

TOWN OF KENSINGTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
Kensington Town Hall
95 Amesbury Road
Kensington, NH 03833
WEDNESDAY
OCTOBER 25, 2023

Minutes - APPROVED

6:30PM

In attendance: Joe Pace (Chairperson), Bob Solomon, Bob Gustafson, Kathy Felch (Town Administrator), and Owen Corcoran (Land Use Administrative Assistant).

Agenda:

1. REVIEW BUDGETS OF DEPARTMENTS

• **Fire Department Budget**

Chief True stated that his budget typically gets used up at the end of the year. He explained that medical didn't get used much this year. It was primarily used for CDL certification to provide a medical card. stated that the fire department is moving to yearly physical in 2024 and explained the jump from \$1200 to \$7000. J. Pace asked for clarification on individual costs. Chief True explained that he is putting together a warrant article for the additional costs.

There will be \$6000 in dues for Seacoast Technical Assistance Response Team (START) almost \$3000, plus \$2800 for SCBAs. J. Pace asked if the life of the FD's gear if impacted by maintenance. J. True stated that the lifespan of the FD's gear is 10 years. He explained that out of 20 personnel, 13 have up to date gear.

• **Emergency Management Budget**

The only change is \$500 out of COVID funds. Masks and cleaning solutions need to be replaced, and the state isn't paying for those items anymore. Most of the budget is dedicated to upcoming emergency management drills.

Chief True plans on purchasing half the tables for the town hall this year and half next year. J. Pace asked if Chief True could order all the tables in now. Chief True stated that he'd consider that.

• **Police Budget – Chief Cain**

Chief Cain began by detailing an increase in full-time wages of \$31,056. He explained that he created a pay scale to stay competitive with other departments. J. Pace observed that the PD is about 75% through wages. Full time salaries \$9k left over for 2023. Overspent overtime. Increase in budget is tied to pay scale increases.

B. Solomon asked how are budget gaps covered in the event of overages. J. Pace explained that the funds come from the town's funds balance.

Chief Cain discussed state police support/mutual aid. J. Pace opined that he wants to have the right size department for the community, and asked what the town's tolerance for state police support and memorandums of understanding with local towns might be.

Chief Cain discussed the SERT program (SWAT). It has a \$5000 yearly fee, and there has been an increase in cost of training, ammunition, gear, etc.

Part time wages increased by \$5000. Chief Cain explained that he hired part time personnel to help relieve full time personnel. Chief Cain explained that there is also a 5% COLA increase for the police department administrative assistant.

J. Pace questions about overtime pay. Overtime higher due to shifts being covered with personnel shortfall, and how much overtime wages are because of staff outages vs. investigations. Chief Cain provided amplifying information on the overtime budget. J. Pace stated that while overtime, part-time, and full-time wages are listed separately, he's views them as all in the same "bucket".

Chief Cain explained the increase in training funds due to stated mandated training of 24 hours per officer. He also highlighted an increase in weapons maintenance, mostly as it pertains to ammunition and firearms. IT support has also increased for cloud services and licenses.

Chief Cain detailed lease issues on police vehicles and stated that the police department is in need of two new cars.

Chief Cain stated that office supply and uniform costs increased due to inflation. Unleaded gas increased due to high fuel prices.

Skip Heal asked questions about vehicle outfitting and maintenance. Chief Cain explained the details and process of maintenance to police vehicles. Chief Cain also explained the reasons why the police vehicles are left running in cold and hot weather due to the significant time it takes to boot up and login to the onboard computers in police vehicles.

Mr. Heal expressed concerns about how the town's budgets are formulated. J. Pace explained the budget setting process. Mr. Heal asked the chair if he could present his own observations on the police department budget. J. Pace stated he was fine with that. Mr. Heal, Chief Cain, and the board discussed Mr. Heal's ideas and observations of the police department budget by line item. Mr. Heal presented his own recommendations for adjustments to the police budget. J. Pace explained the extensive process the town went through to develop the current pay scale for the police department, with the goal of staying competitive and increasing retention. J. Pace suggested that Mr. Heal and Chief Cain meet one-on-one to discuss Mr. Heal's budget concerns, as there are still two months before the town's budget is finalized.

Mr. Heal expressed concerns about the salary of the police chief, highlighting concerns with detail compensation. J. Pace explained that compensation for details does not come from taxpayer funds.

Mr. Heal asked Chief Cain about how the police department purchases fuel for police vehicles. Chief Cain explained that the police department uses flex cards that removes the requirement to pay taxes on fuel.

Cindy Heal asked if only police officers are authorized to perform details. Chief Cain stated that there is a bill in the statehouse to give police chiefs the authority to decide who can perform flagger duties.

J. Pace thanked the members of the public who attended and participated in the meeting and entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION: B. Solomon made a motion to adjourn. B. Gustafson seconded. All in favor, none opposed, no abstentions.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10pm.

• Next Meeting Date – November, 2023

Respectfully Submitted,

Owen M. Corcoran
Land Use Administrative Assistant