

BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES

December 6, 2018

Members Present: Carl Hagstrom, Winston Wright, Martin Nolan, Kathy Stark, Ben Thomas, Andrew Wood, Debbie Favreau, and Selectman's Representative, Nancy Carney

Members Absent: Virginia Doerpholz

Mr. Hagstrom began the meeting at 7:14 pm.

Minutes: Mr. Wood made a motion to accept the minutes and Mr. Nolan seconded. All members voted in favor with the exception of Ms. Stark who abstained.

Members were asked to review the budgets of the Fire Department, Ambulance, Emergency Management, and the Cemetery.

Fire Department: Bill Prigge presented the budget for the Fire Department. Mr. Prigge stated that the request was a bit lower, amounting to a \$4630 reduction. Mr. Nolan inquired about line 560 Dues/ Subscriptions. Ms. Carney answered that it was for the computer program for dispatch, which is also shared with the Ambulance. Mr. Hagstrom asked about the number of personnel on the department. Ms. Carney responded that there are 21 members, all with various levels of training. She then stated that line 830 Training is up because the state costs for training have increased.

Ambulance: Nancy Carney presented this budget. She stated a committee was formed to determine what can be done to provide better service for Fitzwilliam. There are staffing issues during the day, with 50% of the calls coming in M-F between 7am and 5pm. One option coming out of this was to hire a part time fire chief to man the fire station on a regular basis. Having doors open is important. The chief would be there to work on paperwork and greet town folk who may need help with permits, directions, etc. and be available for calls. Part of this program also involved the hiring of per diem personnel instead of part time employees. Kathy Hotchkins, a member of the committee, stated volunteers are hard to come by and having the required number of personnel ready to take calls and perform all the required safety inspections would alleviate the daytime concerns. Mr. Wood asked how many hours the chief would work each week. Ms. Carney answered that it depended on the number of calls, but nothing over 30 hours. John Holman wanted to know if there were any night time issues with personnel. Ms. Carney stated there are no issues during the night. When he asked about the pay rate, she

answered that the per diem rate \$12-15 per hour depending on their level and when on call it is \$3 per hour. Mr. Wright asked about overtime and Ms. Carney stated there would be no overtime. Mr. Nolan agreed that there are problems with staffing and with the large volume of calls, something has to be done. Charlie Kenison shared that he would like to study this further with the inclusion of the selectmen and the fire wards. Mr. Thomas asked to clarify the difference between the per diem and part time for which Ms. Carney responded that per diem limits the number of hours per week and avoids paying benefits. Looking at the budget, Mr. Wood asked about Line 550 Printing and Ms. Carney indicated that the State requires the printing be done in color. He also asked about Line 560 Dues/Subscriptions and the answer was that the Ambulance uses the same dispatch program as the Fire Department. Mr. Nolan then asked if Line 635 Gasoline was enough as the price of fuel is going up. She responded that they will look further at the end of the year.

Emergency Management: Ms. Carney stated that this budget is up by \$150.00.

Cemetery: Mike Grab presented this budget and stated the only increase is for the 3% COLA in salaries, which amounts to \$600. He has 2 part time employees and performs 7-8 burials per year. Mr. Hagstrom inquired about the equipment and Mr. Grab indicated they have 2 mowers, with one being new. He then shared that the old shed on Richmond Rd is beyond repair, but new shed built last year on Royalston Rd is working out great.

With no other questions or concerns, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Submitted by Marion Wheeler