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Motion to Adjourn

It was moved (John Raby) and seconded (Jerry Coogan) to adjourn the meeting. Roll call vote: Joe Cardillo: yes, John Raby: yes, Lyndsay Harkins: yes, Chris Lorio: yes, Jerry Coogan: yes, John Cannon: yes, Rob Prohl: yes. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 8:24PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Trina Dawson

Recording Secretary
Town of New London