



Budget Committee Meeting
Town of Gorham
Gorham Town Hall
CONFERENCE ROOM

MINUTES OF JANUARY 16, 2020

Members Present: Diane Bouthot, Dan McCrum, Abigail Evankow, Robert Demers, Mary White, Jessica McCreedy, Lee Carroll, Adam White as Selectmen's Representative

Absent: Douglas Gralenski, Judith Leblanc

Town Staff Present: Denise Vallee, Town Manager; Kathy Frenette, Finance Director; Chief Phil Cloutier, Fire Department

Minutes Taker: Shelli Fortin

1. Call to order: 6:02 PM

2. Approve Minutes 1/14/2019: **Motion to approve as submitted from Diane Bouthot with a second from Lee Carroll. Voted in the affirmative.**

3. Review of FY2019 Revenue and Expenses Report

This will be moved to the meeting on January 21, 2020.

3. Old Business

Denise Vallee clarified the amount to be added to the Police Cruiser CRF, and it was decided it should be \$38,000 rather than \$35,000.

4. New Business

a. Review of Fire Department proposed budget

Chief Cloutier advised that the telephone and internet line is up, as all other departments. The gasoline and diesel lines have been broken into two instead of one line, as the new pickup uses gas and before they only used diesel. The vehicle expense line was raised by \$1,000, as the vehicles are getting older and may need more work. The uniform line was raised by \$10,000 to allow for the replacement of 4 sets of turnout gear per year. However, this year it will be used to replace helmets. Chief Cloutier advised that some of the turnout gear is expired, but can still be used by exterior firefighters as long as they put on new name tags, which will cost about \$800. Everyone that goes inside has current gear. The workers compensation line is up, as is IT support. The total increase for the budget is \$16,802. Bob Demers asked about the Cascade station and Chief Cloutier advised it currently houses the tanker and antique engine, along with providing storage. Chief Cloutier advised the cost to keep the station open is \$1808 per year, and renting two storage units would be about \$3,900 per year. When the tanker is replaced, Engine 4 will

move to the Cascade station. Mary White asked about the base salary for the on-call firefighters. Chief Cloutier stated that he would like to look at the pay range, as the only increases there have been are the 2% COLA increases, and like the ambulance service last year, he would like to set new rates. White advised pay ranges from about \$11 up to \$19.48, with an average of \$12.56, and pointed out that the new hires for the Public Works department started at \$16.00/hour. Chief Cloutier advised that an increase was not planned for this budget and that Shelburne on-call firefighters are paid \$9.75/hour. Diane Bouthot asked about the number of firefighters and Chief Cloutier advised there are currently 30 members on the Gorham roster. There is one full-time position, which is the Chief, and EMS has 3 full-time and 1 part-time position, along with per diem work. The Committee discussed the SCBA's and Chief Cloutier advised that all of the packs are expired, but the cylinders are up-to-date. They have hired a new grant writer, and will be applying to the Assistance to Firefighters grant program to purchase 20 new packs. If they are not awarded the grant again this year, they will begin replacing a few at a time. The current balance of the Fire Equipment CRF is \$28,583, and with the appropriation this year, would allow them to replace 7 packs. Chief Cloutier advised that he would prefer to wait to see if they are awarded the grant and purchase all at the same time. The cost of the grant writer was \$1,350, and they are allowed 4 grants in a year. Jessica McCreedy asked where the cost of the grant writer is listed in the budget and Denise Vallee advised she will check to see which line item it was taken from.

b. Review of EMS proposed budget

Chief Cloutier advised the salary line is down, and the OT line has been reduced since they are now fully staffed. Health benefits have changed due to demographics. Retirement and Social Security are down. There is an increase in IT support and internet. Gas and diesel were broken out into two lines, and the cost of fuel is up. Uniforms are up \$500, as they need to start replacing some that are wearing out. Chief Cloutier advised that turnout gear costs about \$500 a set. The total increase for the EMS budget is \$15,522. Chief Cloutier advised that about half of the EMS personnel are cross-trained for fire.

For the Capital Reserve accounts, Chief Cloutier advised that they are looking to replace the tanker and UTV this year. Cloutier provided a list to the Committee of the vehicles and anticipated replacement dates. Ambulance 2 will need to be replaced next year, as it currently has 122,000 miles. The current tanker is about 27 years old, would not pass the pump testing, has rotted pipes, and is difficult to drive. They would like to replace it with a smaller unit that will be safer to drive. Chief Cloutier obtained a quote from Osco Tank and Truck Sales for a 2021 Freightliner with a 2,000 gallon tank for \$238,250, which is less than they anticipated for replacement. The current CRF balance is \$346,000. The Committee asked about the warranty and Chief Cloutier will email the spec sheet for their review. Warranty work could be done in either Londonderry or Lebanon if needed. The current UTV was donated to be used as a response vehicle for all of Coos County, but has been used primarily in Gorham. It breaks down frequently and needs to be replaced. A quote was received from MOMS in Groveton. The UTV is used for response to snowmachine and OHRV accidents, as well as injured hikers and forest fires, and is used about a dozen times per year. Diane Bouthot asked about grants, or the possibility of donations or a reduced price from local OHRV businesses. Denise Vallee will check on the purpose of the Fire Truck CRF, as there is enough in there to cover the purchase of the UTV, but Bob Demers suggested it not be taken from there as they will need to replace Engine 3 in 2025. Capital Reserve items are included in the contract cost to other towns.

