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APPROVED
TOWN OF PELHAM
BUDGET COMMITTEE - MEETING MINUTES
Monday, September 22, 2014
APPROVED – September 29, 2014

CALL TO ORDER – at approximately 7:30pm

PRESENT: Mr. Daniel Guimond, Mr. David Cate, Mr. Bob Sherman, Mr. Dave Cronin, Mr. Greg Smith (arrived after the meeting commenced), Ms. Daryle Hillsgrove, Mr. Leo Rush, Ms. Amy Spencer, Selectmen Representative Doug Viger

ABSENT: Mr. Everett Gibbons (not excused), School Board Representative Megan Larson (excused)

Also present: Town Administrator Brian McCarthy, Finance Director Cindy Kelley, Fire Chief James Midgley, Lieutenant Greg Atwood, Planning Director Jeff Gowan, Planning Department Manager Jenn Hovey, and CIP member Michael Sherman.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MINUTES REVIEW

September 15, 2014

MOTION: (Sherman/Cate) To approve the meeting minutes of September 15, 2014 as amended.

VOTE: (8-0-0) The motion carried.

September 18, 2014

MOTION: (Cate/Sherman) To approve the meeting minutes of September 18, 2014 as

amended.

VOTE: (6-0-2) The motion carried. Mr. Cronin and Mr. Rush abstained.

Mr. Smith arrived.

2015 BUDGET PRESENTATION

Finance Director Cindy Kelley came forward for budget presentation/review.

Fire Department - \$1,930,758 requested – an increase of \$31,455 over 2014 budget.

Fire Chief James Midgley and Lieutenant Greg Atwood came forward to review the proposed budget.

Salaries - Chief Midgley explained there had been a shift of funds out of the Call Fire Department line and reallocated to the Deputy Chief line. He explained in the past the call department held people in all ranks(i.e. Chief, deputy, captain, lieutenant), but with retirements, they currently only had a lieutenant within the twelve call department staff. The decision was to use the salaries previously allocated to the call department and shift it into the Deputy Chief salary line, which had been vacant for a few years. The Deputy Chief position would be a part time position (no benefits) covering three(8 hour) shifts per week. Chief Midgley said it had been a struggle to maintain call personnel.

Mr. Guimond questioned if there were any open fulltime positions. Chief Midgley replied there were no open positions; they had one person on disability and had hired a temporary person to bring down the impact to the budget. He noted they were trying to bring on additional call personnel because retention has been terrible.

Mr. Sherman asked how many fire officer II were in the department full time. Chief Midgley believed 14 of 16 were fire officers. The department encourages everyone to become a fire officer because at any point in time they could be in charge of a shift.

Mr. Guimond wanted to know if the department salaries were competitive. Chief Midgley replied their salaries were competitive to slightly ahead.

Mr. Cronin questioned how long the deputy position had been vacant. Chief Midgley believed it was vacant for approximately two years. Mr. Cronin wanted to know how the department compensated in the interim having the vacancy. Chief Midgley said he had tried covering some of the duties and the firefighters had stepped up and taken extra duties. He explained there was no management within the department; the rank went from Chief to Lieutenant, which left a gap. Having that gap made it difficult for all the administrative duties to be covered.

Ms. Spencer asked if the deputy position would be filled from within. Chief Midgley stated it would most likely be an outside position. He had a couple discussions with candidates that indicated they weren't interested. He said it would most likely be an outside position. He was looking for possibly a retired individual with a lot of experience who wanted to remain within fire service.

Mr. Viger confirmed that the Deputy Chief would be an administrative, part-time, non-union position. Chief Midgley answered yes. Mr. Viger also confirmed that the salary would be absorbed by using the salary line from the call fire department line. Chief Midgley said that was correct.

Mr. Cronin asked why there were five employees receiving an increase in salary. Chief Midgley said although the employees were out of contract, those individuals were eligible for a category upgrade to Master Firefighter. Mr. Cronin questioned why the hourly rates showed several different figures. Chief Midgley replied there were different job classifications and within each category there were ten steps.

Mr. Sherman confirmed that negotiations would occur for a new contract. Chief Midgley responded negotiations would begin within the next two weeks.

