

**TOWN OF ENFIELD  
ENFIELD BUDGET COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES NOVEMBER 30, 2023**

**TIME: 6:30 PM**

**LOCATION: Dept. of Public Works Building & Teams Videoconference**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jane Plumley, Dan Kiley, Nancy Smith, Mike Diehn, Dimitri Deserranno, John Kluge (ex-officio), Tina Stearns, Jim Fickett, Shirley Green

**OTHERS:** Ed Morris, Town Manager; Alisa Bonnette, Assistant Town Manager

**Members of the Public:**

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**MINUTES- November 9, 2023**

Members of the Budget Committee reviewed the minutes as presented. Corrections were made as follows:

- Mr. Morris is listed as present when he was not
- Ms. Patten noted that she is concerned for the cost of the concrete and that part of the discussion is not reflected in the minutes.
  - Mr. Morris stated that after the meeting he asked the question related to the cost of concrete to Bread Loaf and they said the increased cost of pouring the concrete in the winter is offset by reducing the labor costs.

Ms. Plumley made a motion to approve of the minutes as amended. Mr. Kiley seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion. (9-0)

**BUSINESS**

**Review of Emergency Services 2024 Budget**

**Fire Department**

Mr. Morris stated that there are overall minimal changes with the exception of two line items with bigger changes that include Repairs and Service Contracts, going from \$5,500 to \$10,000; and New Replacement Equipment was increased from \$20,000 to \$35,000 because of radio programming.

Chief Neily stated that the clothing line was decreased from \$15,000 to \$10,000 so as to help offset some of the increases. He stated that the radios can be replaced incrementally to allow the department to keep up with the technology without having a significant one-time expense. He stated that there is no reason to buy more than three at one time as the incremental replacement cycle will meet the needs of current staffing.

Ms. Smith inquired about why the clothing line for 2023 has not been expended.

Chief Neily stated that the clothing expense is typically turnout gear, but if there are no new members or members in need of replacing outdated gear, then there is no need to spend the money. He stated that he advised keeping the line item where it is as when older gear does get phased out or ruined while in service, it takes about \$5,000 to replace one full set of gear. He stated that new members can utilize gear that is available until they complete the training and certification process.

Mr. Deserranno inquired about the prices of the radios.

Chief Neily stated that he has looked at three manufacturers and we stay with Motorola as they have a better coverage area which is important for situations where we may be providing mutual aid. He stated that it is possible that some grants may require the capacity of the Motorola radios, whereas less expensive brands cannot provide the same services. He noted that we have utilized other radios as a demonstration and proved that Motorola is a reliable piece of equipment.

Ms. Smith and Mr. Morris expressed their agreement based off of professional experience with the value of the Motorola.

Chief Neily stated that we are looking at an active campaign for recruitment. He stated that we have utilized free training from the state which has used less of the training line as well.

Ms. Smith inquired about the number of members in the department.

Chief Neily stated that there is a roster of 27, with about 10 regularly active members. He stated that there are 7 tiers of pay, including probationary firefighter, a firefighter who is uncertified, a firefighter with Level 1, a firefighter with Level II, officers, and chief officers. He stated that the hope is to encourage people to get to training. He stated that there are six active certified firefighters.

Mr. Deserranno inquired about members who are not active and if they have gear and radios.

Chief Neily stated that at this time, they do. He stated he is tracking personnel responding to calls and will be evaluating the information in the spring to meet with each member and review their activity with the department.

Members of the Budget Committee and Chief Neily discussed active personnel, recruitment, and the current roster.

With no further questions or comments, Mr. Deserranno moved on to discuss the police department.

### **Police Department**

Mr. Morris stated that this year \$51,912 was spent for the replacement of body cameras and tasers, as they were up for renewal and there was an opportunity to do so within the current years' budget based on funding available due to being short staffed. He stated that there was no change in the department budget and the decision was made to utilize the funding available instead of adding the cost to the next years' budget.

Chief Holland stated that there are no big changes in the budget. He noted that the department is contracted with the Upper Valley Prosecutorial Association (UVPA) for prosecution services, which is going up by \$3,177. He stated that he pulled the money from the part-time staffing budget as he is currently focused on filling the two full-time positions. He stated that there was an issue with the ordering for the cruiser that had been approved by the CIP Committee, and it cost \$8,000 more than had been approved. He stated that the money was taken from the current years' budget to cover those costs instead of returning to CIP to request the increased cost.

It was noted that Taser reached out to the department to inform them that they will no longer be supporting the older equipment, which leaves the town open to liability if they continue to use them.

Members of the Budget Committee and Chief Holland discussed training, public information, benefits, and a recruitment and retention program that was presented to the Select Board.

### **Emergency Management & Dispatch**

Chief Holland stated that the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) was reviewed and updated this year. He stated that there will be training for all departments regarding the EOP next year.

Chief Holland stated that the dispatch costs are contracted through Hanover. He stated that he does review other options for dispatch services, but Lebanon is not interested in taking on any other towns and the Grafton County dispatch services are significantly farther away. He noted that there is a good working relationship with Hanover dispatch. He noted that the animal control expenses are part of an annual agreement with the Upper Valley Humane Society (UVHS). He stated that prior to the agreement, the town paid them on a per animal basis, but the contract works out much better and there is a good relationship between the town and UVHS.

With no further comments or questions, the Budget Committee moved on to discuss the ambulance department.

### **Ambulance**

Mr. Morris reviewed the ambulance budget with the Budget Committee. He noted that he reduced the personnel line from \$35,000 to \$15,000. He stated that we will know in January how many calls Lebanon ran for Enfield in 2023 to have an accurate expense reflected.

Mr. Deserranno inquired if there are efforts being made for other responders to be cross trained to help with calls.

Mr. Morris stated that it is in discussion, and he is planning to propose to the Select Board that a committee be assembled next year to look at fire and EMS services and make a recommendation for how Enfield residents would be best served while also taking costs into consideration.

Members of the Budget Committee and Mr. Morris discussed ambulance-call statistics for the town. It was noted that Lebanon provides coverage and is a full-time department whereas Enfield has a volunteer response program.

### **Compensation Study**

Mr. Morris stated that he is looking at the compensation study and reviewing a step matrix that may work. He stated that he is looking at getting some of the people within 5% caught up within the next budget cycle and looking at how to get other people caught up over a period of a couple of years.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Public Comment**

Mr. Deserranno requested comments or questions from the public.

Mr. Deserranno noted that there is a vacancy on the Budget Committee as Tim Lenihan has resigned from his position. He read the email correspondence to members of the Budget Committee as follows:

*I hereby resign my position as an elected member of the Enfield Budget Committee. The town's elected officials and leadership have become entrenched in a pattern of spending and decision making that I cannot support. It is very clear that this reasonable dissent is unwelcome, and that the committee will simply approve and promote all spending regardless of impact to taxpayers.*

Mr. Kiley made a motion to accept the resignation with regrets. Mr. Kluge seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (9-0).

Mr. Kiley inquired as to how the vacancy will be communicated to residents.

Ms. Bonnette stated that she will include the update in the upcoming Town Newsletter.

With no comments or questions, the Budget Committee moved on to adjournment.

**NEXT MEETING**

December 14th @ 6:30pm, @ the DPW; discussion of DPW budget

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Kiley made a motion to adjourn at 7:31 pm. Ms. Plumley seconded. A roll call vote was cast. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (9-0).

The meeting was adjourned at 7:31 pm.