Board of Selectmen
On-Line Via Zoom & YouTube Live
February 25, 2021
Special Budget Workshop Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: T. Govert; C. Quinn; R. Smith
Also Present: D. Angersola; B. Auld; S. Daigle; J. Spencer; C. Varricchio; S. Wheeler; L. Zemienieski, and other members of the public via virtual media

1. First Selectman Smith called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. and provided information on how the public could submit their questions, comments and concerns to the meeting.

2. 2021-2022 General Budget Review Workshop

   A. Public Safety Budgets

      1. Fire Department Operating/Capital: Ms. Varricchio stated that she had made some updates to the Fire Department's budget and noted that there was a slight decrease in the department's new staffing request. Ms. Spencer reviewed the department's current full-time staffing schedule and advised that a request has been submitted to add two additional FTEs to cover an 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. shift. Ms. Varricchio reviewed the impact of this request on hours and hourly rates. Mr. Smith reviewed the department's performance measures and noted that the calls for service in 2019-20 were significantly lower than 2015-16 and 2016-17 and on par with 2018-19.

         In response to an inquiry from Ms. Govert, it was confirmed that the staffing schedule at the start of the Fiscal Year was two FTEs from 6:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and that two per diem employees were added in December to man an additional 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. shift. Mr. Smith noted that the need for the additional per diems is being evaluated monthly. In response to a request from Mr. Smith, Ms. Spencer agreed to provide statistics for how frequently two crews were utilized.

         Deputy Fire Chief Daigle reviewed the history of staffing requests and stated he does not feel four employees (2 full-time and 2 per diems per day) are justified to cover fire calls. He stated that the Fire Department staff is responding to more ambulance calls than fire calls but noted that that is typical across the industry.

         The participants discussed the remainder of the operating budget and Ms. Varricchio noted she needs to correct the proposed overtime budget down by $3,600.00 (original request $20,000 to $16,390) which would still reflect a 64% increase. She further advised that per a request from Ms. Spencer, she will shift the grounds maintenance budget of $2,500.00 to the supplies budget line to cover the increased cost of PPE.

         There was a general discussion regarding deferred training due to the pandemic. Ms. Varricchio advised that she has encumbered funds for training next fall and Mr. Smith instructed the department staff to provide Ms. Varricchio with specific information regarding the proposed training. Fire Chief Auld responded to a question from Mr. Smith concerning the substantial increase (95%) in the uniform budget line.

The participants discussed the increase in the fire ponds budget line (180%) and Deputy Chief Daigle advised that much of the required repairs will have to be contracted out; however, he noted that it would be a one-time expense and the budget for this item should go back to normal once the work is completed.

The meeting participants discussed the department's capital budget. Mr. Smith noted that cumulative capital requests for the department total $3,673,034.00, which includes approximately $450,000.00 in new capital requests.

In response to a request from Mr. Smith, Mr. Daigle agreed to provide usage information regarding the department's Utility 15 vehicle. There was a general discussion concerning the replacement plan for thermal imaging cameras and national guidelines for firehose replacement. Chief Auld discussed the new requests for a duty vehicle and Ranger 15 and trailer.

In response to a question from Mr. Smith, Ms. Spencer confirmed that some of the new hydraulic extrication equipment has been recieved. Ms. Spenser also noted that a grant application for the heavy extruder and dryer closet has been submitted.

Several scheduled replacement capital requests were discussed, including AEDs and chest compression devices, the generator at Fire Company No. 1, and boiler replacements at both companies. Mr. Smith reviewed the request for new security access controls at both Fire Houses and Mr. Angersola discussed estimates received for new overhead door openers and to replace deteriorating metal sheathing at Fire Company No. 2.

There was a general discussion concerning the $28,000.00 capital request to renovate Fire Company No. 2's kitchen and Ms. Spencer stated that that proposal could be reduced to $15,000.00. Mr. Angersola reviewed the problems with the flooring in Fire Company No. 2 and noted that he has not been able to determine who did the flooring work during the recent renovations to the building. Ms. Varricchio stated she would check the project records to see if she could determine who the flooring contractor was.

Mr. Daigle reviewed the pros and cons of the capital requests for a combination engine/tanker and engine/rescue vehicles. He stated that he is not in favor of combination vehicles but prefers dedicated-purpose vehicles. Chief Auld stated that he and the department's executive board agree with Deputy Fire Chief Daigle. In response to questions from Mr. Smith, Mr. Daigle stated that he cannot definitively say that Engine 1 will need to be replaced in 2030 and that the current rescue vehicle was purchased in 2015 so he does not feel it should be scheduled for replacement in 2025.

In response to Ms. Varricchio's stated concern about reserving appropriately for replacement vehicles, Deputy Chief Daigle stated that he felt the estimate of $1M is realistic for either a combination engine/tanker or for two dedicated vehicles. There was a general discussion regarding the FEMA grant condition to trade in one of the engines after the Quint is delivered. Ms. Spencer reviewed the pros and cons of Engine 2 and Engine 4 and confirmed that FEMA is good with whichever vehicle the department decides to trade-in.

The participants discussed the department's capital request to replace the vehicle exhaust fume removal system in the firehouses. Mr. Daigle noted that the current system was

installed approximately four years ago at cost of $97,000.00. Chief Auld reviewed the problems with the existing system.

Mr. Smith advised Chief Auld and Deputy Chief Daigle that Ms. Varricchio will need accurate estimates for all of the department's capital requests before the budget is turned over to the Board of Finance.

The meeting adjourned for a break at 5:50 p.m.

A motion was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Govert, to call the meeting back into order. Unanimous aye. The meeting reconvened at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Smith reported that he had learned new information during the break regarding the estimate for the replacement vehicle exhaust fume removal system. Mr. Angersola advised that the estimates received for the two fire houses were $50,600.00 and $60,600.00 for Fire Company 1 and Fire Company 2, respectively.

Ms. Varricchio stated that she is working on the reserves budget and expects to have a final draft of the operating and capital budgets for the next meeting. Ms. Zemienieski reviewed the agendas of the next two scheduled budget workshop meetings.

B. Other Budget Items: No other budget items were discussed at the meeting.

3. Public Comment: No public comment was submitted to the meeting.

4. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, a motion was made Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Govert, to adjourn the meeting at 6:05 p.m. Unanimous aye.

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,
Theresa Govert, Secretary