

Town of Farmington
Board of Selectmen Public Meeting Minutes
Monday, November 14, 2022
Selectmen's Chambers
356 Main Street-Farmington, NH 03835

Board Members Present:

Gerry Vachon, Chairman
Charlie King, Vice Chairman
Ann Titus
Doug Staples
Penny Morin

Others Present:

Ken Dickie, Town Administrator
James Reinert, Fire Chief
Kelly Heon, Assessing Clerk
Blanche Tanner, resident
Rob Stracken, resident

1). Call to Order:

Chairman Vachon called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

2). Pledge of Allegiance:

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

3). Public Input:

Resident Blanche Tanner came forward and asked if the air purifier that was purchased for this room is still being used.

Mr. Vachon said to his knowledge it is still being used and it should be on 24 hrs. /7 days a week.

Ms. Tanner said that it was not on during the Conservation Commission's recent meeting so she was curious about that. She said the last Selectmen's meeting she attended was on Oct. 3 and she has a few follow-up questions as well as some new ones.

She asked for the total cost of the Town Administrator's search and that when she asked last time she was given an estimate.

Mr. Vachon said the estimated cost was \$5,000 and he didn't know the exact number but the final billing was \$5,000 and change.

Ms. Tanner said at the meeting she watched they said the well testing had stopped because what they were doing wasn't working and asked what is happening now with the wells.

Mr. Vachon asked if they have "fired back up" again and that he not received any notice of it.

Mr. Dickie said they were trying to develop a filtration system that would remove the rust, minerals and particles in the water.

Mr. Staples corrected that it is to remove the tannins in the water not rust.

Mr. Dickie said the standard filtration systems they were using which would be low cost to the Town is not working so they have to put some science behind it and look at different methods to see what would possibly remove the contaminants from the water and propose that to the

Town because it could cost a significant amount of money to remove them.

Ms. Tanner asked if it was still being worked and would be discussed at a future meeting.

Mr. Vachon said they haven't heard from them on what their next filtration system will be and once they get that wording it will be discussed because there will be some type of financials along with that cost.

Mr. Dickie added they have a meeting with the cemetery committee to discuss the possibility of being able to use a well near the cemetery.

Ms. Tanner said she previously asked that when the report on the DPW investigation was complete if she could have a copy of the report and she was told that she could not because she was not named in the report. She asked if someone receives a copy of that or any other investigation report if those people need to sign some kind of non-disclosure agreement or if they can share it with anybody they choose.

Mrs. Morin said there is usually something they have to sign stating that it's confidential.

Mr. Dickie said not that he is aware of.

Mr. Vachon said that type of report would be redacted to just the person that requested it so the only thing they are going to see is wherever that person was named so if that person would like to divulge the information that they provided, but it's not going to give any other information that's in that report because that report has been sealed. The only people that can receive that report are the people named in the report and they are only going to get where they were named they're not going to get the whole report he said.

Ms. Tanner then said she had 3 questions regarding the Police Dept. She said Chief Orlando mentioned possibly looking at a candidate for the Police Dept. who is 19 years old and asked if that is the minimum age that one can apply to be a Police Officer.

Mr. Vachon said he believes the minimum age is 18 years old.

Ms. Tanner said having worked with teenagers for 30 years 19 seems very young to her. She said the budget for the Police Dept. includes 13 Police officers and asked if there are currently 13 officers on the roster.

Mr. Vachon said there are 2 vacancies and the Chief has 1 candidate he will be bringing forward and another candidate he is talking with to fill those 2 vacancies.

Ms. Tanner asked if the 13 officers was the projected number for next year's budget.

Mr. Vachon said he believes that is what they have always budgeted and the Chief is hoping to bring them to full staff after the first of the year.

Ms. Tanner said the Chief said to leave \$1 on the School Resource Officer budget line and asked if anyone from the Police Dept. is currently working with the school SRO program.

Mr. Vachon said currently the Strafford County Sheriff's Office is the SRO and they need to leave \$1 in that line to keep that line open for the future.

Ms. Tanner again asked if no one on our Police Dept. is working with the school at this point.

Mr. Vachon said no.

Ms. Tanner said it was mentioned there is a possibility of a \$1 million bond for the bridges to go before the taxpayers but it may be \$1.5 million and the \$500,000 would be available by the Town and asked where that \$500,000 is available in the Town.

Mr. Vachon said they are looking at the Bridges and Roads Capital Reserve Fund and the additional money from the state for roads.

Mr. Dickie said \$155,000 came from the state and we currently have over \$300,000 in the CRF.

Ms. Tanner asked for the name of the state funding program.

Mr. Vachon said the Town gets funds from the Highway Block Grant and the \$155,000 was additional money from the COVID funds.

Ms. Tanner said it was said that after budget season and Town Meeting the board might be looking at the board's policies and procedures and asked if there is a paper copy of the policies and procedures the board follows and if she could get a copy or sign it out, review it and then bring it back.

Mr. Vachon said that is public document so they would get her a copy or provide it to her.

Ms. Tanner asked when those discussions happen if the policies/procedures would be openly reviewed at public meetings and people could read the documents and make comments. She asked if the only people to make decisions regarding policies and procedures would be the current board members and it wouldn't be open for the town to vote on.

Mr. Vachon said if they would like to change anything.

Ms. Tanner asked if they change anything then the next board would follow those policies and procedures unless they chose to make further changes.

Mr. Vachon said that is correct.

Ms. Tanner said they have a lot of non-public sessions sometimes before the public meetings and sometimes after the meetings and that she was not looking for names and asked who typically attends those meetings.

Mr. Vachon said the board, the Minute Taker, the Town Administrator and anyone involved in the non-public session such as a dept. head and any applicants they want to bring forth if it's for hiring, if it's anything to do with the Police or Fire Depts. it would be that dept. head and if it was anything to do with legal issues legal counsel might be here. He said it would only be this board sitting at this table and anyone that was invited into the non-public that it pertained to.

Ms. Tanner said about a year ago she asked if a citizen could request a non-public session with the board and she was told she couldn't do that so she assumed that applies to every resident in town. She asked if that applies to the other boards in town and the school dept. and if they could request a non-public with the Selectmen or if it is just the Selectmen that would ask someone to come in and how that works.

Mr. Vachon said it depends on if it fell under non-public items such as legal issues, reputation, hiring, firing and compensation. He said it is laid out what is non-public and what is public and if the matter had to do with non-public items it would have to be in non-public session.

Ms. Tanner asked if the non-public sessions are held in this building and in this room.

Mr. Vachon said in this building yes but not necessarily in this room.

Ms. Tanner asked when they have sealed minutes if no one should be discussing those minutes outside of this room and they should not be discussing it with partners, husbands, wives or neighbors. Sealed means sealed and they're not supposed to be discussed outside of this room she said.

Mr. Vachon said sealed means the general public can't receive them and non-public sessions are not supposed to be discussed outside of this board. He said it doesn't have to be sealed and non-public sessions in general are confidential and the only person they can be discussed with is the person within the non-public and this board and it can't be more than 3 board members together to discuss it.

Ms. Tanner said she wanted to make sure she understood that sealed meetings are not supposed to be discussed with anyone outside of here.

Mr. Vachon said it doesn't matter sealed or not and sealed just means that no one can receive them unless they are mentioned in them.

Ms. Tanner said she wanted to make sure she understood that all non-public minutes should not be discussed with anyone outside of the people in the room or the people it may apply to.

Mr. Vachon said they are not for public so yes the people they pertain to and the board.

Mr. King said if they had a non-public session with an employee regarding a personal matter they are bound by that but they can't bind that employee from discussing their personal business with others. He said for example if they had a non-public session with Ms. Tanner regarding a performance issue they brought to her attention it would not be discussed by the board but if she chose to tell everybody she wanted to that is her free will.

Mrs. Morin said non-public minutes after 72 hours that aren't sealed can be requested by a RSA 91-A request.