Mr. Rush asked how many fires the department responded to last year. Chief Midgley believed there were approximately nine structure fires. Mr. Rush questioned how many firefighters the department had. Chief Midgley replied there were sixteen firefighters in total who were also paramedics and EMT's respectively. Mr. Rush wanted to know how many people were devoted to the Fire Department. Chief Midgley said no one was solely devoted to the Fire Department. Mr. Rush was hearing that there were 15-20 people with only nine fires. Mr. Guimond asked how many calls the department responded to. Chief Midgley said they responded to approximately 1,400 calls per year. He explained that there was no such thing as a 'firefighter', the employees were firefighter/EMS providers. The department doesn't hire firemen. Chief Midgley said the employees had to be dual certified. Mr. Rush said it seemed the Fire Department was heavy with firemen since there were only nine fires. Mr. Guimond pointed out that the employees were dual positions – firefighter/EMT who responded to approximately 1,400 calls per year. There are no individuals within the department that solely fight fires. Mr. Viger approached the question by explaining there were 16 emergency technicians/paramedics that could also respond to fires.

Mr. Rush said when he spoke to the ambulance companies, he learned that the Town only had 1,000 calls. Mr. Viger called for a point of order. He said it wasn't the purview of the Budget Committee to speak to the ambulance company. He referred to RSA 32.1 – purpose of the Budget Committee. He stated that the Budget Committee didn't set policy. Mr. Rush wanted to know how many ambulance calls the fire department had. Chief Midgley stated that the Fire Department responds to 1,400 calls for service per year. Those calls could include fire, rescue, emergency medical services, etc. He said they ran approximately 900-1,000 EMS runs per year. Mr. Rush asked what the other 400 calls were. Chief Midgley replied the other calls could be motor vehicle accidents, structure fires, rescue calls, smoke in a building, chimney fires, etc. Mr. Rush wanted to know what was included in the nine fire calls. Chief Midgley answered by saying anything that burned; fires within a structure.

Members of the Board spoke from personal experience the professionalism they witnessed during emergencies the Fire Department had responded, both fire and medical.

Ms. Hillsgrove knew there were specific standards that had to be followed by response personnel when entering a building. Chief Midgley stated the national standard was 'two in / two out'. He said if they didn't follow that standard the Town's Insurance Services Office, Inc. ('ISO') rating would decrease (fire suppression rate schedule) and residents would pay more for their insurance. He noted it took four firefighters to perform a rescue on one victim and explained how rescue situations occurred.

Mr. Viger commented when he started on the Board the Town had a completely volunteer fire department. Thanks to former Chief Fisher, who had all his staff become EMT certified. As the department became full-time, the whole staff was certified and required from new hires.

Mr. Cate asked for a Point of Order - Call to Question so discussion could be limited.

Mr. Rush recalled discussions last year about the department being thankful for not having a private ambulance service. He questioned why there were five towns in the immediate area either signing up, or re-upping ambulance services. Mr. Guimond didn't feel the question was appropriate. He said Pelham was doing the job they were asked to do. Ms. Hillsgrove believed that type of change should come at the direction of the Selectmen. There was a consensus to Call to Question. The discussion was moved forward.

Supplies – Slight increase for purchase of smoke inhalation medication (shelf life 2 years). Mr. Guimond recalled the department had a swap program with the local hospital for drugs nearing their expiration date. Chief Midgley said that program was done. He said they received credit turn backs for drugs handed back and were now simply replacing expired drugs. Mr. Sherman asked about Narcan ('Naloxone') use (which counters the effects of overdose). Chief Midgley said the department had it available for use in the event of emergency.

There was a discussion regarding the turn out gear. They have a revolving replacement schedule; 2016 will show a decrease. Mr. Sherman asked if the department had special goggles, such as thermal imaging. Chief Midgley commented in the past the thermal units were attached to individual helmets, but in present times the department uses a hand held unit that can easily be passed from one firefighter to another.

The Board continued their review of the proposed budget. Chief Midgley described the structure of the Mutual Aid District and how it provided benefit to the Town.

