

Town of Farmington
Board of Selectmen Public Meeting Minutes
Monday, November 20, 2023
356 Main Street-Farmington, NH 03835

Board Members Present:

Gerry Vachon, Chairman
Ann Titus
Penny Morin

Board Members Absent:

Charlie King, Vice Chairman
Doug Staples

Others Present:

Ken Dickie, Town Administrator
James Reinert, Fire Chief
Ron LeMere, Building Inspector/CEO
Ed Brannan, Highway Dept. Supervisor
Pete Spencer, Transfer Station Supervisor
Erica Rogers, Recreation Dept. Director

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: None

Chairman Vachon said Mr. King and Mr. Staples' absences were excused for tonight.

4). Review of Minutes:

November 6, 2023-Public Session Minutes- No errors or omissions

Motion: (Titus, second Morin) to accept the minutes as written passed 3-0.

November 13, 2023-Non-Public Sessions A & B- No errors or omissions

Motion: (Titus, second Morin) to accept the Non-Public Session A minutes as written passed 3-0.

Motion: (Morin, second Titus) to accept the Non-Public Session B minutes as written passed 3-0.

5). Old Business:

Fire Dept. EMPG Bid/Award-Mr. Vachon asked Fire Chief James Reinert to begin with the quotes for the cones, A-frames, barricades, etc.

Chief Reinert said the board should have copies of 4 quotes-3 are local and one is an online company. He said there should be quotes from Hawkins Safety Equipment, Fastenal, Traffic Safety Warehouse and New England Barricade, Sign & Safety. He said Fastenal wasn't even within the realm and they didn't quote the shipping and handling (\$24,303.50), Hawkins was \$13,440, Traffic Safety Warehouse was \$12,690.95 but they were unsure of the amount for shipping until they actually place an order and New England Barricade, Sign & Safety was \$14,030.60. He said all of the NE Barricade, Sign & Safety barricades are wooden and the other

3 quotes were for plastic barricades.

Chief Reinert said in a general ball park it's roughly \$280 over what their grant amount is but they have unspent money in the emergency management line if the board wanted him to get the wooden barricades instead of the plastic barricades.

He said he used Hawkins for the initial grant request as they are right here in town.

Mrs. Morin asked how far over they were.

Chief Reinert said they weren't so they would cover the 50% and we wouldn't have to spend anything more than what he applied for with the grant.

Mr. Vachon said Fastenal was way over and asked if that was with municipal pricing thru them.

Chief Reinert said he asked if it was municipal pricing and he put his list together and sent it over.

Motion: (Morin, second Titus) that we go with Hawkins for \$13,440;

Discussion: Mr. Vachon asked if this was all readily available through them.

Chief Reinert said yes. He said they gave a lead time of 2 weeks for most of it and for the amount of cones they said 3-4 weeks and he anticipates around the 3 week mark.

Mrs. Titus asked if he had the money for this with the grant and the extra money.

Chief Reinert said it's coming out of the emergency management line that they had budgeted for this grant plus another grant that they didn't get so there's \$50,000 in that line so they will get 50% back so it will cost us just over \$6,500.

Vote: the motion passed 3-0.

Inspection Policy- Chief Reinert said the board requested a draft of an inspection policy regarding their life safety inspections and he drafted the policy and sent it to Attorney Roman and she sent it back with a few minor edits and that is what they have in front of them. He asked if they had any questions, liked it, needed something else added or redacted.

Mrs. Morin said that it says that you will annually inspect all occupancies, rentals and mixed use buildings and asked if he could do that in 1 year's time and if they typically do all of that in a year.

Chief Reinert said they do all of the multi-units the state fire code is 3 residential units or mixed use so typically they do about 180 inspections a year on that realm with foster care, daycare and all the residential.

Mrs. Morin asked if that is mixed use.

Chief Reinert said an example of mixed use is across the street from the Municipal Offices Building where they have commercial on the first floor and residential on the second floor.

Mr. Vachon said so that would be most of the downtown then.