Ms. Tanner then closed with the following message: "Thanksgiving: for many of us is a time for reflection, our time to express our thanks to and gratefulness for the important people in our lives. An old card I received many years ago had the following message: May the spirit of Thanksgiving enter your home and heart filling you with many blessings. Thank you for your time".

Resident Rob Stracken, 8 Mechanics Street said he attended a meeting in Aug. and asked about the 2 lots that were tax deeded to the Town when his property before he purchased it was foreclosed on. He asked if there was any movement on that and what the next steps may be to either make an agreement between him and the Town or submit a sealed bid to the Town.

Mr. Dickie said they are working with the Town's lawyers trying to reach out to the families that potentially owned the land previously and they are having difficulties with one lot so they are working to get that straightened out. He said once that is straightened out they enter into the 90 day process which allows the next of kin to come in and settle it and then they own the land

or if no one comes forward after 90 days they can bring it to the board and they can put it out to bid.

Mr. Stracken thanked the board and left the meeting.

4). Review of Minutes:

November 7, 2022- Non-Public Sessions A, B, & C- No errors or omissions

Motion: (Titus, second Morin) to approve the minutes as written passed 5-0.

Mr. King noted for the record that Non-Public Session A is sealed for a period of 3 months and it should be noted as such.

Mrs. Morin said she noted that in the public minutes. She asked if Non-Public Session C should also be sealed.

Motion: (King, second Staples) to seal the Non-Public Session C minutes for one year as disclosure would adversely affect the reputation of a person other than a member of the board passed 5-0 by a roll call vote (Vachon, King, Titus, Staples, Morin-aye).

Mrs. Morin asked Mr. Dickie if he forwarded the motions the board made in public to add to the public minutes that she sent him to Terri Magoon.

Mr. Dickie said he didn't see them and Mrs. Magoon will be doing the public minutes for that meeting.

5). New Business:

500 Boys and Girls Club Water Concern- Postponed to next week

Jason Lauze RSA 79-E Request- Assessing Clerk Kelly Heon said Mr. Lauze would not be joining them at this meeting but the board received everything in their packets and asked if they want to talk about it and decide if he needs to be here or not or if they have any questions.

She said she didn't know who was on the board at the time when Jason Lauze's 79-E (Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive) agreement application was accepted for his building downtown but she was sure they all knew the building that now has the barbershop, the WK Hair Bar and the Delectable Designs. She said he applied for and received tax relief based on the 79-E revitalization program the Town adopted several years ago. She said his full tax relief is for 9 years that's after the rehab is complete and in the original covenant that was signed by the board a few years ago they gave him until October 2022 to complete the rehab or he would need to request an extension. She said the letter the board has is his formal request for a one year extension for the rehab.

Mr. King said she said it was 9 years for the full relief and asked if it then it goes to the new value based on the improvements or if it was tiered incrementally over the years.

Mrs. Heon said it's not tiered.

Mr. King said so its 9 years from whatever the assessed value was at the time so if he gets the improvements done this would be 4 years.

Mrs. Heon said the 9 years actually starts when the rehab is complete so he gets the rehab

period plus 9 years. She said it was originally 5 years and then he came back to the board and got the additional 4 years based on the historic elements of the building.

Mr. King asked if those 4 years had to be approved by the state or just by the Town.

Mrs. Heon said it didn't need state approval and the law reads you only have to be eligible to be on the Historic Register you don't actually have to go through that process. The discussion of that is in the minutes I included she said.

She said if the board wants Mr. Lauze to come back next week to answer any questions he will but she figured since she already got the packets ready and they had it on the agenda if they wanted to make a decision tonight she would leave it up to the board.

Mr. King said originally Mr. Lauze planned to have the improvements done over 3 years and now he is requesting an additional year which would be 4 years for the total renovations instead of 3 years.

Mrs. Heon said yes but she didn't know if it would take him the full year because it's close to being done it's just not complete.

Mr. King said in some ways it is an extension of 25% it's not like he is asking for twice the amount of time.

Mrs. Heon said he got his original approval right before COVID hit so that delayed him quite a bit on doing what he wanted to do.

Motion: (Titus, second Staples) for Jason Lauze's 79-E request to be granted passed 5-0.

2022 Equalization Study- Mrs. Heon said she needed the board's signatures on the 2022 Equalization so it can be uploaded to the state. She said she gave the board copies of the equalization study that was completed by Assessor Chad Roberge and the grid containing the historical tax rates and ratios to put it into context.

She said Mr. Roberge calculated our ratio for 2022 to be 62% which means that our assessments now stand at 62% of market value. She said our revaluation was done in 2019 and at that time they were at 100% of market value and every year since then it's been going down. If this trend continues we could see it at 50% before we do our next revaluation she said.

Mrs. Heon said that doesn't mean that taxes are going up its sticker shock for residents when they see an assessed value potentially double when they bring them to market value and our next revaluation is scheduled for 2024 so it depends on what happens over the next year or so.

Mr. King said houses are selling for substantially more than the current valuation and whether that trend continues, based on economics it may slow down, stop or come back the other way. He asked if the Town has been doing a full revaluation every 5 years and were not doing an incremental revaluation and adjusting it.

Mrs. Heon said they do a statistical revaluation where it's not a full measure and list and every house in Farmington is not visited, measured and checked. She said they stopped doing what is called cyclical several years ago because it was a lot of money to spend on not a lot of return because you typically don't get into people's houses to check on things.

She said the assessor has staffing issues as well and it would be impossible to get that done and it's very expensive so they try to keep their data as up to date as possible using building permits and whenever they find anything when people put their houses on the market that's an opportunity to update their data based on what they see.

Mrs. Heon said the statistical update is just truly an in-depth analysis of the last 2 years of sales and bringing our values up to a market value it isn't physically going and looking at every house. That is contracted for 2024 and it's by law we don't have a choice she said.

Mr. King said he included the excluded sales and asked if he put a percentage on what percentage of excluded sales it is as it is on more than 2 pages and looks to be about 25%.

Mrs. Heon said of total sales it could be. She said excluded sales are sales that aren't considered an arm's length transaction like a landlord selling to a tenant, a family transfer, a foreclosure sale, a bank owned property and there are lots of reasons that would exclude a sale.

Mrs. Morin said the exclusion codes are on page 2.

Mrs. Heon said there is nothing the board needs to do with this other than to sign the pink sheet so she can upload the information to the NH Dept. of Revenue Administration. She said as we move closer to 2024 if this trend continues they are probably going to want to offer a lot of education to the residents because it could be a situation where assessed values could double.

Mr. King said they are going to double and if you look at the last time they were this far back it was from 1997 to 2004 and we went from 100% assessment to 51% and if we are at 62% with 2 more years to go we are on track to be at 50%. He said the tax rate went from \$31.66 to \$16.97 so the assessment doubled and the tax rate got cut in half.

Mrs. Heon said with the timing of the revaluation people would get their letters about what their value was going to be in the summer so they would still be thinking about the previous year's tax rate and that puts people into a panic which is why we need to educate people about even if their assessed value doubles that does not mean their tax bill is going to double.

Mr. King said when they get that assessment they will know what the total valuation of the town is going to change to.

Mrs. Heon said yes and there will be a couple of weeks of hearings, it will get tweaked and people will have the opportunity to come in.

Mr. King said right now the town's assessment is \$562 million so if the assessment goes to \$750 million they could say what the projected tax rate with current expenditures would be adjusted to and they could give that out as information.

Motion: (King, second Staples) to approve the proposed DRA assessment to sales ratio passed 5-0.

EDC New Member Appointments- Mrs. Heon said they received 3 applications for membership on the Economic Development Committee and asked the board to approve them.

Motion: (Titus, second Morin) to have the following people be appointed to the EDC in Farmington: Adam Giles, KJ Cardinal and Danielle E. Harris all as regular members passed 5-0.

Intent to Cut- Mrs. Heon said the cutting would take at Cameron's and requires no action by the board except for their signatures.

