

Budget Committee
January 13, 2020
Meeting Minutes

Present:

Chair Joe Caristi, Vice Chair Dave Carr, Tom Kaempfer, Walter Waring, Charles Therriault, Janet Cavanagh and Select Board Representative Les Dion (late).

Others Present:

James McIntire, Chief of Police; Ben LaRoche, Chief of Fire Department; and Brittany Overton, Library Director

Absent:

Bob Blanchette, Finance/Human Resources Director; Nik Coates, Town Administrator

Call to Order:

Mr. Caristi called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Review and Approval of Minutes:

Motion to amend line 4520-TTCC, motion passed 5-0-1 made by Mr. Therriault. Motion to approve amended minutes from December 16, 2019 by Mr. Therriault, seconded by Ms. Dion. Motion passed 5-0-1.

Correspondence:

Mr. Caristi informed the committee of the two upcoming forums for information on the Water/Sewer Solar project and proposed Public Safety building, at the library on 1/30/20 at 6:30pm and 2/26/20 at 4:00pm.

Old Business:

Mr. Caristi stated it would be best to hold off on voting on line 4711/4712 Principal L/T Debt & Interest and 4194-410 GGB Electricity until Mr. Coates and Mr. Blanchette could present. The committee unanimously agreed.

New Business:

4550 – Library

Mrs. Overton stated that the salary and benefits line has increased, due to merit-based increases up to 3% and from adjustments in wage gaps. There was also an increase in professional development for conferences. The Maintenance and Repair line has decreased as there are no major foreseeable repairs. Motion to move the bottom line of 4550 in the amount of \$208,719 by Ms. Cavanaugh, seconded by Mr. Therriault. Motion passed 7-0-0.

4210 – Police

Chief McIntire stated that employee section of the budget, those figures are a fixed cost. A new officer will be hired soon to fill the full-time position as they are operating on a skeleton crew. The department has had two officers out on family leave so shifts are covered by the other officers on duty and paid out from the overtime budget. When asked to clarify the difference between the Overtime and Civic Events lines, Chief McIntire stated that the Civic Events are for any Bristol event such as July 4th or Bicentennial where the Overtime budget is for any additional shifts needing coverage, non-town event related. Mrs. Cavanagh inquired on the details and length of warranty of the body cameras for the officers. Chief McIntire stated that the body cameras do have a warranty; they are leased through a five-year program. He also stated that the body cameras have been helpful to reduce the number of complaints about encounters with the officers as he can watch the videos of each situation and is able to make better decisions based on what is seen. Ms. Cavanagh also asked for details on the Dispatch Telephone line and Chief McIntire replied that the faxes and emails need to pass through secure and dedicated lines. Through a grant that the department was awarded, the officers received portable computers that can be used in the cruisers and brought into the station. Mr. Waring asked if the Police Department owned the storage box outside the station. Chief McIntire informed the committee that they are renting the box as they do not have a garage or anywhere to store stolen property, crime evidence, or any large items that will not fit into the station. Motion to move the bottom line of 4210 in the amount of \$1,833,773 made by Mr. Therriault, seconded by Mr. Kaempfer. Motion passed 7-0-0.

4220 – Fire

Chief LaRoche stated that the budget has increased by 5 ½%, mostly due to the new position voted on last year. \$7,400 has been spent on overtime and has estimated 276 hours for each shift employee due to recertifications, normal work shifts, and extra shifts for coverage. Chief LaRoche stated that back when he became chief in 2004, he had a staff of 30 people and is now down to 12-15 people. Motion to move the bottom line of 4220 in the amount of \$987,689 by Mr. Kaempfer, seconded by Ms. Dion. Motion passed 7-0-0.

Chief LaRoche stated that the budget has increased by 5 ½%, mostly due to the new position voted on last year. Overtime is overspent by \$7,400. This year's request returns to the past budgeting method of estimating 276 hours for each shift employee due to recertifications, shift coverage, and callback for emergencies. Chief LaRoche stated that back when he was hired in 2004, there was a call staff of 30 people and is now down to 12-15 people. Motion to move the bottom line of 4220 in the amount of \$987,689 by Mr. Kaempfer, seconded by Ms. Dion. Motion passed 7-0-0.

4230 – Forestry

Chief LaRoche informed the committee that the fire department inherited a former town truck with a Ford Motor chase that required a lot of motor and transmission work. Discussion followed about labor for the truck. Motion to move the bottom line of 4230 in the amount of \$3,450 by Ms. Dion, seconded by Mr. Therriault. Motion passed 7-0-0.

Chief LaRoche informed the committee that the fire department inherited a former town truck, a 2008 Ford that has required a lot of transmission work and repair. Discussion followed about the cost of labor for the truck. Motion to move the bottom line of 4230 in the amount of \$3,450 by Ms. Dion, seconded by Mr. Therriault. Motion passed 7-0-0.

4290 – Emergency Management

Chief LaRoche stated that the budget includes trainings which he hopes that they can attend more this year. Mrs. Cavanagh inquired on the number of fire department employees, and Chief Laroche specified there are eight full time firefighters, one part time administrative assistant, and 17 or 18 on call fire fighters. Motion to move the bottom line of 4290 in the amount of \$1,001 by Ms. Dion, seconded by Mr. Kaempfer. Motion passed 7-0-0.

Chief LaRoche stated that the budget includes trainings which he hopes that they can attend more this year. Mrs. Cavanagh inquired on the number of fire department employees, and Chief LaRoche specified there are eight full time firefighters, one part time administrative assistant, and 17 or 18 on call and per-diem fire fighters. Motion to move the bottom line of 4290 in the amount of \$1,001 by Ms. Dion, seconded by Mr. Kaempfer. Motion passed 7-0-0.

Member Comments:

None

Select Board Comments:

None.

Staff Comments:

None.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn meeting at 6:52pm by Mr. Kaempfer, seconded by Ms. Dion. Motion passed 7-0-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Shannon Wharton