The Chief said that's correct-apartment buildings, anything with 3 living units or more are required.

Mr. Vachon said a lot of the storefronts.

Mrs. Morin asked if they go with this if they would have to have a public hearing for those

charges or if those charges are in place.

Chief Reinert said those charges are already in place.

Mrs. Morin asked if they had a public hearing when those charges were originally put in place.

Chief Reinert said this was back during a previous Chief when they put the inspection fees in and that was what covered the Fire Chief's position at that time because it was volunteers.

Mrs. Morin said she remembered that when they changed something they had to have a public hearing about charging for something.

Chief Reinert said the fees are not new and at one point they used to charge for their initial inspection and there were some property owners in town that felt like they were getting taxed and then charged for the inspection so about 10 years ago he came before the board to eliminate the initial inspection fee and only put in the fees for missed or no call/no shows.

Mrs. Titus asked if it was legal to charge them.

Chief Reinert said yes.

Mrs. Morin said they might want to look to see if there was ever a public hearing on those charges because if they need to have one, they should.

Mrs. Titus said she remembers when this all came up so she thinks it was approved so they could back in the minutes to check.

Chief Reinert said he was sure it was but he would check.

Mrs. Titus said she didn't want to approve this tonight because she wanted the whole board to see it before they make a decision on it.

Motion: (Morin, second Titus) to accept it as a first read of the policy;

Discussion: Mrs. Morin said that means it can come back it's not a final read.

Mr. Vachon said this means the policy will not be approved tonight but they are accepting the draft form for the rest of the board to look over until the next meeting.

Chief Reinert said the policy is pretty close to being verbatim of what the state fire code is.

Mrs. Titus said she felt comfortable knowing Att. Roman looked at it but she would like all of them to look at this too just in case somebody wants to make a change.

Mr. Vachon said before they adopt it as a Town policy even though it mirrors the RSA's. He asked if this covered so there would be no unannounced inspections.

Chief Reinert said no and this is where that confusion comes in because he still has to have the ability at certain times to do an unannounced inspection. He said if they had information or a complaint that someone took a fire alarm system or sprinkler system offline or they have blocked egresses or an overcrowded drinking establishment in town those are incidences that would have to be unannounced and have to be dealt with by the Fire Dept. or the Inspector. He said they typically don't operate that way and they have never done an unannounced inspection for an actual life safety inspection but it's in there for the fact of the Fire Dept. operates differently than the Police Dept. in doing a warrant or the Building Inspector who is more in line with the law enforcement aspects of getting entry into a building.

He said they can go to a property and say they are here to do an inspection and the property owner can say no we don't want you in and we go get an administrative search warrant which we have done in the past.

Mrs. Morin said she didn't know what an administrative search warrant is.

Chief Reinert said they go before a judge stating the life safety code, RSA, state fire code says we should be inspecting them and we have information to believe there are chained doors on the inside, there's a place of assembly permit or they require it and they are not letting them in the facility or the property and they need an administrative warrant to go in and ensure that everything is up to code.

Mrs. Titus asked if it says that in this policy because she didn't see anything saying they had to get a warrant.

The Chief said it should be on both sections (Section 401.3.2 Residential Occupancies and Section 401.3.3 Business Occupancies) and read that "a tenant or owner/manager of a residential dwelling can stop the inspection at any time for any reason. In the event that access to a dwelling is denied for the reasons of a required inspection the Fire Prevention division may apply for an administrative search warrant in order to facilitate the inspections" and the same thing under Business Occupancies.

Mrs. Morin asked if where they used "will" it would be the same as "shall" and if will and shall are interchangeable in this circumstance.

Chief Reinert said will or shall can be used.

Mrs. Morin asked what the liability is if they did not make it to all 180 residences.

Chief Reinert said there's no liability they try to get out there and it's working with the property owners and they try to give advance notice of their annual inspection and they try to do them in the same months but sometimes things happen or they don't get the notification letters done in time so they reschedule and we have our time frame of 30, 60 or 90 days.