6). Fire Dept. Proposed 2023 Budget:

Fire Chief James Reinert said he "stole" the way the Police Chief did his budget and hopefully it is something the board likes. He asked if the board wanted to go line by line and if there were any specific questions or anything they wanted to target.

Chairman Vachon suggested they review the budget line by line and if they have any questions they can ask it then instead of bouncing all over and the board agreed.

Fire Dept. Chief (2022 approved budget-\$72,668)- Chief Reinert said his yearly salary is included in this and he could discuss it more in-depth when they get to the wage increase what he is asking for or whether it should be discussed in non-public session which he thought would be the appropriate venue.

Per Diem Coverage (2022 approved budget -\$543,551; 2023 proposed budget-\$425,890) - Chief Reinert said this covers all the wages for the per diem or part time members based on the potential for a 4th additional full time person so if that full time person doesn't go through he will have to readjust it to cover those hours in the per diem line. He said this includes the \$4 shift differential on the weekend and there is a potential savings of about \$13,000 because full time people don't get the weekend shift differential as it is a perk for the part-timers. He said there is approx. \$27,000 in callback pay for coverage for per diem vacation hours that will start in 2023. He said on the job training for new members averages about 400 per diem hours a week after the full time hours.

Mrs. Morin asked how often they do a callback.

Chief Reinert said there are certain calls where callbacks happen, so any report of a structure fire, a motor vehicle accident with entrapment or anything on Rt. 11 or high impact area is automatic. He said they have a list of what calls are automatic for callback and anytime they need additional help if they have multiple calls going on at once.

Mr. King asked what a callback is and who is getting called back.

Chief Reinert said it is anybody that is not on duty that is available in the immediate area to come back for additional help or multiple calls.

Mr. Staples asked if he would try to use Middleton or New Durham first since we cover them all the time.

Chief Reinert said not so much those 2 communities but Milton and Farmington have entered into on a trial basis of increasing their automatic aid because even with the callbacks they might not be getting that personnel so on certain types of calls like fire alarm activations and echo-level cardiac arrests both Farmington and Milton will get toned to send additional help to that community and if they get on scene in Farmington and determine they can handle it they will cancel Milton and vice versa. We are trying to see other avenues of getting hands on patients or getting people on scene and we started this around August 1 he said.

He said the other caveat is Strafford County is still working out their bugs to make sure that they're doing it correctly and there have been times when they were supposed to have sent personnel or toned out Milton and they didn't do it because of a dispatcher or whatever so it's a work in progress.

Mrs. Morin asked how often they tone out Milton because Farmington isn't there.

Chief Reinert said it's not so much that they're not there though it can happen that way. He said this is in place so for example if a cardiac arrest comes in on Main Street and they have 3 people on duty it takes more than 3 people and there should be 5 to 6 people on hand because there's a process to it. He said Strafford should be toning out Farmington and Milton would be sending an ambulance with staff to assist because they may not be getting the callback people. He said he thought Mrs. Morin was asking if there have been times when they call in Milton because they are tied up or unavailable—yes and year to date there have been 45 instances where they have had to call in mutual aid because they were tied up at another incident.

Mr. King asked about 2 bulleted items in this section- the \$5,200 to cover per diem vacation hours and to cover approx. \$8,300 in full time vacations.

Chief Reinert said the full timers can earn up to 2 weeks of vacation and the cost to cover their shifts would be approx. \$8,300. He said in 2020 the previous board approved the per diem vacation hours as one of the perks because they were having difficulty recruiting and retaining part time Firefighters so if they average 24 hours a week throughout the year they're allotted a 24 hour week of vacation. He said he has a pretty good idea of who is going to earn that 24 hours and that calculation came from how many people will average that per week times their hourly rate which would be \$5,200 and payroll to cover their vacations.

Mr. King asked if this is the first or second year that this is in force.

Chief Reinert said this is the second year it will be in force that it will cost money. He said in 2022 they were earning the time because they had to get the average weeks in and the financial impact starts next year.

Mrs. Morin asked if a full time Firefighter goes on vacation wouldn't he just take someone from another shift to fill that spot.

Chief Reinert said they only have 3 full timers and it costs less money to put a part-timer in that spot so any time there is an open shift it goes out to the part timers before he gives it to the full timers just to try and keep the shift filled and reduce the cost from time and a half for overtime vs. someone that's working a per diem shift that gets straight time unless they're working a holiday or a shift differential on the weekends.

Full Time Firefighters (2022-\$57,818; 2023-\$209,500)-Chief Reinert said he expressed his concern about the way this warrant article was written at Town Meeting and the way the budgetary number looked. He said the proposed \$209, 500 will cover the wages for the 3 full timers and he is asking for a fourth starting April 1 plus the holiday pay they get because they don't get time and one-half for holidays. He said in the employee handbook it says DPW, Police

and Fire Dept. employees that work on a holiday get an end of the year holiday check which is 8 hours per holiday times the 11 holidays in the handbook.

Mr. King asked what happens if they don't work those holidays.

Chief Reinert said they still get it because it's in the handbook.

Mr. King asked if this covers benefits and retirement.

Chief Reinert said this does not and this is just wages. He said this year the way it was budgeted came out of mostly the per diem line because they were converting per diem hours into full time hours which covered wages, benefits and retirement. That's why the way it was presented was kind of misleading as to what the actual costs were but the costs were tracked in and budgeted for in that pot of money in the per diem line and the overage was that.

Mrs. Morin said so there would be some sort of balance throughout his budget.

Chief Reinert said that's correct and they will see the retirement costs will be the actual true retirement, health care will be true health care, etc.

Mrs. Titus asked if there were only 3 full time Firefighters right now and if the \$209,500 is for 3 or 4 full time Firefighters.

Chief Reinert said they have 3 full timers now and the \$209,500 would be the wages for 4 full timers with the 4th one starting after Town Meeting and he put it as April 1 to make it easier.

Mrs. Titus asked if he has someone in place for that wanting to take that place and if he was talking about last year's Town Meeting or the next one coming up (March 2023).

Chief Reinert said he was talking about the Town Meeting coming up. He said they would advertise the position and he might have a candidate or 2 that may be interested that are part time or lateral transfers. He said this is a request for 4 and if it gets denied he would adjust it back down to the 3 full time wages and then add in the hours to cover the per diem.

Mr. King asked if the 4th person is in this proposed budget.

Chief Reinert said the 4th person is included in the \$209,500.

Mrs. Morin asked if it's also in the per diem fire day coverage.

Chief Reinert said no and that he subtracted it.

Mrs. Morin asked if he doesn't get the 4th person he would add \$12,480 to the per diem coverage.

Chief Reinert said that \$12,480 is the shift differential that is provided to the per diem people on the weekends. He said the full timer gets put into a weekend shift so they wouldn't be paying the \$4 shift differential so they would have to add that back into the per diem line.

Mrs. Titus asked why he is requesting a fourth person.

Chief Reinert said he is trying to ensure they have continuity in staffing. He said the part timers are great and they wouldn't be able to operate without them but it does get difficult to get people to come in, stay on board and they will hire someone and then 2 months later they get hired full time elsewhere. It's becoming more of an issue in the recruitment and retention on the part time level because there are so many full time positions out there and if they're not

already full time most of their goals are to get to that level. We're filling a need to them but I'm looking for stability in staffing he said.

Mrs. Titus said so this is more of a need than a want.

Chief Reinert said that's correct.

Overtime (2022-\$0; 2023-\$4,000)- Chief Reinert said they never had to budget for overtime because the Fire Chief position was the only full time position and it's a salaried position. He said looking at what was spent from Jan. 1 until now it's around \$1,500 in overtime but that is also him being very aware and trying to move pieces around so they're keeping that. It could be \$3,000 it could be \$10,000 I'm trying not to put it up there but this is one of those budgetary numbers we have no real data on he said.

Mr. King asked if they have a full staff of per diem people to back those shifts why they are expending anything for overtime.

