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**APPROVED**  
**TOWN OF PELHAM**  
**BOARD OF SELECTMEN - MEETING MINUTES**  
**September 4, 2018**  
APPROVED – September 25, 2018

**CALL TO ORDER** - approximately 6:30PM

**PRESENT:** Mr. Hal Lynde, Mr. William McDevitt (via conference telephone), Ms. Amy Spencer (arrived after the meeting commenced), Ms. Heather Forde, Town Administrator Brian McCarthy

**ABSENT:** Mr. Doug Viger

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**MINUTES REVIEW**

**August 21, 2018**

**MOTION:** (Forde/McDevitt) To approve the August 21, 2018 meeting minutes as amended.

**VOTE:** (3-0-0) The motion carried.  
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**August 28, 2018**

**MOTION:** (Forde/Lynde) To approve the August 28, 2018 meeting minutes as written.

**VOTE:** (2-0-1) The motion carried. Mr. McDevitt abstained.

**OPEN FORUM**

No one came forward.

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

New Hampshire Primary Election – voting will be held September 11, 2018 at the Pelham High School from 7am-8pm.

**APPOINTMENTS**

**Jonathan Ingraham: New Library Trustee appointment**

Library Board of Trustees President Ms. Rosanne Cares came forward to introduce Mr. Jonathan Ingraham who was seeking appointment to a vacant position on the Library Board of Trustees with a term to expire March 2019.

**MOTION:** (Forde/McDevitt) To appoint Jonathan Ingraham to the Library Board of Trustees with a term expiring March 31, 2019.

**VOTE:** (3-0-0) The motion carried.

**Fire Chief James Midgley: SAFER Grant Update and new grant application request**

Chief Midgley came forward to update the Board regarding the status of the SAFER Grant. He said they were informed last week it was very unlikely Pelham would receive the SAFER Grant. Although Pelham made the 'funding' list for award consideration, he stated funding would run out. He noted if towns declined their award, it would move Pelham up on the list. Chief Midgley then told the Selectmen he would be applying for an equipment grant (approximately \$140,000) to replace portable radios. If awarded the department would be responsible for approximately \$7,000 which would be withdrawn from the non-lapsing grant match warrant article. The Board had no objection.

Mr. McDevitt commented it was good for the Board to hear about grant applications, and at the same time it was good for the public to be aware that the department heads seek grants.

**2019 Budget Review**

Finance Director Dan Ramgopaul was present for any questions.

Mr. Lynde stated that the Board would assume there was a motion on the floor to approve the submitted budget figure unless a Selectman offered an amendment. There was no objection to the process.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector – \$240,680 proposed and approved.

Elections - \$11,427 proposed and approved.

Ms. Spencer arrived.

Assessor – \$222,211 proposed and approved.

Senior Center – \$135,845 proposed and approved.

Mr. McDevitt understood the Director requested an increase in salary. He spoke about some of the other proposed salary increases and noted those positions had advocates requesting the increase because the current salary was below other towns with similar positions. He felt the request was legitimate and included back up information. He proposed increasing the salary line by \$2,000 to begin to make up for the shortfall in salary that was described (in back up information).

Ms. Spencer understood the suggestion was to increase the salary line but asked for clarification where the increase would be allocated. Mr. McCarthy spoke to Mr. Ramgopaul and believed the salary budget line was inclusive of the proposed increase. Mr. McDevitt replied he wasn't aware of that fact and withdrew his motion. He noted concern about the center's refrigerator/freezer that wasn't due to make it past this year. He felt they should aggressively look for a replacement before it stops working. Mr. McCarthy replied the issue would be resolved this year.

Cable – \$136,837 proposed and approved.

Cemetery – \$145,470 submitted. Selectmen didn't address. The Cemetery Trustees oversee the budget.

Conservation Commission – \$7,947 proposed and approved.

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Library – \$474,848 submitted. Selectmen didn't address. The Library Trustees oversee the budget.

Parks & Recreation – \$248,850 proposed and approved.

Planning Department – \$416,783 proposed. The Board approved \$409,593

Ms. Spencer understood the figure included an increase for the inspectors (plumbing, building and electric); she wanted to make sure that the amount was based on the increase (steps) approved by the Board last year and not the additional percentage increase discussed at the Board's last meeting. Mr. Lynde believed the budget figure was the requested amount and not based on the Board's discussion from the previous year. Ms. Spencer proposed decreasing the salary line for inspectors to reflect the 35% (step) increase as discussed during last year's budget discussion. She felt the Board should use a consistent process when reviewing salary increases.

Ms. Spencer made a motion to increase the inspector's salaries by 35% rather than by the percentage requested within the budget. Mr. McDevitt seconded. He said the Town occasionally found itself in a position of not paying market rates and felt they should fix it.

Planning Director Jeff Gowan believed the motion was for a 35% increase of the budget amount proposed last year, and not a 35% increase of the whole salary.

Ms. Forde applauded Mr. Gowan's efforts to work on behalf of his department. She said the Town's inspectors were great and felt it was important to keep them. Mr. Gowan respected the fact that the Selectmen were supporting incremental increases.

**MOTION:** To approve \$409,593 as the amended 2019 Planning Department budget.

**VOTE:** (4-0-0) The motion carried.

Highway Department - \$1,530,276 proposed and approved.

Mr. McDevitt noted that the budget had decreased \$4,786 from last year's budget.

Transfer Station – \$711,831 proposed and approved.

Mr. Lynde noted that the budget had decreased \$19,291 from last year's budget. Ms. Spencer commended Mr. Frank Ferreira (Transfer Station/Highway Road Agent) for his fiscal responsibility and investments made over the last few years which was now reflecting in a budget decrease.

Police Department - \$3,027,197 proposed. The Board approved \$3,054,658.

Mr. McDevitt stated the Board had discussed a second School Resource Officer ('SRO'). He said he fully and completely supported the position and felt the Town needed it. He was concerned what it would do to the overall Police budget. He said they had to be cognizant of property taxes. He made a motion to remove the fully loaded cost for the Animal Control Officer ('ACO') and add in the fully loaded cost for the SRO. Ms. Spencer seconded for discussion. Mr. McDevitt had done research of the ACO role and the type of calls received. He said his request was not a performance review of Pelham's ACO, it was just a matter of figuring out how to afford an additional SRO. He recognized that the Town needed someone to attend to the pound but believed some minor part-time work could be accommodated within the budget.

Police Chief Joseph Roark reviewed the budget and salary figures Mr. Ramgopaul provided (during the meeting) for a base patrolman (\$52,925) versus the ACO (\$50,403). He noted there would be approximately \$2,000 for equipment plus training costs for the base patrolman. Mr. Lynde asked if the proposed SRO was in the proposed budget. Chief Roark answered no. He felt dropping the animal control service was drastic. He then spoke to the ACO position and summarized the duties listed in the job description. He added that the ACO was also in charge of keeping nuisance geese out of the Town parks, conducts rabies clinics, instrumental in collecting dog license fees that haven't been collected, helps with the RAD program, does car seat installations and plows the parking lot in the winter. He told the Board some of the items they could take on, but they would have to train people in the procedures for rabies, quarantine etc. Chief Roark was taken aback in that several months ago the Board had discussing building a new animal control shelter and now they were discussing the elimination the program entirely. He would rather take the animal control shelter off the future Capital Improvement Plan and maintain some semblance of an animal control division. He felt the quality of life issues that are addressed and the complicated calls the ACO handled were necessary; elimination of the division should be carefully considered. Chief Roark stated if the Board needed to think about having a second SRO and defer for a year he was okay with doing so.

Ms. Spencer asked if the Chief had proposed to cut the position fifty percent. Chief Roark replied he proposed to cut the position to twenty hours at \$20/hr. (with no benefits). He noted there would still be a cost for the SRO. Ms. Spencer asked if there were some aspects of the ACO position that wouldn't happen anymore. Chief Roark stated he would have concerns regarding how they would run an animal control shelter and investigate sending the animals elsewhere. He didn't feel it was realistic to have patrolmen tending to the animal shelter and the union may have issues with them doing so.

Mr. McDevitt stated it wasn't his intention to 'blind side' the Chief, it was not something he did if it could be avoided, but he also didn't feel an obligation to have advance discussions. He understood and believed that the shelter would have to be maintained and never mentioned patrol officers doing so. Earlier he mentioned that a part-time person may need to be hired. He stated he had no idea that the ACO was as busy as described or required forty hours per week. He said this was the last night he had a chance to weigh in on the budget and he had an obligation to the public. He wasn't in favor of a part-time position, but if the Board go in that direction as an interim step he may support them.

Ms. Forde questioned if dog licensing fees go into the General Fund. Mr. Lynde answered yes.

Ms. Spencer recalled that the proposals for a renovated shelter were upwards of \$200,000-\$400,000 and questioned if there was 'room' to take \$50,000 out of the cost and still meet the needs of the animals and person responsible for caring for them. She understood it would be a one-time savings, but it would give them time to think about the transition of the positions. Chief Roark stated it would be difficult because they didn't have an exact number at this time and the shelter would be a warrant article. He would prioritize a person over having a shelter. He said it wouldn't be a good expenditure to have a nice shelter with no staff.

Mr. Lynde inquired who maintained the shelter on the weekends. Chief Roark stated there were certain responsibilities done during the week and typically the Animal Rescue Network of New England ('ARNNE') helped on weekends. ARNNE had difficulty having volunteers over the weekends. He pointed out when the Police took custody of a dog, it was considered a person's property; the Police took responsibility for the dog. There have been instances where they took in multiple dogs that had to be sheltered upwards of 3-4 months. He said the ACO position was unpredictable and when situations occur it's good to have an expert. Chief Roark stated he had no disrespect toward the Selectmen and he understood the review process. He was only trying to advocate the position. Mr.

187 Lynde wanted to know what happened when a resident had a rabid animal over the weekend. Chief  
188 Roark replied the Police would put the animal down. If it didn't bite anybody it would be stored for  
189 the ACO to dispose of it on Monday. However, if it bites someone the animal would be put down the  
190 ACO would be called in to handle the situation and follow rabies testing protocol.

191  
192 Mr. McDevitt suggested moving the ACO to a part-time position and see how it works out for a year.  
193 He felt the Chief made a good case a while back for why they needed a new shelter. He commented if  
194 the Chief came back next year with a case why the part-time position wasn't working he would advocate  
195 to go back to a full-time position. He believed they needed to find some reductions for the taxpayers  
196 to afford the second SRO.

197  
198 In principal Ms. Spencer agreed with Mr. McDevitt that to add a new position they should find  
199 someplace to find at least half the cost elsewhere. She suggested proposing a number cut and let Chief  
200 Roark decide from where those funds would be cut. Mr. McDevitt believed the Chief provided the  
201 Board with a number for a part-time person. He understood NH State Law (relative to Police  
202 Departments) allows the department to allocate assets once they had a budget figure. He said he would  
203 rather see the number for the part-time position used. Chief Roark said the Board asked him to review  
204 their operation. He said the ACO was the only less-essential position, but at the same time he was  
205 hesitant to cut into the protection of life and personal property. He stated the protection of the schools  
206 was paramount to animal control, therefore a compromise was put forward.

207  
208 Ms. Forde said by looking at the Assessor's bi-weekly they could see there were approximately 2,500  
209 dogs in Town. She asked if it was possible to increase the dog licensing fee. Mr. Lynde said they could  
210 look at the fees but was unsure if they were covered by Statute. Ms. Forde reviewed the current  
211 licensing fee and saw to date there were seventy-five still outstanding.