Mrs. Morin said as long as they have it on the books that they sent notice we don't have any liability should they not get there.

Chief Reinert said that's correct.

Mrs. Titus asked if they have gone to every place this year.

Chief Reinert said it's pretty close and he would have to follow up with Inspector Waite to see if there is anything out lying but he didn't think there were any properties they have not actually gotten into after 2nd or 3rd attempts.

Mrs. Titus asked if they do 95% most of the time.

Chief Reinert said yes.

Mr. Vachon said the unannounced he was just discussing is in the business occupancies section where it says "This rule becomes null and void in the event of an emergency or extenuating circumstances such as a complaint or observed violation of a life safety code". He asked if there were any further comments or questions and hearing none called for the vote.

Vote: the motion passed 3-0.

Mr. Vachon asked Mr. Dickie to put this back on the agenda for their next meeting.

Mr. Dickie said he would do so and that he would clarify if they need a public hearing too.

Equipment Purchases-Chief Reinert said he requested money for next year's budget but he though he squeeze 2 items out of this year's budget. He said the first one is the cylinders for their RIP packs that would be coming out of hydro next year and if he ordered 2 at \$3,210 to replace those this year he could get it out next year's request for the budget. He said it should have been 1 singular quote.

Mr. Vachon asked if he received more than one quote.

Chief Reinert said Fire Tech & Safety (of New England, Inc.) because they deal with Scott they are their vendor for Scott so this goes off the MA state bid so even if they were to get another vendor they would have to request it off the MA state bid price so that's why there was only 1 quote for the cylinders.

Mr. Vachon asked if that is why it's discounted from \$4,815 to \$3,210.

Chief Reinert said the \$4,815 was they had initially quoted them for 3 but he only has 2 RIP packs and they're 60 minute cylinders that go into the pack.

Mrs. Morin asked if they are proprietary to this company.

Chief Reinert said they are the authorized vendor so they have territories so that's who they got all their SCBA's from and their fill station.

Mrs. Morin asked if they can't get them at another vendor.

Chief Reinert said he could reach out to other vendors but if they operate on the MA state bid...

Mr. Vachon asked where he was going to pull this money from.

Chief Reinert said he would have a roughly \$70,000 surplus by the end of the year and he has some money left in the equipment line (\$1,800), the vehicle maintenance line (\$8,000), the per diem line (\$50,000) and some money in training/medical line so they are sitting healthy throughout the rest of the year.

Mr. Vachon said and it's something he wouldn't have to budget for next year.

Mrs. Morin asked if it's in his budget for next year so they could reduce his budget by that amount.

Chief Reinert said yes.

Motion: (Morin, second Vachon) to waive the bid policy passed 3-0.

Motion: (Morin, second Titus) to accept the bid from Fire Tech & Safety in the amount of \$3,210 passed 3-0.

Chief Reinert said the second item is the strut system. He said he received 3 quotes and he asked for this is his 2024 budget but he thought they could squeeze it out of this year's budget and reduce next year's budget. He said there are 3 different systems because they are proprietary to the specific brands they deal with.

He said he liked the Paratech system it's the least expensive but it's the most versatile system

out there. He said they can utilize it for horizontal, vertical and vehicle stabilization, it comes in a kit where there are cylinders vs. just a pin system, it's rated 4:1 safety and has the highest rated weight capacity. He said the other 2 systems are specific to vehicle stabilization working on an angle, strapping it to the vehicle to prevent it from rolling over. He said the Paratech system allows for if they were in some sort of building collapse or a trench type situation they could use it vertically or horizontally where the other 2 systems don't do that.

Mrs. Morin asked if that was specific to his Request for Proposals.

Chief Reinert said no it was just vehicle stabilization this system happens to do that plus.

Motion: (Morin, second Titus) that we go with Paratech for the stabilization kit for \$4,904;

Discussion: Mr. Vachon asked if the current system just works vertically.

Chief Reinert said the current one is 20 years old, it does vehicle stabilization, its weight rated only up to 7,000 lbs. and has the old pin system.