Chief Reinert said he can't force a part-timer per diem to work if they're not available. He said if they are working a full time job sometimes the stars align and everybody is on shift at their normal job and he has no other choice but to back fill with overtime for full time people and it's inevitable that that's going to happen unfortunately.

Mr. King asked what did in the past before they had full time people.

Chief Reinert said they continued to move pieces or they might go short staffed and run 2 on a shift plus him. He said they try to maintain 3-5 on during the day and at least 3 on the overnights and weekends as their staffing model but there have been times when he has a crew of 2 and him.

Mrs. Morin said on Friday she saw a fire truck going to Holy Rosary Credit Union and there was 1 person on the truck and asked if that is typical.

Chief Reinert said that was one of their dual calls the ambulance was out and they were transporting so the third person on Friday morning responded initially and then the ambulance came in from Frisbie so it was a delayed response and Doug came in from off duty and took another engine and there were 2 calls going on simultaneously so they had to "divide and conquer" but that is not typically the way it's done.

Physicals (2022-\$1,000; 2023-\$4,000) - Chief Reinert said they typically budget \$1,000 for their pre-employment physicals and drug screening and they are just baseline physicals. He said he was unaware when he hired the full timers that the state requires that they have a NFP physical and related lab work that cost \$750 each and they have to have that at least once in their employment.

Mrs. Morin asked if he should include himself in that.

Chief Reinert said they could.

Mrs. Morin said $\$750 \times 4 = \$3,000$ and he is asking for \$4,000.

Chief Reinert said the other \$1,000 covers the pre-employment physicals for people they might hire throughout the year for part time positions and that was the best rate he could find.

Mrs. Titus asked if he is obligated to pay for their physicals.

Chief Reinert said as the hiring agency they have to pay for their NFP physicals and the Town policy's normal pre-employment baseline drug screening and physical.

Mileage (2022-\$100; 2023-\$100) – Chief Reinert said this is a rarely used line item so he level funded it at \$100 but they may want to increase it because of the fuel costs these days.

Mr. Vachon asked what they have spent YTD from this line.

Chief Reinert said they have spent about \$87 because his car was out and the utility car was out and they had to send an ambulance down to Massachusetts for some work so they had to use a personal vehicle.

Telephone (2022-\$3,900; 2023-\$4,200) – Chief Reinert said this is a \$300 increase and he does not receive their phone bill so he is going on what they pay monthly for their phone and fax because it is all in one bill and the Finance Administrator just charges this line item. He said he is asking to increase Asst. Chief Edgerly's and Deputy Chief Manchester's phone stipends from \$360 to \$600 as they are always ready and available, they're using their phone for issues and it would keep them in line with the Police Dept. as the Sgt.'s and Lt.'s there have the full phone stipend.

Mr. King said the Chief's math was incorrect because the 2 cell phone stipend increases total \$480 but he is only showing an increase of \$300 for this line. He asked what they have expended to date and if this line is currently under expended.

Mr. Dickie said they spent \$2,308 from this line through October.

Chief Reinert said he is showing they have \$1,592 left but he didn't know if that is accurate because they typically spend right up to the total \$3,900. He said they pay for the tablet data and their monthly phone bill and the stipends previously so he will look at that number.

Mr. Vachon asked if they changed phone carriers.

Chief Reinert said they did and on average it is around \$90 or \$100 each for their phone and fax lines plus the cell phone stipends and his tracking shows it at less than \$1,000 left but he hasn't had an update for a few months. He said the Verizon bill is \$110, the stipends are paid quarterly and it is approx. \$1,200 a year for the phone and fax lines and he will look at that number again to make sure where he came up with that.

Software (level funded at \$6,500) – Chief Reinert said he would like to change the name of this line because they do more than just software out of this line but he didn't know how that works. He said all of the Information Technology work, the anti-virus program, the website and the e-mail also comes out of this line and that he was looking for a little more clarity.

Consensus of the board was to change the name of the line to what more clearly states its purpose.

Chief Reinert said he level funded this line as there hasn't been much increase to the line. He said the expenditures include their yearly NFPA subscription, the emergency reporting software, Breezeline for the cable boxes, the website/e-mail, preventative maintenance and

their scheduling software. He said in the event of an emergency if they had to replace a computer they would take it out of this line.

Mrs. Morin asked if the Town has ever looked at everybody having a G-Mail account.

Mrs. Titus said when she was on the board in the past they could only do so many accounts.

Mrs. Morin said school districts get G-Mail accounts for their whole staff and she didn't think it would be unreasonable for the Town to go the same way.

Mr. King said they should look at it Town-wide because we don't have a good system and we are paying too much for it across the board.

Chief Reinert said he would like to keep the website as it is a reasonable breakdown to what they pay from other avenues. He said when the Town went through the upgrade it was about \$1,500 which is substantially more than what they pay for their website and it meets the mission and is user friendly for updates.

Mr. King asked how much of the \$650 fee is for the website and how much is for the e-mail.

Chief Reinert said the website is probably \$250 and \$400 for the e-mails and the e-mails are based on the users so that number could fluctuate. He said if someone leaves they still pay for that spot and just transfer the name.

EMS Billing Service (2022-\$10,000; 2023-\$10,000) – Chief Reinert said he level funded this line because over the last few years they have not expended the line fully. He said they get charged 5.5% from Quick Med Claims who is their primary EMS billing company and anything FFR is at a third party collection agency and they keep 33% off the top so we don't have to pay them they send us the check for the remaining amount.

He said they have seen a significant increase in Medicare/Medicaid and uninsured patients so they're not collecting much on those patients so they're not getting larger deposits in that. He asked Mr. Dickie where they are at with the EMS billing.

Mr. Dickie said they are at \$5,600.

Chief Reinert asked the board if that is something to look at as a potential area to cut.

Mrs. Morin asked if we have done our own billing in the past and it was just not successful.

Chief Reinert said it was not successful.

Mr. King said it was not the best use of our resources and Chief Reinert agreed.

Mr. Staples asked if Medicare and Medicaid don't pay their bills.

Chief Reinert said they are capped by the federal level depending on if it's a basic or advanced call. He said the basic rate is \$382 so even though they might charge \$1,200 for an ambulance bill for a basic call they cannot charge above that \$382. If it goes to Quick Med Claims for collection we're collecting \$382 minus the 5.5% charge to collect it and we have had a higher level of those types of claims or uninsured in the past several years he said.

He said with commercial insurance depending on the individual plan they might pay the entire bill or only pay \$600 and send the patient the remainder of the bill so it's always a moving target. We've had years where we've collected over \$260,000 and this year I think it will be

around \$200,000 in ambulance revenue at the end of the year and that's including the bundle billing from Frisbie Hospital which has dropped but with the 3 full timers they have been able to provide better care and we didn't have to rely on their paramedics because they are all advanced level so we are keeping more of that money in-house he said.

Office Supplies (2022-\$2,000; 2023-\$3,500) - Chief Reinert said he increased this line by \$1,500 and he needs to replace 2 printer/fax machines because the 10 year old machine that came from the old fire station died early this year and their primary machine that came new with the new station has about 90,000 copies on it which is almost double its lifespan and it prints out a giant streak down the middle of the page that IT technician can't fix. He said the technician quoted a price of approx. \$700 each to replace and install the new printers.

Mr. King asked why pre-employment motor vehicle and background checks are in this line item. Chief Reinert said he didn't want to say "because that's the way it's always been done" but that is how it was set up when he took over as Chief and he doesn't have a specific line item for that. Mr. Vachon said he thought employees had to get their own motor vehicle background checks. Chief Reinert said that was changed after last year and we now pay for the background checks which are \$15 for the motor vehicle and \$25 for the criminal history as part of their pre-employment screening. At one time we required it when they turned in an application but then it became kind of difficult when they were going through the recruitment process and we took on that task and that financial piece of it he said.

Mr. King said it needs to come out of this line and needs to go in another line such as under hiring. He said there is also a line for physicals and asked when a new Firefighter is outfitted where that comes from.

