

Present: Dorianne Almann (arrived at 6:45pm), Joe Conroy, James MacDonell, Lewis Major, School Board Representative Sean Leary, Selectmen's Rep William Nebelski, and Peter Zavorotny.
Excused: Bruce Bellville. Absent: Michael Carrier, Morris Klein.

Mr. Zavorotny called the meeting to order at 6:30pm in the Town Hall. This was a joint meeting with the selectmen for budget matters.

Several members of the public were present.

The Budget Committee tentatively approved the **Fire Department's (01-4220)** budget for \$163,696; not included was an increase to Vehicle Allowance of \$1,200 made by the Selectmen. Mr. MacDonell moved to approve a new total of \$164,896; Mr. Conroy provided the second. Fire Chief Jay Matuszewski expressed concern that the salary line in the fire department budget had been reduced too far. After discussion the Selectmen raised the amount from \$67,000 to \$73,000, an increase of \$7,000.

Mr. Zavorotny turned the chair over to Vice Chair MacDonell as Ms. Almann had not yet arrived and discussion made note taking difficult.

Mr. Major moved to return the salary line to the original \$80,000 request. The motion died for lack of a second.

Mr. Zavorotny moved to increase the salary line to \$73,000. Mr. Nebelski seconded. The motion carried with Mr. Major voting No and Mr. Leary abstaining.

Some of the salary line and some of the training line had been moved. The Selectmen tentatively approved a total of \$170,896. Mr. Conroy rescinded his second and Mr. MacDonell rescinded his motion.

Mr. Zavorotny moved tentative approval of \$170,896. Mr. Conroy seconded and the motion carried with Mr. Leary abstaining.

Ms. Almann arrived as discussion turned to training.

Chief Matuszewski was also concerned that the training line was too low. This is connected to the first responder change being moved to police department control. Selectman Mike Darcy said the Police Chief has been asked for job descriptions for the first responders; they will take effect in July.

The Chief said he felt the Budget Committee did not "want to change on training." He sends people to ice rescue and fire training classes; the department has "four new guys--maybe six guys doing fire classes." They may start classes before July. There is \$5,500 left for training this year. Mr. Darcy noted that the average for training is \$5,800. It's assumed that since EMT and EMR training will take place in-house, the cost should be less. Chief Matuszewski replied that training may take place in Concord at

the Fire Academy. Mr. Nebelski asked why training couldn't take place in-house?

Chief Matuszewski said that training could be offered in Brattleboro, in Keene, "anywhere. If I have people interested, I am going to sign them up."

Mr. Darcy spoke up, saying it was his understanding that "everyone won't be trained" because a "dedicated group of people" will respond to calls. Holly Kennedy wanted to know how many people. Police Chief Todd Faulkner said the pool of people includes 10-12 officers with a total of 27. Firefighters will be on the team--"we'll use what we've already paid for. The status doesn't change; firefighters will still respond." Chief Faulkner said the Police Department "has always responded to emergencies." He said the Fire Department has been ex officio for two years but is now "losing the ability to help." Chief Matuszewski replied this isn't true. Chief Faulkner said he "wants to work with the Fire Department."

The **First Response (01.4211.10)** budget (\$46,252) was approved by the Selectmen.

Mr. Zavorotny remarked he wished he could take the First Responder "and put as a warrant."

Mr. Nebelski made a motion to approve the First Response budget (\$46,252); Mr. Conroy seconded the motion.

Discussion, however, continued.

Audience member Tim Giroux reminded people that with First Response the town is "starting a new program." The town has spent \$100,000+ on rescue equipment and is paying Rescue, Inc. \$140,000 to respond. Chief Faulkner pointed out that "if you're going to respond to a medical emergency, you must be prepared as you can't know if it's serious or not. You must have people to respond when someone calls for help."

Mr. Zavorotny responded to Mr. Giroux's comment by explaining that First Response is under a "new heading" and is not a new expense. Chief Matuszewski disagreed saying it "will cost more" to have people respond in the future; the town "is throwing out a big chunk of money." Chief Faulkner spoke up and explained how he derived the budget. Mr. Giroux said he wants First Response to be on the warrant. Mr. Zavorotny replied that Mr. Giroux could certainly seek to have First Response added to the warrant article at town meeting.

Mr. Zavorotny called for the Budget Committee to vote on the motion to approve First Response budget. The motion passed with Messrs. Conroy, MacDonell, and Nebelski voting Yes, Ms. Almann and Mr. Major voting No, and Mr. Leary Abstaining.

Moving to other budgets, TA Collins noted the **Library (01.4550.10)** budget had been voted on by the Budget Committee in November. **Health Agencies & Hospitals (01.4415.20)** still needs Select board discussion with Meals on Wheels money having shifted to Home Health Care. Morningside Emergency Shelter is now New Ground Works Collaborative.

Selectmen passed **Health Agencies & Hospitals (01.4415.20)** budget (\$51,029).

Mr. Major made a motion to approve **Health Agencies & Hospitals (01.4415.20)** budget (\$51,029). He was seconded by Mr. Zavorotny. The motion carried with Mr. Leary Abstaining.

Mr. Zavorotny made a motion to request that Emergency Management's request for \$25,095 for purchase of three deployable emergency signs be moved to Warrant Article. He was seconded by Mr. Major. The motion carried.

The Selectmen approved the motion and subsequently passed a new **Emergency Management (01.4290.01)** budget of \$18,124.

Mr. MacDonell made a motion to approve **Emergency Management (01.4290.01)** budget of \$18,124. He was seconded by Mr. Major. The motion carried.

Mr. Darcy began discussion on Article 7. Water Superintendent , Dennis Nadeau explained he doesn't have "an exact quote" for the cost of refurbishing the chassis of a Ford F-450. The most expensive part of the quote is stripping; Mr. Nadeau believes this could be about \$57,000. He expects to have an exact cost for the next meeting (Feb. 1).

Mr. Darcy tabled Article 7.

In terms of Article 8, Mr. Zavorotny asked if "fire apparatus" means vehicles. Yes, replied Chief Matuszewski.

Mr. MacDonell made a motion to approve Article 8. Mr. Major provided the second and the motion carried.

The money in Article 9 (\$80,000) will replace every water meter in town. Mr. Conroy made a motion to approve Article 9. He was seconded by Mr. Major. The motion carried.

Replying to Mr. Zavorotny's question, Road Agent Frank Podlenski said he does plan to try to trade in one of the department's vehicles to help with money for the Ford 5-550 (Article 10).

Mr. Conroy made a motion to approve Article 10. He was seconded by Mr. Major and the motion carried with Mr. MacDonell Abstaining.

Mr. Darcy tabled Article 11.

Article 12 was removed from the Town Warrant by selectmen's' vote.

TA Collins noted that the Fire Department needs to have an engineer assess the department's building (Article 13).

Mr. Leary made a motion to approve Article 13. He was seconded by Mr. Conroy. The motion carried; Mr. Leary Abstained.

The focus of Article 14 is replacing the big roof of the Dry Bed at the Wastewater Treatment Plant before addressing the smaller roofs. Mr. Zavorotny observed that the town should perhaps pick up some of the cost since town equipment is stored in the building.

Mr. Conroy made a motion to approve Article 14. He was seconded by Mr. Major. The motion carried.

Mr. Conroy made a motion to approve Article 15 (\$32,000 for Fire Department Breathing Apparatus). He was seconded by Mr. Major. The motion carried.

Article 16 (\$15,000 for the transit service from Brattleboro to Hinsdale) will be put into the budget, TA Collins said.

Mr. Zavorotny made a motion to approve Article 16. He was seconded by Mr. Major. The motion carried.

TA Collins said that the money in Article 17 (\$10,000 to create the Town Hall Improvement Fund) will come from Undesignated Funds.

Mr. Major made a motion to approve Article 17. He was seconded by Mr. Conroy. The motion carried.

The liner will be taken out of the town pool, TA Collins said in reference to Article 18.

Mr. Conroy made a motion to approve Article 18. He was seconded by Mr. Major. The motion carried.

Article 19 is to create an expendable trust fund for the Field House.

Mr. Zavorotny made a motion to approve Article 19. He was seconded by Mr. Leary. The motion carried.

Mr. Major made a motion to approve Article 20. He was seconded by Mr. Conroy. The motion carried with Ms. Almann voting No.

Mr. Major made a motion to approve Article 21. He was seconded by Mr. Conroy. The motion carried.

Mr. Zavorotny made a motion to approve Article 22. He was seconded by Mr. Major. The motion carried.

Mr. Major made a motion to approve Article 22. He was seconded by Mr. Zavorotny. The motion carried with Ms. Almann and Mr. Conroy voting No.

Selectmen left the meeting at 8:17pm.

Mr. Zavorotny reminded the committee that the next meeting is Monday, February 1, 6:30pm. The deployable signs, Mr. Nadeau's vehicle quote, and the Police Department garage will be discussed.

Mr. Zavorotny briefed the committee on his analysis of the numbers. The town is looking at a "\$600,000 problem; maybe it's only a \$400,000 problem." He's concerned the town will not have as much money returned to its coffers by the school as has been returned in the past. Perhaps "minimal reduction in personnel" on the part of the school is something to consider.

Mr. Zavorotny noted that the town could be looking at \$1.80-\$1.90 increase on the tax rate with possibly a \$3.50-\$4.00 increase over two years. Insurance rates for the school may come down. Contract negotiations will likely not be done in time for the February 1 meeting; the union will be voting on the contract after school closes on February 3. He said he would ask the school for the percent increases over the last few years for salaries so the Budget Committee could have an idea as to what might be expected.

He concluded, saying there are three items of the school budget that can't be controlled--retirement, insurance, and salaries.

With no additional matters to discuss, Mr. Zavorotny made a motion to adjourn. He was seconded by Mr. Conroy and the meeting ended at 8:38pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dorianne Almann
Secretary