Mr. Vachon said if this one will do trenches because we have quite a bit of pipe work that is supposed to be done with the wells and if something shall ever happen it would be nice if they had equipment to utilize.

Chief Reinert said the technical rescue team comes out of Rochester and they have 2 systems so they could use it in the event we had a larger scale incident in conjunction with the equipment they already have.

Vote: the motion passed 3-0.

Hazard Mitigation Plan Update- Chief Reinert said he wanted to keep the board apprised that they are still in a holding pattern and he actually had a face-to-face meeting with the Director of Homeland Security. He said they are being held up by FEMA and once FEMA starts allowing them to approve plans they have to get caught up with all of the other plans that have been submitted since last year. He said he put a letter in for a brick grant regarding the engineering study of levee for \$250,000. He said they cannot technically apply for the grant until we have an updated Hazard Mitigation Plan but the letter is there as a place holder in the event that they move that along quickly.

He said he would also be putting in another letter of intent this week for a second grant regarding culverts and ditching and working with Ed (Highway Dept. Supervisor). He said there are 2 different grants one is a 75/25 match unless they deem us as a poverty stricken rural community then it's a 90/10 match but he didn't make that request in the letter of intent. He said it would be the same thing for the Hazard Mitigation grant if we get that its 75/25 unless we're deemed at that level and then it would be 90/10.

Mr. Vachon said the agenda says he also had a valve quote.

Chief Reinert said that was all he had.

Resignation Letter- Mr. Dickie said they had a Police Officer come before them with his resignation letter.

Motion: (Titus, second Morin) to accept Bart Bentz's resignation letter as of 11/18/2023;

Discussion: Mr. Vachon said he didn't like to see him go he's one of the good ones. He said we have pretty good officers in Farmington and that he has had a couple of dealings with him and he is definitely one of the good ones so it's unfortunate to see him go but they talked to him and he gets it.

Vote: the motion passed 3-0.

Rec. Dept. Budget- Rec. Dept. Director Erica Rogers said they had to fill in a couple of things today and gave the board copies of the most current Parks & Recreation General Fund 01 budget.

Mrs. Titus said she was looking at payroll and asked how many people that employs.

Mrs. Rogers said that is for her and the Asst. Director and that it is only up by about \$100 (2023 budget-\$96,452; 2024 requested budget-\$96,554).

Mrs. Morin asked if that includes the insurance increase.

Mrs. Rogers said no and that the insurance is further down on the page.

Mr. Dickie said the Rec. Dept. Gas and Rec. Dept. Supplies are moving to the 04 budget.

Mrs. Rogers said the Vehicle Maintenance is also moving to the 04 budget. She said those 3 lines have \$1 in them to keep them open but they feel confident that they can move them over to the 04 budget at this point. She said any supplies they are ordering and using is for the programs which is what the 04 account is for.

She said the same thing with the gas and the vehicle those kind of go hand in hand with the programs we're not using the vehicle for anything other than programs. It's to set up programs or go get the school kids or whatnot so we're going to move them to the 04 this year. We're heading slightly more towards self-sustaining budgets she said.

Mr. Dickie said the other big change for next year is the grant line because this year we got the \$125,000 grant for the playground and that is final this year. He said next year that is not in it so that is another significant change between this year and next year.

Mr. Vachon said reading this that playground is going to cost about \$96,000 and asked if we get 50% back.

Mrs. Rogers said we are going to end up spending the whole \$125,000 because there is still work to be done down there but it won't be until spring because its things like the pathways and resurfacing the basketball court.

Mr. Vachon said then they would need to encumber some of that money otherwise it's not going to be budgeted for the first of the year which is before spring.

Mrs. Rogers asked if that would go in the grant line or where that would go.

Mr. Vachon said they would need pricing on it so that they know how much to encumber so that money doesn't go back to unexpended at the end of the year. He said once the end of the year comes it goes back to unexpended and you don't have it as of the first of the year because once we close the books we close the books.

Mrs. Morin said on the payroll they are \$23,000 higher than last year.