Chief Reinert said there is a line for uniforms and any PPE that is not in stock and they have to order comes out of the Personal Protection line and they don't currently have a new hire line. Mr. Vachon asked if it would be appropriate to change the line to Physicals/Pre-employment. He said however they word it he needs to slide it over because background checks are not office supplies.

Chief Reinert said he would see what other depts. use as a title for this.

Mrs. Morin suggested it be called New Hire Pre-Screening.

Consensus of the board was to rename the Physicals line and put the pre-employment background checks expenditures in that line.

Mr. Vachon asked the Chief to adjust the line numbers and what the Office Supplies line would be reduced to.

Chief Reinert said the line would come down about \$500 and it is about \$45 or \$50 a person. Mr. Vachon said then the Physicals line would go up \$500 and the Office Supplies line would come down \$500.

Mrs. Titus said everyone has office supplies in their budgets and the line is going up and asked if it is better to buy in bulk for all the depts. and then split it up.

Chief Reinert said the Town used to have a catchment area of all the supplies and they would come in to pick up their supplies and that went by the wayside. He said he didn't know if they had true tracking of what the cost was though they did fill out the forms. He said he does his best to get most supplies on Amazon because he found that to be the least expensive. Currently the only charge out of the Town is when he takes a case of paper and for postage he said.

Mrs. Morin said if they looked at what everyone was ordering historically and they did it here they would have to store it all here and then parcel it out and that takes time and money.

Mrs. Titus said he would come pick it up here and they would take the cost of whatever he takes out of his budget which might be cheaper in the long run and is something to look into.

Mr. Vachon said they can look into that and asked Mr. Dickie to look into group buying.

Mrs. Morin asked if the Town has a contract for the printers.

Chief Reinert said every dept. has that except for the Fire Dept. and he didn't know why. He said he discussed possible ways of consolidating and keeping costs down with Police Chief Scott Orlando, Lt. Matt Embrey and IT technician Eric Miles but they don't think the Fire Dept. could join in with the Police Dept. because of security issues.

Mr. Vachon suggested the Chief look into getting a printer contract for his dept. because then they wouldn't be charged for toner and would pay pennies per copy.

Chief Reinert said he wasn't opposed to that and it would be simpler. He said Chief Orlando said he spends \$3,000 a year on his copier and he (Chief Reinert) is spending about \$1,000 on ink and toner.

Mrs. Morin said he could get an all in one printer and just have one vs. buying 2 at \$1,400.

Chief Reinert said he would find out who the Town uses and look into it.

Mr. Vachon described all the parts and services included in his dept.'s contract and how they haven't paid a penny for replacing parts.

Mr. King said they are paying for the overall service and it depends on how much they use as to how much value they get from it. He said if Chief Reinert is only spending \$1,000 now that's a long way from \$3,000.

Chief Reinert said he assumed the Police Dept. is out-printing the Fire Dept. as they doing approx. 18,000 printings a year and he can confirm with Chief Orlando as to what they are printing.

Training (level funded at \$5,500) – Chief Reinert said they didn't really expend from this fund this year because this was one area where they could save money because of inflation and fuel costs, etc. He said they are looking into transitioning to an online EMS platform which has a \$2,500 a year subscription that covers all of their people and the required training vs. sending them out to whatever training they need and they can add their own trainings into it.

Mr. King asked what the remaining \$3,000 is for.

Chief Reinert said it is for additional classes like Inspector or Fire Officer 1 and they had people slated to take those trainings this year. He said they didn't do that because of the financial issue

they were in and because the Fire Academy is still trying to ramp back up from COVID and more classes are being offered now.

He said he has 2 people that need to go through Level 1 that Seacoast Chiefs is hosting in the spring and there is a grant available so those costs have come down from \$1,400 to \$200 for the next 2 years that the state will be funding them but there are other classes like Level 2 which aren't grant funded. He said he has a plan of who needs what and it's getting them to the potential cost.

Uniforms (2022-\$4,500; 2023-\$5,500) – Chief Reinert said he increased this line by \$1,000 because they have seen a supply chain issue and the overall cost has increased. He said he does his best to try to shop around and this covers the uniforms for almost 30 people throughout the year. They get a polo shirt, a couple of tee shirts and a new job shirt every year and full timers are now getting duty pants as part of their uniform package. We still use someone local for the embroidery and it is the same cost as if we were to order the shirt through the Fire Store but it comes out looking nicer than what we order he said.

Protective Clothing (2022-\$4,200; 2023-\$15,000) – Chief Reinert said there has been almost a 100% increase over the previous year in the turn-out gear they were purchasing. He said he was getting them for \$1,800 a set and the sets they purchased this year were \$3,200 and that is just for the jacket and the pants.

Mr. King asked if the cost has doubled for the equipment why this expense has increased 3.5 times.

Chief Reinert said because they base it on where they are at in the replacement cycle and there are 3 sets that have to be replaced in 2023 because their 10 year lifespan will expire and there are other items needed like boots, helmets, gloves and hoods. He then corrected that there are 4 sets that are going to expire.

He said he didn't know if there was a supply chain issue but they were waiting for about a year for stuff from Globe which is located in Pittsfield.

Mr. King asked if they are still buying items from Globe.

Chief Reinert said they are looking at other vendors and the other vendors have a quicker turnaround time but the cost is still in the \$3,000-\$3,400 range per set depending on the makeup of the buttons, zippers, pockets, etc.

Mr. Vachon asked for the life expectancy of a set.

Chief Reinert said the NFPA lifespan is 10 years but with more use their lifespan is shorter. He said the other issue he has is he has to verify if they bought another brand and there is a repair needed if Globe would repair other manufacturers' products and how that process works.

Medical Supplies (2022-\$12,000; 2023- \$15,000) – Chief Reinert said the supplies were costing about \$1,000 a month and they were still getting stuff from the state surplus early on in the year that is now closed and he went on his last shopping spree for free stuff in Aug. and got everything he could. He said there have been price increases in all the medical supplies needed

to staff the ambulance so he is trying to cover the cost to make sure they have all the required supplies on the ambulance.

Mrs. Morin asked if all of the AED batteries need to be replaced.

Chief Reinert said he replaced some of them out of this year's budget and he had 4 units left and he paid \$636.61 for 3 batteries.

Mr. King asked for the cost of a power stretcher battery.

Chief Reinert said the market price for a name brand is about \$700 each and there is a generic brand that is about \$200 per battery but it uses a different charger so they would also have to purchase the charger which is about \$150.

Mr. King asked if they were changing the batteries based on need or lifespan.

Chief Reinert said they are changed based on need and in their life cycle now they might get 2-3 lifts out of it vs. when it's brand new they can go a week. He said he didn't know which route they wanted to go and he didn't know if it would void the warranty on the power stretchers if they go with the knock-off brand of batteries and if they would need to be replaced more often. He said there is one battery on the stretcher and they keep a spare in the ambulance on the charger and they rotate them more often now.

Mr. King said he would ask the question on the warranty and if it voids the warranty he would say no to the generic batteries.

Mr. Vachon said he would be okay with spending the extra \$500 on the brand name battery to keep the warranty on the (\$22,000) stretcher.

Mrs. Morin asked the Chief to get it in writing if they say it would not void the warranty.

Chemicals (level funded at \$100) – Chief Reinert said they get their Class A foam from this line. He said they keep a 5 gallon bucket on each engine and replace them as needed and they haven't had to use any of it.

Mrs. Morin asked how long the foam lasts.

Chief Reinert said as long as its sealed the shelf life is pretty long it's once you open it, put it in the foam tank and it sits there it gels up and that's why they no longer do that.

Mr. Staples asked what the foam would be used to fight.

Chief Reinert said for any type of Class A fire and they changed it because of the PFAS (chemicals that may cause health and environmental concerns) and if they use that foam by law they have to contact NH Dept. of Environmental Services because there is a potential for hazardous material cleanup. He said there is another formula they are now using that costs \$95 a pail that they get through the NH Division of Forest and Lands at their cost.