Vallee advised they met with both Shelburne and Randolph about the contracts and are negotiating a cost that will be fair to all. Mary White asked if there is a resale value to the tanker and Chief Cloutier advised not as a fire truck, however there will be something. The vehicle will be sold bare, and all equipment will stay here for the new truck. The committee asked about the hose that was damaged in the forest fire and Cloutier advised that the railroad has been billed for that replacement cost along with labor. They are waiting on reimbursement. Cloutier advised that the Ambulance CRF was kept at \$25,000, and the cost to replace the ambulance next year will be about \$180,000. The ambulances are on a schedule to purchase one every 6 years. The CRF will need to be increased to \$30,000 next year to allow for this. The Ambulance Equipment CRF is up \$15,000 due to the need to replace the cardiac monitors, which will be \$66,000 for two. There is a purchase plan available at a cost of \$16,000 per year for four years. A Siren grant may be available, but it is currently waiting on funding from Congress. They were awarded a grant for mobile repeaters and radio programming after the motorcycle accident in Randolph last year. Abby Evankow asked about services available for first responders who may be dealing with trauma from this accident. Denise Vallee advised that Healthtrust does offer an employee assistance program. Chief Cloutier advised that the Vet Center and CCFHS both offered free counseling services after the accident, and that he does talk with his employees about mental health and is there to talk if needed.

c. Review of Finance proposed budget

Kathy Frenette reviewed the Finance budget with the Committee. The Executive office includes \$1,800 for minutes for the Board of Selectman. This had been done by the Dispatch Supervisor, and then Chief Cyr. Health Insurance is up, and other changes are minor. The total budget increased \$16,609, mostly due to insurance. Selectmen are paid \$3,200 each, the additional \$75 in the budget last year was due to a prorated salary. The telephone charge is for cell phone reimbursement. Diane Bouthot asked if the town is self-insured and Denise Vallee advised they are part of a pool but considered self-insured. The cost for the Finance part-time position, once done the probationary period, will be covered by the National Able Agency for up to 4 years. They will pay wages and workman's compensation. Vallee advised that we are in the second year of three years for the migration fee to the new website. Michelle Lutz updates the website, but all department heads have been trained. The Purchase Maintenance/Repair line is down \$4,200 as this was broken out to each department. The Software support is an annual fee. Robert Demers asked why there was a balance remaining of \$22,315.07 and was advised it was due to health insurance, which was moved to the Executive Office.

Legal expenses are up \$25,000 due to the OHRV case. Abby Evankow asked about settling the case to avoid the cost of going to trial, and Denise Vallee advised mediation was not successful and it is headed to trial. Any other legal expenses are also included in this line. The Wellness program is budgeted at \$400, and also receives a \$500 grant from Healthtrust. It is used for employee wellness activities, which Sue Bolash plans. There is also \$750 included in the budget for Tuition Reimbursement.

The Town Hall budget includes the 2% COLA for the custodian. Town hall heat and oil was budgeted at \$2.18, but is locked in at \$2.23/gallon. This will be adjusted. Abby Evankow asked about the Tax Deeded Property line and was advised it is for legal expenses or expenses to secure the property if taken by the town by tax deed. Last year the town received a premium holiday for Insurance, but it is budgeted at the full cost in case they do not receive one this year. The Family Resource Center reimburses the town for their

portion, and they are still working on a new contract for the lease. Mary White asked if police liability cost would go down if the body cameras are purchased, this would have to be looked into.

North Country Council is budgeted at \$3,304, and is the regional planning commission. Town office printing includes ads for public notices, RFP's, and employment. Street lighting was suggested to be reduced by 40% last year, but the amount budgeted was not enough. It should be increased by \$1,000 from the current proposed budget and this will be adjusted. The Welfare line is down, as Sue Bolash is very good at referring clients to resources that are available. Diane Bouthot asked about those requesting assistance working for the town to pay it back, and Vallee advised this is done on a case-by-case basis. As for long-term debt, the LED payments will end next year. Jessica McCreedy asked about the balances for long-term debt and Vallee advised these are listed in the Town Report. The TAN was not needed this year, but is budgeted in case it is needed next year. DARE is budgeted at \$3,000, but they may use LEAP instead of DARE for a program. This would include the cost of the material and any OT hours needed by the officer. Mary White advised that the 5th grade also does a health program that covers the same issues, and asked if DARE or LEAP would just be duplicating the same information.

5. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, January 21, 2020

8. Adjournment – **Diane Bouthot made a motion to adjourn at 8:04 PM, seconded by Robert Demers. Voted in the affirmative.**

Respectfully Submitted
Shelli Fortin