

KENSINGTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING  
Virtual Meeting due to COVID-19  
MONDAY November 23, 2020 – 6:30pm  
Minutes - DRAFT

In attendance: Joe Pace, Vanessa Rozier, Bob Solomon

Others in attendance: Chief Scott Cain, Chief Jon True, Kathy Felch, Fred Feldman, Linda Bennett

At 6:31pm, Joe called the meeting to order. At the start of the Zoom meeting, there were 10 participants on the call.

It was noted that this has been a unique year due to COVID-19. Mr. Feldman recognized the efforts of the Board and Department Heads who worked on this budget. He recognized that this has been an especially difficult year for everyone and would like to see the budget come down as much as possible to ease the burden on the citizenry.

**Police Department:**

Police Chief Scott Cain presented his proposed budget to the Board. Chief Cain noted that COVID-19 has made this a particularly interesting year for the Police Department, combined with many unexpected technologies needs for the department.

The State of NH has moved to a J1 system with tickets submitted electronically, requiring an increase in internet service and routers. Due to the lack of service and connection in Town, there was additional technology required for the department to meet the State requirements and an increase to the ATT bill of approximately \$420.00 per month.

The Watchguard camera system (body cameras and in vehicle cameras) will require an upgrade to the server. The current server does not have enough storage to store the data from the cameras as needed.

There has been a mandated increase in police training per officer, resulting in an increase to the Training line item of the budget. The current requirement was 8 hours per officer; the new requirement is 24 hours per officer.

The Animal Control Officers have not yet submitted all their time. Time from this summer still has not be submitted. The \$3,100.00 requested has been consistent with years past, even though the YTD number is not yet accurate due to not all hours being accounted for.

There have been approved additions to the fleet this year. There is a Dodge Durango and Dodge Charger on order. The first lease payments will be made this year with funds that are leftover in this year's budget. The additional vehicles will bring the fleet total to 5 as no vehicles were traded in. There will be two additional lease payments and the cars the department already has will be paid off this year. Ideally, the vehicles will have a 5-year life cycle. The Cruiser Revolving Fund was discussed. The CRF can be used for anything having to do with a police car without hitting the budget. Earlier this year, the CRF was used to make a cruiser payment to be conservative with the uncertainty of what COVID-19 would bring and has been used for one lease payment of one of the new vehicles.

Cruiser maintenance was added to the budget and is typically used for electronics for the vehicles and parts.

Call Out/Overtime- There has been an increase in drug investigations, which the Town has to pay for because there is no one on the SERT team, and there has been undercover activity that Chief Cain would like to increase. It was explained that for approximately 3 months this year, there were minimal traffic stops and investigations due to COVID-19. Additionally, the police department is fully staffed for the first time in many years.

The weapons budget has been unrealistic in the opinion of Chief Cain for years. Additionally, this year ammunition costs have significantly increased, resulting in an increase in this line item in the budget. Equipment is needed every few years to include ballistic vests, shields, holsters, etc.

There was a brief discussion on the cameras for the department; there will likely be a warrant article for cameras. The fuel costs this year have been very low, combined with several months of minimal patrolling, result a low fuel cost year for 2020. There will be two additional vehicles in 2021. Each vehicle costs about \$5,600 to run.

Operations was discussed. This accounts for most items in the office in addition to phone service, which increased due to the J1 requirements, routers, etc.

This year there was restitution due to an officer leaving prior to the contract being fulfilled.

Chief Cain and the Board discussed the FT Salary line. There is currently a step program in place to prevent a high turnover situation. Chief Cain and the Board agree that it is crucial to retain personnel rather than continuing to re-hire and re-train. There was some confusion over how the current step program is being implemented as the raises and step plan were reviewed Joe will meet with Chief Cain to discuss this outside of the meeting. There is some surplus in the FT salary line due to not being fully staffed for all of 2020 and because one officer was expected to become FT but has not yet gone to the academy. Chief Cain hopes to use that surplus to positively impact the 2021 budget. Some of those funds were used for the Watchguard system and the lease payments on the cruiser. PT salaries were not used as much this year because the department was fully staffed with full time officers. PT officers are used in the event that there is someone out before offering overtime for full-time officers.

There is mandated increase in training to include de-escalation and bias training. This would be in addition to the regularly scheduled training, resulting in an increase to this line item.

Chief Cain hopes to increase IT support from \$2,000.00 to \$5,000.00. Watchguard Cloud services are required to maintain video records in addition to a yearly fee for the operating systems for the cameras.

#### **Fire Department:**

Chief Jon True explained that this year had been a challenge due to COVID-19. There have been purchases that were not able to be made, such as hose, due to shut downs and shortages on items.

Admin support may have had some items that should have come from elsewhere in the budget in 2020 such as subscriptions and dues. Chief True has had some admin support in the office for database assistance and grant writing assistance.

Chief True anticipates that the fire station will need to be re-roofed in 2021. Electricity usage is anticipated to remain the same in 2021.

There is equipment that the Fire Department will need to replace soon including new attack lines. The possibility of putting capital equipment needs on the ballot as warrant articles was discussed. It was noted that many items are smaller value items ranging from \$500.00-\$600.00. It was discussed that moving items to warrant articles does not necessarily provide taxpayer relief, only budget relief. It will be important to look at what one-time purchases could be made in 2020 with unexpended funds. Chief True does hope to purchase a gear dryer that would dry out PPE. There is a grant that may be available for this. Structural firefighting gear is needed; this expires every 12 years. New gear is also needed, which needs to be fitted for each firefighter. Currently there are no federal grants available for this because of the small amount of PFOS found in the gear. Ideally this would be on a cycle and it would not all expire at the same time. New radios are also being covered under a grant. Chief True has hired someone to assist with some of the grant writing. This year, 17 grants were written and 14 were awarded. The most beneficial grant would be the AFG grant, which someone has been hired to assist with.

Chief True has been able to secure grants this year not only for the Fire Department, but for other departments as well. It is anticipated that there will be more opportunities for training in 2021, both online and Zoom classes, which still require a fee. After COVID-19 hit, no one was sent to FF1 classes.

Chief True hopes that firefighters will be able to get a spirometry test for lung capacity, which is not typically covered by insurance during an annual physical. The cost of this has been factored into the medical budget.

There have been price increases as Comcast and Consolidated Communications costs increase.

Salaries were discussed. The hierarchy of the department was improved with the promotion of a Deputy Chief, Captain and a Lieutenant. Chief True has a minimal salary increase of about \$500.00

This year, a Chief's vehicle was purchased after the old vehicle failed inspection and was sold for \$4,000.00. Chief True has been working on outfitting the newer Ford Explorer at a total outfitting cost of under \$1,500.00.

Chief True summarized the costs of the vehicles to include repairs and annual inspections. There was brief discussion of an off-road vehicle. Chief True is working on a 50/50 grants for that.

#### **Emergency Management:**

Chief True summarized the many tasks of the Emergency Management team this year. Typically this would have been a year for the Seabrook Drill, however that did not happen due to COVID-19.

A temperature kiosk was purchased however that money will be returned in a grant. Consolidated Communications will be installing Wi-Fi in the meeting room of the Town Hall to allow for more connectivity and the option of hybrid meetings in the future.

Chief True anticipates that some drills and training will occur in 2021 in a modified manner.

Additional important purchases have been the disinfecting sprayer to be used in the back of the ambulance, police cruisers, etc.

There has been approximately \$44,000.00 in grants that have come in through FEMA and GOFFER. Chief True summarized the many grants that have been awarded to the Town including stipends for first responder salaries, hazardous mitigation plan grants, a Secretary of State grant, a forestry grant, a radio grant, and a sign board grant. IT was explained that although it looks like there was a significant amount spent from Emergency Management this year, approximately \$84,000.00 has been accepted as unanticipated funds from grants, with an additional anticipated \$10,000.00 coming in the future.

The COVID-19 line item was discussed. Chief True explained that this was used mostly when there was uncertainty on availability of PPE and was also used for the purchase of the disinfecting sprayer. This would be used for similar needs in 2021.

Mr. Feldman felt it would be beneficial to the citizenry to know how much the Town Administration has done for them over the past year.

The Board hear from other Department Heads on their budgets at the meeting on 11/30/2020 at 6:30pm.

***At 9:22pm, Bob made a motion to adjourn. Vanessa seconded. Joe took a roll call vote. Vanessa voted yes, Bob voted yes, and Joe voted yes. The motion passes.***

Respectfully submitted,

Chelsea Lalime