

**TOWN OF ENFIELD
ENFIELD BUDGET COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES NOVEMBER 1, 2022**

TIME: 6:30 PM

LOCATION: Dept. of Public Works Building & Teams Teleconference

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Shirley Green, Nancy Smith (remote), Dan Kiley, Jane Plumley, Tracy Young, Dimitri Deserranno, John Kluge (Board of Selectmen)

ABSENT: Mike Diehn

OTHERS: Ed Morris, Town Manager; Alisa Bonnette, Assistant Town Manager; Emily Curtis, Recording Secretary; Richard Martin, Chief of Ambulance; Phil Neily, Chief of Fire; Roy Holland, Chief of Police; Luke Frye, Lieutenant.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Deserranno called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

MINUTES – October 4, 2022 & October 18, 2022

Mr. Kiley made a motion to approve the October 4, 2022, minutes as printed. Mr. Kluge seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (7-0).

Ms. Plumley made a motion to approve the October 18, 2022, minutes as printed. Ms. Green seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (6-0). Mr. Deserranno abstained.

BUSINESS

Budget Presentations

EMS

Mr. Morris and Chief Martin reviewed the proposed EMS budget with the Budget Committee.

Mr. Morris noted that the mutual aid line is higher than it has been in previous years due to a higher number of responses from Lebanon for which we are billed on a per call basis, and Lebanon bills the patient for the transport. He stated that contracted services have been budgeted at \$4,500 and he is looking into why it was set at that amount and will bring information back to the committee.

Mr. Morris stated that each building is billed separately for internet and communications, but as the public safety facilities are combined, we will be able to combine and lower the overall costs.

Chief Martin stated that a couple people have left the department and he is coordinating with Chief Neily and Chief Holland to add firefighters and police to the trained EMTs in town. He stated that there needs to be two licensed people on the ambulance to be able to transport a patient and that may reduce the need for calling Lebanon.

Ms. Plumley inquired about recruiting efforts.

Chief Martin stated that volunteers are hard to find and there is a high burnout rate.

Mr. Kiley inquired about the billing collection rates.

Mr. Morris stated that the billing is about 50% collected, which is higher than it was previously.

Mr. Morris presented a cover page related to the strategic governance plan and metrics relevant to each department. He stated that it can be developed and modified as the process moves forward, and he is open to feedback and questions.

Mr. Young stated that he believes it is important for citizens to see where their money is going, and it is important for them to see the results.

With no further questions, the Budget Committee moved on to review the proposed budget for the Fire Department.

FIRE

Mr. Deserranno inquired about how many of the 26 members are consistently responding to fire calls.

Chief Neily stated 14 to 16 of the 26 are consistent on responding. He stated that he and Mr. Morris are supporting a wage increase and added that firefighters are not paid for all elements of their work, such as their time to respond to the station for a call, as well as maintaining vehicles and equipment, and filing reports. He stated that there will be different levels of responsibility for each rank in the department, such as officers initiating and coordinating the training for the department. He stated by doing so it continues the officers' training as well as developing the department.

Ms. Smith inquired if there was a relationship to the pay and someone's responsiveness to the call.

Chief Neily stated that there is not, but it is a next step in the changes and evolution of the department.

Mr. Morris stated that firefighters only get paid when they respond, but the goal is to incentivize training and the career ladder.

Chief Neily stated that he thinks the pay is secondary and the responsibility of maintaining and keeping an officer's position will incentivize participation.

Ms. Plumley inquired if there was a possibility to incentivize responses by giving a bonus of some kind after a set number of calls were responded to.

Chief Neily stated that, as of yesterday, the fire department has covered 221 calls and there were only two calls that we could not cover as a department. He stated that the daytime is particularly difficult because most members of the department have full time jobs that they cannot leave to go on a fire call. He added that it is also important to consider that it is hard for members to leave their day job that could be paying \$25 an hour for a job that is paying around \$17 an hour.

Mr. Morris stated that we have pulled data from towns and cities around us to get data for comparison. He noted that firefighters devote 180 hours to complete their level 1 training, and 160 hours for level 2. He stated that wage increases are incentivizing commitment to the department.

Mr. Young requested to clarify that the training costs listed in the budget are not associated with compensation to the firefighters for their time to train, but the firefighters do get paid for the time they are in training.

Chief Neily confirmed that the training budget is to cover training needs such as contracting with a training company, purchasing props or materials for training, or enrolling personnel in specialized classes. He stated that members are paid for their training hours, but the personnel costs do not expend from the training line.

Mr. Morris noted that the lack of expenditure in the training line is not due to a lack of training. He stated that Chief Neily utilizes as many free trainings as possible, including working with Canaan and Lebanon for training.

Chief Neily stated that the department is working to be seen in the community more including being in the school for lunches as well as giving fire engine rides to school. He stated that it is important to be in the community and that is what he is promoting as he sees it as being beneficial to both the department as well as the town itself.

Mr. Deserranno stated that training that has been completed should be highlighted in the annual report to show that training has taken place even though the line is not fully expended.