Mrs. Rogers said no the \$73,000 is what they have spent so far and this year's budget is \$96,452 so it's only about a \$100 difference.

Mrs. Morin said for Parks & Rec. Training this year so far they spent \$430 and she is increasing it to \$2,000.

Mrs. Rogers said there are some training that have been paid for and these numbers are the Oct. numbers. She said they just did a training that hasn't hit this that was \$639, it was a 3 day conference up north so that will go in there and there will be another one in Dec. She said she joined 2 state boards for Parks & Rec. and that opens up a lot of training opportunities for next year that she would like to be able to take advantage of.

Mr. Vachon said his quick run on the numbers, taking the grant out for this year still shows that she is \$9,000 under what her budget should have been without that grant. He said if you take the grant out and the \$3,500 for the supplies, gas and vehicle maintenance you're left with \$176,215 and she is asking for \$167,211 so she is still down \$9,000 so she came in under budget which they like to see.

Mrs. Rogers said they made some cuts in other places too and moved some things into the 04 Rec. Revolving Account. She said with any Rec. Dept. the goal should be to be mostly self-sustaining and this is her 3rd year and they've seen some numbers these last couple of years so they're ready to start slowly. I don't want to make too many big changes at once because our programs and our families are going to have to eat that cost so we don't want to dump a whole bunch into there but I think there is some room to pull in some lines and see what we can get into that 04 budget. I'll work on those numbers she said.

There were no other questions for Mrs. Rogers so she thanked the board and left the meeting.

Transfer Station Budget- Mr. Vachon said he was seeing a \$26,000 increase in the Transfer Station budget and asked what they are increasing. He said they talked about Solid Waste Hauling that was the actual cost for tonnage on an average of 3 years.

Mr. Dickie said they pulled in from Waste Management and he has the data from 2020 up to the current date and then they averaged that out. He said they estimated for the remainder of this year based on what history it showed on this year to date and then he took that and averaged it for the 3 year average and is what Mr. Spencer used in here.

Mr. Vachon said plus the increase in the actual tonnage.

Mr. Dickie said we are in a 5 year contract with Waste Management and 2024 is the last year on that contract but the cost increases are listed in that contract and they are holding true to that contract. He said hauling is going to be up to \$263 and the tonnage varies based on the material that they're hauling and it varies from \$87 up to \$93 a ton.

He said one of the big increases that Mr. Spencer saw was the tires.

Supervisor Pete Spencer said the tires are getting out of control and they had this conversation back before COVID and they searched for tire people and they weren't accepting anything at the time. He said the NRA works with Bob's Tire and Bob's Tire has come out with a new format

for what they're charging and it doesn't jive with the NRA. He said the NRA says they are non-profit but they do take a portion of the increases.

Mr. Spencer said they had to take it from another line to cover it because there was so much cost in that tire line.

Mr. Vachon asked which line they pulled it from so they know there would be an increase in that line for this year.

Mr. Spencer said the tire removal line was at \$500 and that doesn't even cover one pickup and he has been taking it from the Universal Waste line. He said the passenger tires were \$4 and the new price would be \$5, heavy equipment tires were \$61 and they would be \$85 and backhoe, rear loader and radial tires were \$61 and for one tire they charged him \$315 for a loader tire from the Town.

He said some deficits he has had with the tires is because sometimes the Highway Dept. comes in with their stuff and they don't notify him and he doesn't know it's there until they've taken the tire so he and Mr. Brannan talked about how to handle that so they have a tracking sheet and most depts. are going to get charged for whatever they bring into the Transfer Station.

He said they also have this new price that he didn't understand called the dirty tire price.

Mr. Vachon said it probably has a rim on it.

Mr. Spencer said it went up to \$525 for a passenger and ours should be \$625, truck tractors over 19" is \$25.50 and transfers should be \$28.

Mrs. Morin asked if they remove the rims and noted they are metal.

Mr. Vachon said we don't but they have to.

Mr. Spencer we prefer them removed but Bob's likes them because they get the metal money and they're charging us for rim removal.