212  
213 Chief Roark stated that the second full-time SRO cost (including mandatory training and equipment)  
214 \$58,931, the budget would subtract the cost of the ACO \$52,270. They would add \$20,800 for a part-  
215 time ACO. The total increase in budget would be \$27,461. He noted that the effective date of the  
216 change would be April 1, 2019; at which time the full-time ACO position would drop to a 20hr/week  
217 position. The second SRO wouldn't be in position until the 2019 school year.

218  
219 Mr. Ramgopaul provided the Board with figures showing what had been collected for dog licensing  
220 fees. In 2017 fees collected totaled: \$10,262, the fees collected to date (2018) were: \$9,838. It was  
221 noted there were seventy-five dog fees still to be collected (approximately \$375).

222  
223 Ms. Spencer said before she decided she wanted to know if the Chief had spoken with the current ACO  
224 to see if they would be willing to do the job as a part-time position. Chief Roark replied he hadn't  
225 broached the subject with current ACO.

226  
227 Mr. McDevitt withdrew his earlier motion. Ms. Spencer withdrew her second.

228  
229 Mr. McDevitt then made a motion to increase the Police Department overall operating budget by  
230 \$27,461. That provides for a part-time Animal Control Officer and an additional full-time School  
231 Resource Officer. Ms. Spencer seconded.

232  
**MOTION:** (McDevitt/Spencer) To increase the Police Department overall operating budget by  
\$27,461. That provides for a part-time Animal Control Officer and an additional  
full-time School Resource Officer.

**VOTE:** (4-0-0) The motion carried.

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Ms. Spencer reiterated that if they try the situation out for a year and it isn't working she would make a commitment to fix it. She asked the Chief to keep the Board updated. Mr. Lynde said the problem he saw with that was if a person was knocked back the Town may lose them and not find someone to replace them.

The new Police Department proposed budget is \$3,054,658.

Fire Department – \$2,259,025 proposed and approved.

Emergency Management - \$8,644 proposed and approved.

Town Buildings – \$713,910 proposed and approved.

Mr. Lynde noted the budget had decreased \$110,256 from last year's budget.

Mr. McDevitt noted that on-going tree maintenance was included in the proposed number; there may be contributions from Parks & Recreation and the Village Green Tree Fund. Mr. Lynde replied that the Board concurred.

Selectmen – \$513,716 proposed and approved.

Town Insurance – \$2,410,396 proposed and approved. (a 2% increase placeholder number)

Final figures will be received in November.

Retirement – \$1,757,918 proposed and approved.

Mr. Lynde asked if the figure included the hiring of a School Resource Officer. Mr. McCarthy answered yes and noted the current position is in the New Hampshire Retirement System. He clarified by stating the Animal Control Officer is in the retirement system.

Budget Committee – \$162 proposed and approved.

Debt Service Interest – \$113,477 proposed and approved.

Debt Service Principal - \$710,714 proposed and approved.

Health Services – \$73,500 proposed and approved.

Health Officer – \$45,766 proposed and approved.

Human Services – \$93,040 proposed and approved.

Legal – \$97,500 proposed and approved.

Town Celebrations – \$9,260 proposed and approved.

Treasurer – \$15,176 proposed and approved.

Trust Funds – \$150 proposed and approved.

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The Selectmen approved 2019 Town Budget is: 16,153,829 (a 3.37% increase over the 2018 budget)

**TOWN ADMINISTRATOR / SELECTMEN REPORTS**

Ms. Forde reported that September 23, 2019 the Muscular Dystrophy Walk is scheduled in Manchester. She said there is a 'small army' of fourth graders attending. If anyone is interested in joining them they have space on the bus.

Mr. McDevitt thanked the department heads and Mr. McCarthy for the diligent and difficult work they do on the budgets.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** (Spencer/Forde) To adjourn the meeting.

**VOTE:** (4-0-0) The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:56pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Charity A. Landry  
Recording Secretary