Chief Neily stated that he currently highlights trainings in each monthly newsletter.

Mr. Morris agreed that quantifying the training that is taking place would be valuable to highlight to the public.

Members requested clarification on who pays for other towns providing mutual aid.

Chief Neily stated that Enfield pays Enfield firefighters responding as mutual aid to another town, and Enfield does not pay other towns to receive mutual aid.

Mr. Kiley inquired about the \$47,000 encumbrance from 2021.

Chief Neily stated that it was for the forestry truck as well as furnace replacement.

Mr. Morris stated that a new furnace had been planned in CIP for the Union Street fire station, due to the construction of a new public safety facility, it has been proposed for the town to replace the furnace at the Enfield Center Fire Station instead of the Union Street Fire Station.

Mr. Young inquired about the use of the new and replacement equipment line.

Chief Neily stated that new and replacement equipment would be expended for saws or another set of jaws. He stated that it is always a roll of the dice when projecting needs based on the number of calls, the need for new or updated equipment, and the addition of new members to the department who need new gear.

Mr. Kiley noted that \$32,000 was spent in the previous year and he could see where it may be necessary to keep that even if it was not fully expended in the current year.

Chief Neily stated that hose testing needs to be completed, which can be an indicator of when hoses will need to be replaced. He added that if hoses were found to need replacement that would also come from the new and replacement equipment line.

Mr. Morris stated that sometimes the hose testing also indicates when maintenance is necessary to prevent the need for a full replacement of equipment as well.

Mr. Young inquired if there were any anticipated large maintenance items to come up in the next 12 months.

Chief Neily stated that he did not foresee anything.

With no further inquiries, the Budget Committee moved on to the next agenda item.

POLICE

Chief Holland presented the proposed budget for the Police Department to the Budget Committee. He noted that each year there is a mental health evaluation that is expended at the end of the year, which is why it shows unexpended at this time. He noted that the professional development line has been used for reimbursement for college courses and FBI trainings; however, the FBI trainings were moved to the training budget line. He stated that there are two officers going through college courses and their reimbursements go through another part of the town budget and not the professional development line anymore.

Mr. Morris stated that there are a few department line items that appeared to be redundant to lines within the overall budget and he is working on bringing those items back to one line to reduce redundancy.

Mr. Young inquired about the possibility of encumbering the funds not expended for the telephone line.

Mr. Morris stated that we cannot encumber for operational costs, only for special contracts.

Mr. Young inquired if there was any major expense within the next 12 months.

Chief Holland stated that the boiler for the police building was on the CIP plan for this year, but if the building is changed and renovated for other use once the department moves into the public safety facility, the money would go to waste, so it was decided to hold off at this time.

Mr. Morris stated that the police building will be planned to temporarily house the town offices while Whitney Hall is being renovated.

Chief Holland stated that the emergency management budget is related to updating the Emergency Operation Plan in the next year, which we will work with a contractor. He stated that it was put off due to COVID, but we are ready to take on the project and he is applying for a grant to assist with the process as well.

With no further comments or questions, the Budget Committee moved on to the next agenda item.

Draft CIP Plan

Mr. Kiley stated that, because of the property purchase for the public safety building, there is an offset of the ARPA funds being used to purchase other items that had been listed on the CIP plan. He noted that there was also a highway block grant that could be used for additional road work that was not already planned or budgeted. He stated the goal is to not borrow due to current interest rates.

Mr. Morris stated that there are three projects that he is bringing forward in the budget including a website update with a cost placeholder of \$15,000 which may come in closer to the \$7,000 range. He noted that there will be new online components that will make things more accessible to the public, including the ability to electronically file building permits, etc. He stated that he would like to set goals for strategic planning sessions with the Selectboard and the Budget Committee. He stated he is working with the Center for Strategic Governance and is setting a placeholder of \$10,000 to host a strategic planning session. He noted that the Budget Committee has discussed having a compensation study for the town in previous years, so he has reached out to MRI to confirm it will cost about \$15,000. He noted that Lebanon does a rolling compensation study, so each department is updated every 6 years. He stated the goal for Enfield may be to have three sections and to have each one updated every other year to remain up to date. He noted that Lebanon does step raises and then adds COLA each year.

Mr. Deserranno stated that it would be ideal to have the Selectboard to make the request or to approve a recommendation for the Budget Committee to follow through.

Mr. Kiley stated that Potato Road has had a problem for many years and there is a proposal in 2025 to have more permanent repairs, but the only way that will be done is if we get a FEMA grant for it. He stated it will cost \$800,000 to fix the roadway and prevent water from Hazen Drive from washing out the roadway, but right now the grading and gravel is the most cost-effective management.

Mr. Kiley stated that the only warrant article will be money going into CIP.

OTHER BUSINESS

There were no members of the public present for public comment.

NEXT MEETING

The next Budget Committee meeting will take place on Tuesday November 15th at 6:30pm.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Kiley made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 PM. Mr. Kluge seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (7-0).

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm.