

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING  
OCTOBER 29, 2019

PRESENT: David Lage, Chairman, John Veaser, Bert Hamill  
Scott Butcher – Town Administrator  
Finance Advisory Committee Members Jack Low, Jeff McCabe, Nicole Saczawa, Marc Fortier and Fire Chief Meredith Lund

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. at the Town Office.

Chairman Lage began the meeting discussing the need for a Request for Proposal (RFP) for replacing streetlights with LED units to save money on electricity and instructed the Town Administrator to look into it. Chairman Lage also requested that a meeting be set with Town Counsel to discuss the Smithville Cemetery and invite the Cemetery Trustees. The Selectmen discussed possible dates and settled on Tuesday, November 5<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 OM. Chairman Lage also requested that a meeting be set with abutter to the Old Town Hall to address septic, water, and parking issues. Selectman Hamill brought up the estimate from Scully Architects to assess the Old Town Hall and District 13 Schoolhouse. Chairman Lage said then discussion of what is involved to restore the old Wachusett fire engine would be tabled. That discussion will happen at a later date.

Heart Safe Community Presentation: Bill Wood from the State of NH Fire & EMS Academy discussed efforts to get more Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) into public places and have people properly trained to use them. He stated that there are about 200 cardiac arrests per month in New Hampshire. A representative from the American Heart Association, Nancy (??) was also present and stated they refresh the guidelines on CPR, the use of AEDs, and providing training. Bill Wood said that New Ipswich is the 39<sup>th</sup> community in NH to achieve the status of being a Heart Safe Community and read a letter of commendation.

Cell Tower Discussion: The Selectmen discussed the status of the Vertex Tower Assets, LLC cell tower proposal that is pending before the Planning Board. There was some concern about whether the Planning Board was prepared to take a vote on the issue at their next meeting on November 6<sup>th</sup>. The Town Administrator indicated that there was to be a meeting with the town's communications vendor to determine how much space the town would require at the cell tower facility for emergency communications. That would factor into the negotiations with the tower owner.

Budgeting Process: The Town Administrator informed the Selectmen that there are 53 pay periods in 2020 and that should be factored into the budgets. There was some discussion on the impact on cash flow and Chairman Lage requested that the Town Administrator ask the Treasurer for a report on that.

Propane Tanks and Vendor Discussion: There was some discussion on the ownership and location of the propane tanks for town facilities. Facilities Manager Mark Hopkins had been getting prices on propane from different vendors and found that Suburban Propane is significantly less than Haffner's, the vendor be used now. The Town Administrator was asked to confirm ownership of the current tanks as that would have an impact on the cost of switching vendors.

Fire Department Budget Review: Chairman Lage reiterated that budgets should be zero-based, built from the ground up. He asked Chief Lund if she had backup for each of the line items requested. She said she has all the backup documentation to justify each item. There was some discussion about various line items around maintenance and testing. There was discussion around line items for 2019 that haven't been fully exhausted such as training, training supplies, and stipends.

Chief Lund explained that she is requesting an increase in the Equipment Repair, Maintenance line item due to SCBA repairs required due to age. The age of the SCBA tanks mean that in the next few years they will not be able to be repaired and must be replaced. The Chief indicated that she will be pursuing an AFG grant to replace the SCBA tanks. The discussion then led to the amount being spent on small engine repair, \$1,500. Chief Lund indicated that it is cheaper to send small engine repair out than trying to do it in-house. There was discussion between the Selectmen and FAC members about what the firefighters are being paid via stipends and what duties they should be performing. Jack Low from the FAC recommended that small engine repair be bid out. Selectman Veaser questioned the cost of compressor maintenance and testing.

Chief Lund stated that vehicle maintenance is being shopped around. Chairman Lage questioned why the cost had not gone down proportionately with the reduction of the number of vehicles now in service. The pump maintenance and testing for this year has been completed, but not all the bills for those have been received from the vendors. There was multiple discussions going on about the spending so far in 2019 and how much of the remaining balance will be used for the rest of the year. The discussion then turned to upgrading the lighting on remaining vehicles to better LED units. There was extensive discussion regarding the need for installing onboard air compressors on some vehicles. The onboard compressors eliminate the need for a shoreline air hose connected to each truck in the bays to keep the air pressure up to operate the brakes on the fire trucks. There was discussion about how the trucks have to be situated at the fire station to enable connection to a shoreline air hose. This reduces flexibility and can delay trucks from responding to a call.