Equipment Expenses (2022-\$6,300; 2023-\$8,000) – Chief Reinert said this line covers most of their day to day stuff like if something breaks or they need to fix a tool. He said there is a \$1,700 increase in their hazmat funding for 2023 and they have paid \$2,000.10 every year since 2013 and the hazmat team has to increase their budget due to the increased cost of the required training, equipment and physicals each person on the team has to have every year. He

said they base this on population and we fall in the middle population so our increase is going to be \$1,700 just to cover our hazmat team's yearly dues.

Preventative Maintenance (level funded at \$7,000) – Chief Reinert said each time they have preventative maintenance done they sign on for the following year and he has not received notice of any increases. He said this includes ground and aerial ladder testing, Zoll testing, and hose and pump testing.

Mr. King asked if the testing is done by a subcontractor.

Chief Reinert said yes and there is a different subcontractor for each of items being tested.

Forestry Equipment (level funded at \$3,100) – Chief Reinert said they are requesting \$3,100 with the hope that they get approved for a 50%/50% matching grant and they have been very successful in previous years with this grant. He said they are looking to replace some chain saws thru this grant and if it's awarded they will get \$1,550 back.

Mr. King asked what they plan to do with the old equipment.

Chief Reinert said most of it will be turned over to the DPW and a couple of them are old Jonsered chainsaws. He said the other issue is Watson's Corner is closed and they were doing all the maintenance on the Jonsered so now they have to go to Elliott Small Engine for repairs.

Mr. Vachon suggested the Tool Crib in Somersworth may be closer than Elliott, Maine but he didn't know if they do Jonsered equipment.

Mrs. Titus asked when he would know if they would be awarded the grant.

Chief Reinert said they applied in Sept. 2022 and they should know in the 1st quarter of 2023.

Fire/EMS Prevention Education (2022-\$750; 2023-\$500) – Chief Reinert said during COVID they weren't doing a lot of community engagement and they stocked up so they have a surplus in that area and he feels comfortable reducing this line by \$250.

Dispatch (level funded at \$7,500) – Chief Reinert said Strafford County said they are not increasing their dispatch fees (\$6,400) and the I am Responding paging program (\$1,000) also comes out of this line.

Radio Repairs (2022-\$500; 2023-\$4,500) – Chief Reinert said this line was increased to cover the purchase of a second single head mobile radio for the new command vehicle as discussed earlier this year. He said when they went through the GOFFER grant they priced out that the grant would cover the lighting and one radio so they are looking at adding a second radio for fire ground operations because sometimes they have to have a water supply line, an incident command line or an operations line. He said they should good on repairs because they have fairly new 2 & 3 year old portable radios and he is still waiting on the AFG grant he applied for to review the mobile radios for the fleet.

Mr. King asked if there was no equipment coming out of the old command vehicle going into the new one.

Chief Reinert said the old command vehicle has Motorola Astro-Spectra's which are obsolete and they can't even get cables or cords for them.

Mr. King asked what is in the new vehicle now.

Chief Reinert said nothing and they have one radio in the car that hasn't been installed yet. He said they have a dual head radio they ordered under the grant that has one head in the rear when they operate and one head in the front so they can talk when responding. He said they are looking to add a second single head radio for the rear so when they are at a structure fire or large incident they have to have multiple radios going because they don't want someone doing the water supply talking over the operations person and being the command post they have to have those functionalities. Currently we have that same setup in the old command car he said.

Mr. King asked if this is earmarked to come out of the ARPA funds.

Chief Reinert said no and the only thing he requested originally was the repeater that hopefully is being shipped on the 25th after a year. He said there was a discount coming from Motorola Solutions through Strafford County because they are doing the Strafford County radio upgrade so it's about \$4,000 for the single head radio and they paid \$4,900 for the dual head radio.

Mr. Vachon asked if he has a functioning radio in his car at this time.

Chief Reinert said he is using his portable radio and it's in the box in the back and he is waiting for it to get to Ossipee Mountain to be installed. He explained there was an issue with the installation because Ossipee Mountain pre-ordered the equipment for a 2022 Expedition and the center console in our Expedition was built in the second half of 2022 and is different and now they had to order the late 2022 equipment. He said everything is in except for the center console and he is in the queue to get them installed.

Air Pack Repairs (2022-\$4,500; 2023-\$8,000) – Chief Reinert said they are coming up on 5 years since purchasing the new air packs and they are required to have hydrostatic tests on the cylinders every 5 years and that will be around July/Aug. 2023. He said he got a quote of \$30 per cylinder x 68 and the packs are required to have flow tests next year at \$30 per pack x 34. He said they spent \$600 a year for the batteries for heads up display that tells them how much oxygen is coming through their mask and the PASS alarm that sends out a loud chirping sound if a Firefighter goes down. He said the fill station has quarterly air tests to make sure they are breathing in clean air (\$250 per quarter) and the annual maintenance service is about \$1,500.

Mr. King asked if that is a newer fill station.

Chief Reinert said they purchased it when the new Public Safety Building was built so it is 5 years old now and they spent \$65,000 on the fill station.

Gas (2022-\$2,500; 2023-\$3,500) – Chief Reinert said he didn't know if they wanted to adjust this line to more or less. He said they are going to the Town pumps and 2 weeks ago Irving was cheaper (\$3.71 a gallon) than the Town pumps (\$3.80 a gallon) for unleaded fuel but now it is still \$3.80 at the Town pump and almost \$4 at Irving. He said he was going on their average yearly use of 840 gallons of gasoline x \$4 a gallon average last week and that a small amount would be used for the gas powered equipment and they buy True Fuel by the gallon.

Diesel (2022-\$8,500; 2023-\$20,000) – Chief Reinert said when they budgeted for this last year

he asked for \$8,500 and they have already spent over that amount. He said he based this on what their usage is and the average cost at a commercial station and the Town's diesel fuel is \$4.30 a gallon as of last week and that number could fluctuate.

Mr. Dickie said this line is over spent by \$3,259 and they spent almost \$12,000 with a budget of \$8,500.

Truck Expenses (2022-\$10,000; 2023-\$25,000) – Chief Reinert said they normally average around \$10,000 in maintenance, repairs and tires and he is asking for \$25,000 and the big thing is Engine 3. He said the Town mechanic said the leaf springs are flattened and it will cost about \$2,200 to replace them. He said there is also some paint peeling and rust around the hinges, handles and the tail lights.

Mr. King asked for the age of this vehicle.

Chief Reinert said it is a 2013 and he got a quote from Northeast Fire Apparatus of about \$12,000 to do the body and paint repair on the box portion of Engine 3 and we tend to use these vehicles for many years.

Mr. King asked about his warranty on his work.

Chief Reinert said he would have to find out what the warranty is and this initially came with a 5 year tiered warranty which we are already out of.

Mr. King asked if there is a \$12,000 price tag to make it like new, what the new warranty is. Chief Reinert said he would find out and he just got a rough quote to see what direction the board wanted to go in and if this is something they want to invest in because we're going to have it for another 13 or 15 years at an average.

Mr. Vachon asked if that truck has an aluminum or steel body and if it has a double frame like the old Engine 1.

Chief Reinert said it has a steel body and does not have a double frame so he was confident the frame wouldn't rot out. He said Engine 4 has the double frame and is having some issues.

Mr. Vachon said Engine 3's frame isn't like that but the body is starting to rot.

Chief Reinert said yes and it's all around the connection points of the tail lights, hinges, etc.

Mr. Staples asked how often they wash them in the winter.

Chief Reinert said daily as long as they can give them time to acclimate back into the temperature or otherwise it will freeze. He said he tries to get it done every day because he doesn't like to see the salt on them because it doesn't look good and it is not good for them.

Wage Adjustments (2022-\$15,406; 2023-\$68,418) – Chief Reinert said the number for merit increases has been between 2.3% and 3% on average so he budgeted at the high end at 3% but the board hasn't provided direction on where they would like to keep the merit raises.