Mr. Vachon said because they have to have somebody dismount the tire before they can throw it in the shredder.

Mr. Spencer said he had 505 passenger tires, 7 light commercial tires, 1 loader tire and they called it a loader radial tire at \$310. He said he had a Bobcat at 4 tires, truck tires 1 a piece and he had a gentleman come in this week with an R22 that he found in the woods on his property and he charged him \$26 for it. We need to change our prices to take care of the tires he said. He said he had a bill of \$3,878.38 just in tires so he had to take it out of Universal to cover the fund for tires because \$500 doesn't cover that.

Mr. Vachon asked if he checked with BDS out of Ossipee. He said they weren't taking new customers at the time and asked if he had checked back with them.

Mr. Spencer said not since because he just found Larkin and they service this area and they also do Town Fair Tire it's just a matter of talking to them and opening an account with them and their tire pricing seems to be pretty decent. He said and then he gets the fuel charge on top of that and it was \$115.50 and then it went to \$235 on fuel so that \$500 doesn't cover what we're looking at.

Mrs. Morin asked what is in the line that just says "Wage".

Mr. Spencer said it should say Wage Adjustments.

Mrs. Morin asked why that isn't in the Personnel line.

Mr. Vachon said that is for his employees and each dept. has that line for their employees just like health insurance, FICA, etc.

Mr. Spencer said it was based on 3% increase of the wage study.

Mr. Vachon said that is the Personnel line for that dept. and we don't have a general Personnel line for all the Town employees.

Mr. Spencer said there is only 2 of them at this time and went back to tires and asked if it would be justifiable to come up on the cost of tires at this time.

Mr. Vachon said we shouldn't be charging \$10 if its \$15 to get rid of it.

Mr. Vachon said they are slowly increasing it so it's not a big whammy to everybody. He said people don't seem to mind it they understand and they can't just discontinue it because they know where their tires are going to be. With the Conservation Commission we pulled over 200 tires and we could probably pull another 200 out of Poor Farm Road he said.

Mrs. Morin said unfortunately they are going to have to increase it on the honest people to pay for the dishonest people.

Mr. Vachon said if you get your tires changed on your car and bring them in they shouldn't charge you \$5 a tire when it costs us \$6 to get rid of them. He said if they're going to throw them in the woods they're going to throw them in woods and they could take them in for \$2 and they would still throw them in the woods.

Mrs. Morin said her point was the taxpayer has to pick up what they throw in the woods.

Mr. Vachon said right now the taxpayer is picking up what the taxpayers aren't paying to get rid of them the right way. He said unfortunately some people feel they don't have to get rid of it the correct way and that's why we have roadside and parks cleanups and it's in every municipality.

Mr. Spencer said the Con Com does twice a year cleanups and he hasn't charged them in the past and asked if he should be charging them and if they have an account to pay them for what they take off the roads.

Mr. Vachon said they have money in their account.

Mr. Spencer said he talked to Con Com Chair Bill Fisher and he was on the fence about it.

Mr. Vachon said if he could reach out to Pete Lachapelle at Waste Management because he didn't know that they would need an entire dumpster but he has been pretty good with theirs with providing disposal especially the one around Earth Day in May and he has been pretty good with the disposal of roadside trash collection.

Mr. Spencer asked if that was at their cost.

Mr. Vachon said that's correct.

Mr. Spencer asked if that would be a 15 yard dumpster with their bags.

Mr. Vachon said if they are only picking up 300 lbs. he may be able to work with Pete on getting a discount on that can. He said if they let him know they don't need a 20, 30 or 40 yard dumpster and let him know how much they'd be picking up and he may provide a dumpster as they've done that in the past and the bags are provided by NH The Beautiful so they help out with that. Just put it out on the website that they donated the can for roadside cleanup vs. charging the Con Com. Check with Pete he may be able to help us out he said.