Telephone - Mr. Smith questioned if the telephones were under contract. Chief Midgley said they were under a municipal contract with Verizon and paid approximately \$40 per phone/modem. Mr. Guimond asked for the date that the phone contract would expire.

Vehicle Maintenance & Repairs – Mr. Cate asked why pump testing & repair increased \$2,000. Chief Midgley said the cost should have gone up \$4,000, but he didn't want to put it in the budget. He explained that the pump was rebuilt; however the mechanical housing had burnt oil come out, which could be two possible issues (varying cost between \$2,000-\$7,000). It's believed the repair will be on the lower end. He said with the vehicle being purchase half a year out, he'll be able to make up the additional cost over \$2,000. Ms. Hillsgrove asked if they were confident on the delivery date for the new truck. Chief Midgley said they don't have a date yes; detailed review and change orders have been done. Once the amendments and pricing are finalized (within two weeks) the Selectmen need to give approval; the truck will be ready 280 days from that approval.

Equipment Repairs – Chief Midgley discussed the Self Contained Breathing Apparatus ('SCBA') gear and the proposed replacement schedule. He explained that the design and specification had changed. There will be a warrant article brought forward in 2017 for twenty tanks at a cost of approximately \$120,000. Mr. Smith questioned why the request would be in the form of a warrant article. He said it seemed to be a one for one replacement of existing equipment. Mr. Guimond felt it was probably a warrant article because of the dollar figure. Ms. Hillsgrove suggested the department consider having the units in the operating budget. The SCBA are necessary for safety and shouldn't be delayed.

Computer System - Decrease due to department switching to a more functional system for EMS. Lieutenant Atwood discussed the new system and explained responders would have access to an interactive map with a multitude of information at their fingertips for additional service to residents. The system sends automatic popups containing information, streaming video etc. to the Chief's phone. This allows responders to be in better contact with the Chief for solutions on scene.

Equipment Rental – Chief Midgley told the Board that Pennichuck Water hydrant fees had increased 12% over last year's rate. The other increase was oxygen refilling, which was also out of the department's control. Mr. Cate asked if the Pennichuck contract was negotiated annually. Mr. Viger said there weren't negotiations with Pennichuck. The rates were similar to an electric bill; Pennichuck provides a service and has an associated charge.

Mr. Smith understood that the Fire Department provided free carbon monoxide detectors and questioned if the cost was included in the proposed budget. Chief Midgley stated he was able to get a grant for 50 detectors. The good part of the program is the ability for the department to assist residents with their detectors and ensure the units were working properly.

New Equipment – Ms. Hillsgrove questioned if the equipment from the old ambulance would be transferred into the vehicle. Chief Midgley said the hardest part of the design work for the new vehicle was determining how the components from the old vehicle would be moved over and integrated. He commented the board (with Chair Lt. Ignatowicz) who designed how the equipment would be put into place.

Expenses - Chief Midgley explained that the Mutual Aid District had voted to take some of the surplus funds and offset the cost of dues for one year to lower the impact to the towns.. He said they had enough money in surplus from grants and dues.

Mr. Cate asked where the mutual aid facility was located. Chief Midgley said it was located in the oil facility on Lowell Road in Windham. Pelham is one of the primary responders to assist, should the equipment need to be deployed.

Mr. Rush wanted to know where the cost to rent the building showed up in the budget. Mr. Guimond explained that Pelham belonged to a Hazardous Waste District; the rent for the facility was paid by that district; it wasn't a Town responsibility. Mr. Rush asked for the cost of renting the building. Chief Midgley said the rent was included in the dues. He stated he would provide the Budget Committee with a copy of the Mutual Aid District's budget.

The Board concluded their review of the Fire Department budget. Mr. Guimond asked how the new station was doing. Chief Midgley said aside from a couple glitches, they came in under budget and there were no major problems. Mr. Cate wanted to know the status regarding the siding on the building. Chief Midgley said the siding had been resolved. There were no problems with it buckling during the summer months.

Emergency Management - \$8,108 requested – a decrease of \$868 from 2014 budget.

Fire Chief James Midgley and Lieutenant Greg Atwood presented the proposed budget. Chief Midgley explained that the emergency management budget was used to fund the unforeseen (i.e. snow and ice storms). He noted if an event becomes a declared disaster, roughly 75% of costs were reimbursed back to the Town.