Mr. Vachon said it was 2.5% this year and that is what the rest of the depts. are doing.

Chief Reinert said he was calling it a cost of living and put a number out there of 7% just looking at the inflation over the past year, the per diem people are sometimes driving far to get here and to give them a tangible reason it is economical to come here and work. He said the other

avenue is to realign them with the Patrolmen because last summer when they went through this they brought up the wage scale and they were comparable based on certifications to be even tiered with the Patrolmen and a couple of months later the Patrolmen got a significant bump in their salaries. In my opinion a Firefighter and a Patrolman have different functions but they are the same level job he said.

He said the other adjustment is he would like at some point to have a discussion with the board about his current rate of pay. He said he wanted to have a discussion to see where the board lies, to see where his value is with the folks in town and see what they can do to adjust that.

Mrs. Morin asked if he had a copy of the last wage study that done.

Chief Reinert said yes and that he would send it to Mr. Dickie for distribution to the board.

Longevity Pay (2022-\$4,195; 2023-\$4,386) – Chief Reinert said this is based on the employee handbook and the Fire Dept. longevity pay was adopted 5 years ago. He said the part time people have to average 24 hours a week throughout the year to be eligible for longevity pay and everybody on the list (page 33 of his proposed budget) is active and are all maintaining 24 hours a week or more and that is what would be budgeted with their years of service.

Worker's Compensation (2022-\$38,307; 2023-\$?) – Chief Reinert said he just received the update from the Town Administrator today and according to Primex their contribution is \$48,956.

Mr. King asked if that is based on their current employees or their current employees plus an additional Firefighter.

Chief Reinert said that is based on the 2022 payroll contribution because that is how they do their equation.

Mr. Dickie said those are the numbers he got from Primex.

Mr. King asked if this based upon the per diem and full timers at current staffing.

Chief Reinert nodded yes.

Mr. King said if they were to hire one more they would need to know what that would be.

Mr. Dickie said they would see the effect of that next year.

Mr. Staples noted they wouldn't hire them until April 2023.

Mr. King said there would be some impact in 2023 and there is a worker's comp audit at the end of the year and we will be charged the "delta" (the difference between the 2 rates). He said you are basically buying insurance based on your estimated payroll and at the end of the year or the subsequent review period there's an audit that's says you overpaid or you under paid. He said one thing that was missing here is the retirement costs.

Chief Reinert said he did a preliminary number and he didn't put it on here because those numbers always came from the Finance Director. He said according to his math it is \$93,220 and this cost was incorporated into this year for 6 months but it came of the per diem line. He said that's based on the 4 full timers and him for the full year but at the new rate which doesn't start until July 1.

Mrs. Morin asked for last year's budgeted amount for retirement.

Chief Reinert said last year's budgeted amount was based on just him and it was \$23,100.

Mr. Staples asked if that cost and the Worker's Comp is not in the \$907,000 quote.

Chief Reinert said in a round-about way for 2022 it is and \$907,253 was last year's budgeted amount. He said he does not have all the true numbers yet for FICA, life and health insurance, long and short term disability and \$1.1 million is where they are at.

Mr. Staples asked if that includes the 2 numbers he just gave the board (the \$48,000 for Worker's Comp and the \$93,000 for retirement).

Chief Reinert said yes and the number is \$1,181,122 but that's based on using 2022 numbers for dental, life insurance, short and long term disability, etc.

Mr. Dickie said he would be working on that the rest of the week and will get them populated.

Mr. King said he is coming in with the biggest planned budget increase in the Town even higher than the Police Dept. budget that increased by 17%. You are proposing a 25% increase he said.

Chief Reinert said some of them are things they can't get out of like the increase in fuel costs. He said the wage increase is spread over 33 potential employees vs. 13 employees. He said he operates the largest dept. in Town vs. the Town Administrator who oversees everything.

Mr. King said that is based on a number of part time employees and he has people that work one shift a week. He then asked for the number of slots that are filled.

Chief Reinert said he has 33 slots and 31 of them are filled as of his last interview. He said they are also fulfilling where it's less money to hire and try to keep a part time person on than having 20 full time Firefighters. We're doing what we can to keep them here and keep them happy and keep them equitable to some other places they could work. We have increased and we have improved but we are still playing catch up in being competitive with surrounding depts. he said.

Mr. King said we have always faced that problem and the people that are going to pay for it aren't getting a 3% increase and a 7% COLA.

Chief Reinert said if he is hiring someone at \$15.10 to come in and then go through 2 years of schooling to get certified to do this type of work...

Mrs. Morin asked if we pay for that schooling.

Chief Reinert said oftentimes yes.

Mr. King asked if \$15.10 is the starting wage.

Chief Reinert said yes. He said it has been drastically decreased over the years and they used to hire more people in town that wanted to be part of the Fire Dept. but now they don't have the time or commitment where they would pay for their Level 1 and more often than not they are focusing on people that are already certified and they can jump into the role and start sooner.

Mrs. Morin asked if they still work with the Boy Scouts.

Chief Reinert said no and he doesn't even know if there is still a Boy Scout Troop in town. He said they got away from the Explorer Posts and now have live-in college students that are

working and getting a college education. He said they ran into a lot of issues with holding Boy Scout level students due to academic suspensions and there was no real interest to keep them there and maintain that. He said he loved farm systems and it may be something they look at again in the future.

Mrs. Morin asked if they have Firefighter program at Kingswood.

Chief Reinert said he didn't know. He said Dover High does a Firefighter internship but they haven't reached out too far into the seacoast area and again it could be something they look at.

Mrs. Morin said it might be nice to entertain some student that wants to go into this field. She said the Fire Academy does a lot of training and asked if we pay them a yearly fee.

Chief Reinert said they only pay a fee when they send someone to a class at the Fire Academy.

Mr. King said he would like to have the Worker's Comp and retirement portions and the comparative line items from what he approved in 2022 and 2023 included in the revised budget so they can go through it and beat out any extra stuff before it goes to the Budget Committee.

Chief Reinert said he oversees the Civil Defense budget and asked the board if they wanted to review it.

Mr. Vachon said they didn't have copies of that.

Chief Reinert said it consists of 4 items and requested to change the name to Emergency Management as Civil Defense is kind of antiquated terminology.

Mr. King asked what items are included in this budget.

Civil Defense-Chief Reinert said this includes the Emergency Management Director's stipend and the cell phone backup for the Emergency Operations Center so if the power goes down they still have communication and that's about \$40 a month.

Grants-He said they have civil defense grants and that's where they budgeted thru GOFER for the command vehicle and there are a couple of items he would like to go after through Homeland Security grants for \$15,000-\$5,000 to update the Hazard Mitigation Plan, \$10,000 for a potential 50/50 matching grant for in the event that the Town Office goes down what type of equipment they need for a "to-go bag" so they can operate a temporary Town Office elsewhere.

River Maintenance- He said in 2021 \$54,000 was budgeted and they spent \$51,000. He said this year \$5,000 was budgeted and that was for them to weed whack and mow the levee area and he included a piece of equipment that is attached to an excavator that can reach down and mow most of that area and prevent potential injuries from working on the steep embankments and it can also be used elsewhere in town. He said the estimated cost is about \$35,000 or \$40,000 and they are working on getting a more solid number.

Forest Fire Protection-The Chief said there is \$1 as a placeholder for forest fire protection as they typically don't fall under that model. He said back in the day they used to pay for fire protection for forest fires when mutual aid came in and for the on-call volunteers that worked brush fires. He said most communities don't do this anymore and they haven't used this since

before 2010. He said he would forward this budget to Mr. Dickie to distribute to the board. Mrs. Morin asked the Chief to add what was in the warrant article that was proposed for the 3 Firefighters so they have some sort of comparison of what he is spending now vs. what was in the warrant article.

Chief Reinert said the warrant article was for \$58,000 to offset the cost and he has the breakdown for the true cost for 3 and 6 full timers for 6 months but the majority of the money for the 3 full timers for 6 months came from the per diem line.