Mr. Spencer said it was a good idea and he would contact Mr. Lachapelle. He then moved to the Landfill Part Time line and said this position pays \$16 an hour for 24 hours which would be \$19,968 annually and with SWAT and scale certifications that's \$21,000 annually. He said that's like \$380 a week before taxes and he is not getting any entertainment at \$16 an hour so he would like to request that this goes to \$19 and that would be \$23,712 annually and with the SWAT and scale certification that would be \$24,500.

Mrs. Morin asked if that was for an open position.

Mr. Spencer said that is an open position that they have been unable to fill for quite some time.

Mrs. Morin asked if he was suggesting that for his other part time person as well.

Mr. Spencer said no he only has 1 part time person.

Mr. Dickie said he wants to change the budget line to accommodate a \$19 an hour and then advertise it as \$19 an hour.

Mr. Spencer said he has had it on his marquee, he has gone word-of-mouth, has advertised it and it's been at the Highway Dept. and when Mr. Brannan finds someone suitable he sends them his way. He said with the things that are going on and the things that are coming up they need someone that's interested in the position because they are not finding that interest.

Mrs. Titus asked what kind of certification you need for this.

Mr. Spencer said within the first 6 months they would do their SWAT and that gives them an idea of the platform of what they work on and everything that comes in and how they deal with it and then it would be a scale certification so they become a scale master so if he or Mr.

Rutherford are not at the scale house they can step in because the job is utility for everybody.

All 3 of us would be doing the same thing in a sense with hands on. Preferably I'd like a full time position but that's something maybe down the road he said.

Mrs. Morin asked if the wage falls in line with his other full time person.

Mr. Spencer said the full time position is more and that Mr. Rutherford is a SWAT and a scale master at \$20.50 for 40 hours and that's \$44,000 annually and that was done on the study of the wages and his increases. So that's food for thought he said.

There were no more questions for Mr. Spencer so he thanked the board and left the meeting.

Building Inspection Budget- Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer Ron LeMere said he has 3 depts.-the Planning Dept., Fund 12 and Building Inspector and gave copies of those budgets to the board.

Planning Dept.-Mr. LeMere said there is a bit of a change from last year and their level of activity has changed because there has been an increase in volume of projects coming through. He said the first item they are looking to increase is the Planner contract position and the position was set at \$50,000 and this year they are proposing an increase to \$70,000. He said they are looking for an additional 4 hours per week from the contract Planner (Kyle Pimental) and to also accommodate the annual increases. This is a line that hasn't increased in 2 years but there was a small increase for this year staying at the 16 hours of service per week and we do need the extra 4 hours of service per week as it has been pretty busy for us and we need to have Kyle available for a few more hours he said.

Mr. LeMere said the support staff in their office is Planning Asst. Tabby Scott and she is presently working at 29 hours a week at \$19 an hour and he is proposing to have that wage set at \$21 an hour and they are looking to fund that for 32 hours a week.

Mrs. Morin asked if that includes insurance.

Mr. LeMere said that does not include insurance as she is looking to opt out of the insurance.

Mrs. Morin said they have to plan for whoever is in that position. She said when increasing the hours they have to take into account that that person might not always be there.

Mr. LeMere said he wanted to note that too and add a budget for it.

Mr. Dickie said 35 hours is when they have to start offering insurance not at 32 hours.

Mrs. Morin said state law says it's at 32 hours and asked if the state law does not cover municipalities.

Mr. LeMere said he talked to Finance Admin Kelly Heon about that and the insurance can be offered to that position at the full rate and whatever that single rate would be that's what you would offer.

Mr. Dickie said she could pick it up but she would have to pay for the insurance. He said at 35 hours the Town has to start picking up some of it.

Mr. LeMere said as we move forward into 2025 with what we have for activity he would like to see that position at 40 hours but he wanted to make the increments smaller so we can progress and watch what we have for growth and be able to accommodate that.

He said there is an increase of \$300 for the Meeting Minutes Secretary for this year.

He said on travel the training memberships that line is remaining funded with no increase.

Mr. LeMere said the cell phone allowance line for the Planner position is not funded.