The discussion turned to Computer Services and the need for a large monitor at the Fire Station to be mounted where firefighters could see it when preparing to depart from the station during a call. The Spotted Dog system allows for firefighters to track who is responding to a call and how close they are to arriving at the Fire Station to respond to calls. The Communications line item was also discussed and Chief Lund said the cost for telephones is high since the new town-wide phone system was installed. She said there was also an increase in the budget due to replacing

radios, pagers, batteries, etc. Chairman Lage questioned whether money was being requested for things we want rather than things we need. Selectman Veaser suggested that Chief Lund should look at what monies are still available in 2019 that can be spent now rather than budgeting for them in 2020. Selectman Hamill asked if the potential cell tower on Old Peterborough Rd. would be of any benefit to the Fire Dept. with respect to communication. Chief Lund said any improvement in cellular coverage would be helpful. The option to place a repeater on the tower would also improve general radio communication. There was a lengthy discussion regarding communications requirement for the Fire Dept.

There were no changes requested in the Dues, Subscriptions and Fees line item. Chairman Lage requested that the Mileage line item be reduced because it didn't look like the full amount for 2019 was required. Chief Lund explained why the money won't be expended in 2019 but will be in 2020. The mileage is used mostly for training purposes including trips to the Fire Academy. The discussion turned to General Supplies. Selectman Veaser said he wanted to stop renting water coolers from Monadnock Water and purchase them outright.

Chairman Lage asked what the reason was for such a large increase in the General Supplies line item. Chief Lund explained that she included the purchase of two AED units to be installed in a couple of the fire trucks. Chairman Lage questioned why the units on the ambulances and in the police cruisers couldn't be used instead. Chief Lund explained they are not always on the same calls the Fire Dept. is or may not be in close proximity to the fire scene. The second leading cause of death among firefighters is a heart attack, the first being cancer, the AEDs are important. Chairman Lage scrutinized the General Supplies budget and suggested that things could be cut. Chief Lund said that things were cut out of the 2019 budget and now they are needed for 2020. FAC member Jack Low said he couldn't get his head around needing \$2,000 for consumables. He also questioned why the need for two AED units and asked if the Fire Dept. could get by with one. FAC member Jeff McCabe did a recap of the other line items Chief Lund agreed to cut. FAC member Jack Low questioned why the AEDs and pressure washer being requested are included in the General Supplies line item versus the Equipment line item. Chairman Lage agreed they should be in Equipment. He went on to challenge Chief Lund about the need for the two AED units giving examples of how the Police, Ambulance Service and/or mutual aid could have one available.

The discussion moved on to the Office Supplies which is level funded. The Electricity line item was also level funded for 2020. The Heat line item is level funded at \$5,000. Chief Lund suggested that the heating system should be replaced at the Fire Station with a newer, more efficient system. Postage is level funded at \$50 and Fuel at \$2,000.

The focus turned to the Equipment, New/Replacement line item. The discussion started with the gear extractor to clean turnout gear. There was concern about the cost and how the firefighters' gear would be dried since the extractor only washed the gear. The forestry nozzles and hoses were also discussed and why they are necessary, as were the MSA gas meter vehicle chargers. There was also a long discussion about the requested rescue jacks used at motor vehicle accident

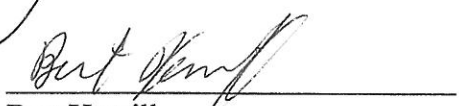
scenes. Chairman Lage questioned why Chief Lund was requesting rescue harnesses and carabiners because they had budgeted them for 2019. Chief Lund stated that she had asked for four harnesses in 2019 and only got approval for two. She is now coming back to ask for the other two in 2020 plus the carabiners that go with them.

Emergency Management Budget Review: The Town Administrator informed the Selectmen that Emergency Management Director had submitted his resignation stating that he didn't feel he could devote enough time to the position to be completely effective. The Selectmen and FAC members discussed the role of the Emergency Management Director and whether it is a necessary position.

Selectman Veaser made a motion to adjourn. Selectman Hamill seconded the motion. The Selectmen voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Scott Butcher, Town Administrator

Minutes approved by:  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

  
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David S. Lage, Chairman  
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John Veaser  
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Bert Hamill