Chief Midgley told the Board that the department had to use the cistern maintenance funds during the past winter season for clearing the areas around the cisterns. There are 75 cisterns the department is required to clear after snowstorms. Mr. Cate questioned the conditions of the existing cisterns. Chief Midgley believed they were doing well. He said one failed, and a couple had minor issues. The department has an aggressive maintenance schedule and conduct regular reviews.

Planning Department - \$303,101 requested – an increase of \$8,328 over 2014 budget.

Planning Director Jeff Gowan came forward to present the budget. Also present was Office Manager Jenn Hovey.

Salaries – Contractual increase. Mr. Sherman questioned when the inspector's last pay raise occurred. Mr. Gowan believed they received a 1.5% last year. He said he may have an increase in next year's budget. Mr. Guimond asked if the Town had a new code officer. Mr. Gowan said the department had a part-time (\$24/hr) code compliance official. He was very pleased with the work being done.

Supplies – Mr. Rush wanted to know if all the departments were using the same brand of copy machine. Mr. Gowan said his department used Konica-Minolta and believed all departments within the Town hall were using the same. Mr. Rush also wanted to know which printers were being used. Mr. Gowan replied his department was phasing laser printers out.

190 *Telephones* – Ms. Spencer asked if the Town had a municipal contract for cell phones. Ms. Kelley said the Town received a municipal discount
191 and used shared minutes. She said they were all with Verizon, but all different contracts.

192
193 *Gas & Oil* – Mr. Guimond saw that the line showed a decrease and wanted to know how the new vehicles was working out. Mr. Gowan showed a
194 photograph of the vehicle . He said it was working well and getting good mileage. He didn't expect to have to replace the vehicle for at least ten
195 years.

196
197 *New Equipment* - There was a brief discussion regarding the vehicle lease that had been moved to Debt Service. Mr. Viger explained the Town
198 had different lease agreements, but they were all listed in one place within the budget for easier tracking. The individual department budgets
199 maintain a budget line for cross-reference.

200
201 *Miscellaneous (Specials)* – Mr. Gowan told the Board that he brought forward two items for the Selectmen to consider, 1) Impact Fee Review, and
202 2) Master Plan Update. He discussed the importance of updating master plan, which was last updated in 2002.

203
204 The Board concluded their review of the budget.

205
206 **Capital Improvement Plan ('CIP')**

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208 Planning Director Jeff Gowan and CIP member Mike Sherman came forward to discuss the recently updated CIP. The Board members were
209 provided with a revised copy of the CIP. Mr. Gowan gave the Board a summary of the plan . The Board decided to review the plan on their own
210 and will ask questions or request additional information if necessary.

211
212 Mr. Smith questioned the line for the animal shelter and wanted to know if there were other options that could be considered. Town Administrator
213 Brian McCarthy came forward. He said the animal control shelter building was probably 30-40 years old. He said to try and keep costs down the
214 Town has an agreement with the Animal Rescue Network of New England ('ARNNE') who help with maintenance, upkeep and tending to the
215 animals. He said the arrangement has allowed the Town to save a lot of money, but because the structure was so dilapidated, the Town was
216 putting money into bad money into the building. They need to reviewing putting together the most cost effective way to correct the building that
217 houses the animals. Mr. McCarthy noted he had been with the Town for approximately 9-10 years and the item had been pushed off every year.
218 He felt they should review the building and consider a viable cost-effective solution.

219
220 Mr. Guimond believed the question centered more with the proposed cost. Mr. Gowan said the figure was submitted by the Police Chief.

222 Mr. Sherman asked if the building was on Town property or Fish & Game property. Mr. McCarthy believed it was a Town building on Fish &
223 Game property and they received a tax abatement for allowing the building on their property. Mr. Viger added that the abatement wasn't big and
224 didn't justify moving the building offsite.

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226 **ADJOURNMENT**

227

MOTION: (Sherman/Cronin) To adjourn the meeting.

VOTE: (9-0-0) The motion carried.

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229 The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:12pm.

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Respectfully submitted,

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Charity A. Landry

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Recording Secretary