Mr. King said in rough numbers the increase in pay and benefits is a little over \$100,000 because there is \$152,000 increase in full time firefighters, plus the \$70,000 retirement increase and a \$117,000 decrease in the per diem which totals about \$105,000. He said last year it was \$57,000 and in 6 months it is close to double that.

Chief Reinert said he presented that to the previous board and he had an increase of \$150,000 if they paid for 12 months of what it cost to fund those 3 positions.

Mr. King said the \$105,000 doesn't include raises and the COLA's and his proposed number is \$43,000.

Mrs. Morin asked if some of the Firefighters that were hired may fall under the longevity pay.

Chief Reinert said the only one that would fall under that is Chris Waite because he transitioned from part time to full time and has been with the Town for 7 years.

Mr. King said that is an annual pay and that line item is \$43,000 for the entire year.

Chief Reinert said it is paid out in December.

There were no other questions so the Chief thanked the board for their time and wished them a wonderful Thanksgiving and a safe holiday.

7). New/Old Business:

Levee- Mr. King said they received copies of an e-mail and asked if there was any additional information following this e-mail.

Mr. Dickie said he received a response from FEMA Risk Analysis Branch Chief Kerry Bogdan and she sent him to FEMA Insurance Specialist for Region 1 Bob Desaulniers and he awaited his reply. He said this morning he sent him an e-mail specifically asking him Mr. King's questions about the impact to taxpayers if they don't satisfy FEMA's requirements for properties in the flood zone and if there are different levels of insurance they would have to purchase based on where they are located in the flood zone area and he is waiting for a reply.

Mr. King said the area shown in the e-mail is pretty significant and is larger than he anticipated.

Mr. Dickie said the flood zone extends more than just what they think it is on Main Street and it goes significantly back.

Mr. Vachon said the aerial photo shows it goes from Central Street down to the bridge and Main Street to the river for the most part.

Mr. Dickie said it goes past Crowley's Market all the way up to the lower end of Winter St.

Mr. Vachon said it looks it also includes the end of Lone Star where it meets Winter St., all of

Mechanics St., Civic St. and Grove St. He said it is definitely bigger than he expected and he expected it to be the general area along the river and that has to be the worst case scenario to go all that way.

Mrs. Morin asked if they reevaluate flood zones or if it's a flood zone it's always a flood zone.

Mr. Vachon said he thinks it's always a flood zone unless there is a barrier like the levee and this is where the water naturally flows.

Mr. King said this might be based on elevation and whatever they feel the flooded elevation would be.

Woman's Club- Mrs. Morin said the 9th Annual Farmington Woman's Club Pie and Craft Fair is on Sunday, Nov. 20 and it goes to support scholarships at the high school.

Christmas Tree Lighting- Mr. Vachon said the tree lighting will take place on Dec. 2 downtown.

School Bus Driver Training- Mr. Vachon said he had an inquiry about the school district being able to use the Town's CDL training facility to train school bus drivers with their own trainer and with them paying all of their costs.

Mr. King said this came up at a School Board meeting and they asked if the Town gets their training facility if the school district can piggy back on that to train their school bus drivers to potentially be able to hire some new drivers by being able to do their own training.

Mr. Dickie said he would have to see what they checked off when they applied for it.

Mr. Vachon said they would need a CDL B because of the weight and a passenger endorsement and they have a trainer for that and they may have to modify the training facility. He said they didn't click passenger on the original application but they should be able to go in or e-mail them to update it for passenger endorsement. He said he didn't see any problem with it as the training portion would be online and they would be using their buses for the driving portion and they wouldn't be using any Town equipment.

Mrs. Titus asked if there would be any cost to the Town.

Mr. Vachon said the cost would staff time for Mr. Dickie to modify the application to include passenger endorsement, the driving portion has to be reported and once they have all their paperwork he would have to notify the Federal Motor Carriers through the website at the training facility that they have completed to an acceptable level that they are competent to get a driving test. He said he planned to be at the Town Office on Wed. so they could see if they could modify the training facility then.

Boston Post Cane Award- Mr. Vachon said Wed. at 3 p.m. is when the 35th Boston Post Cane will be presented to the oldest Farmington resident which is Nelson Hutchins at 99 years old here in the Selectmen's Chambers.

Sidewalk Plow- Mr. Vachon said the Highway Dept. took the panels off the sidewalk tractor that had some rust on them and patched, primed and repainted them and the tractor looks pretty good.

Mr. King asked if the concerns about access with the sidewalk tractor to the fence area past the

park have been addressed.

Mr. Dickie said they had a couple of the poles moved back to give them the clearance they needed. He said they went back as far as they could and Mr. Tiffany said he thinks they can get through the place where the pole is leaning in but he is going to contact Eversource to ask them to straighten the pole back out so they don't hit the fence or the pole.

Rec. Dept. Ramp- Mr. Vachon asked how they made out with the fence by the ramp at the Rec. Dept.

Mr. Dickie said they went and measured everything with the plan that was supplied to us from Hoyle, Tanner & Assoc. for that ramp and where the posts were was reviewed by the Building Inspector and they were okay.

Town Hall Generator- Mr. Dickie said they are also putting up a fence around the generator because when they looked around inside they found some items being hidden by the bushes and by putting in a fence it will open it up and then they can't hide in there anymore.

Mr. King asked if they determined if that generator back feeds the Town Hall or not.

Mr. Dickie said he hasn't gotten to that yet.

Mr. King said he doesn't believe that it does and they may need to shut the main line off to make the generator come on and see what it back feeds. He said it may need to be re-wired so that it is the back up for the building not the old Police Station.

DPW Union Contract Negotiations- Mr. Dickie said they would like to get the negotiation team together for the next DPW union contract and they want to know who on the board would like to be part of that. He said the way it is written, once they do the ground rules meeting and the names are presented no new players can be named. They are getting ready to start and they are waiting for me to give them dates so I wanted to get whoever the team would be he said.

Mr. King asked for the final date that the new contract has to be ready.

Mr. Dickie said Feb. 7, 2023 is the last day it can be submitted to be put in warrant article to be presented to the voters.

Mrs. Morin asked when it has to go before the Budget Committee.

Mr. Dickie said he couldn't recall the exact date it would go before the Bud Com.

Mrs. Titus read aloud that collective bargaining agreement cost items must be submitted by Feb. 7 which is the fifth Tuesday before Town Meeting.

Chairman Vachon asked if any of the members wanted to sit on the negotiating team.

Motion: (King, second Morin) to nominate Gerry Vachon and Doug Staples to sit on the negotiating team passed 5-0.

Mr. Dickie asked Mr. Vachon and Mr. Staples to e-mail him with suggested times and dates they are available to start the negotiations.

Con Com Appointment- Mr. Vachon said that Michael Harris attended the Con Com meeting last week and said he wanted to join the commission and they would gladly accept him if the board will appoint him. He added that the Con Com is still in need of additional members.

Motion: (King, second Morin) to appoint Michael Harris to the Conservation Commission as a full time member passed 5-0.

8).Next Meeting: Monday, November 21, 2022

9). Non-Public Session A:

Motion: (King, second Titus) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (c) Reputation passed 5-0 by a roll call vote (Vachon, King, Titus, Staples, Morin-aye) at 8:26 p.m.

Motion: (King, second Staples) to come out of non-public session passed 5-0 at 8:55 p.m.

10). Non-Public Session B:

Motion: (Morin, second Titus) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (c) Reputation passed 5-0 by a roll call vote (Vachon, King, Morin, Staples, Titus-aye) at 8:55 p.m.

Motion: (Morin, second Titus) to come out of non-public session passed 5-0 at 9:07 p.m.

11). Adjournment:

Motion: (Morin, second King) to adjourn the meeting passed 5-0 at 9:07 p.m.

Kathleen Magoon
Recording Secretary

Gerry Vachon, Chairman

Charlie King, Vice Chairman

Ann Titus

Douglas Staples

Penny Morin