He said Strafford Regional is an estimated increase of \$154.

He said Boards Printing and Ads is an estimated decrease of \$1,500.

He said Office Supplies is level funded with no increase.

Mr. LeMere said Postage has a decrease of \$1,199 because the postage has historically been charged to the Admin side so it's removing those dollars from that and just keeping at \$1.

He said the Wage Adjustment line is based on 3% (including FICA, Medicare for the Land Use Asst.).

He said the Health, Disability/Life and ICMA lines are not funded as there is no full time staff and the FICA, Medicare, Unemployment and Workers' Comp lines are funded.

He said their biggest increase is with the Planner contract position but it's something we really need to invest in to be able to work on the projects we have in front of us.

Mr. Dickie said as they consider this in the time that he has given us currently which is 16 hours they had a meeting with Mr. Pimental and his boss (SRPC Executive Director Jen Czysz) and they gave us the highlights and over last year he's written and gotten acceptance for grants in excess of \$500,000 for this town so it's well worth it and the 4 hours that we gain we gain 4 plus because he typically works more than what we're paying him and we would reap the benefits north of the \$500,000 that we saw this year. Just bear that in mind that they do a lot of good for this town and they have some big projects coming and as we consider developing Rt. 11 and seeing land for sale on Rt. 11 we need to get ahead of that and be prepared for it and not react to it as its going on because by reacting to that we're behind the 8 ball and we aren't going to keep up with it. There's one thing when I took this position there was 1 dept. I wanted to strengthen and that's the Planning Dept. because it starts with Planning and gets the ball rolling for the rest of us he said.

Mr. LeMere said there is a Cash Match Grant line item of \$1,500 that they added in here also for a grant that they're planning on that has an amount that we need to match and that's a placeholder.

Mr. Dickie said that is for the drainage study for the Town. He said we're getting money for an engineered drainage study to study the drainage in town and what we need to do about the increased water that we're seeing and not be constantly worried about flooding the downtown.

Fund 12 Building Inspector- Mr. LeMere said the Fund 12 and Bldg. Insp. Dept. are very well connected but they're separate budgets. He said under Fund 12 they would see a reduction on the line for the Bldg. Insp. /CEO position and the reason they have that reduction is they're looking at splitting the position. He said the reason they are splitting the position is that they spend some time in both building inspections and permit processing and almost an equal amount of time in Code Enforcement and that's anything from violations dealing with people who have discarded tires, junk, trash, housing inspections and court cases so there are a lot of different aspects to the position.

He said the Bldg. Insp. fees historically alone they were always trying to make sure those would cover the cost of all of the other aspects of the positions because they really are 3 different positions- Building Inspector, Code Enforcement Officer and Health Officer and they've combined them as one and try to pay for them on the backs of the permit fees.

He said that he, Mr. Dickie and Mrs. Heon have gone through this extensively saying they need to have a better balance in their budget, we need to know what are costs are and why and how much time they're spending. He said they would see that the position has changed somewhat as far as funding and in Fund 12 they are reducing that down from \$106,883 to \$66,625.

Mr. LeMere said that number would have been \$112,202 for 2024 so they made a 60/40 split leaving 60% of the position in Fund 12 and moving 40% of that position into the 01 (General) Fund and then went through the Fund 12 Bldg. Insp. budget line items.

He said the Bldg. Insp. position is funded based on his present rate of \$35.82 per hour.

He said the FICA, Medicare, ICMA, Unemployment and Workers' Comp (split 60% in Fund 12/ 40% in Fund 01) are funded.

He said the cell phone allowance is being funded in Fund 01, the Bldg. Insp. Misc. line is not funded and the Wage Adjustment is based on 3% (\$1,341 increase split with Fund 01).

He said Longevity is not funded, the Health is a 2 person plan (\$1,663 increase split with Fund 01) and the Dental and Disability/Life are funded and each cost is split with Fund 01.

Mr. LeMere said this makes it a little bit of trying to see where all the math comes out in doing that split but they took the base number of \$112,202, took that wage/hour at 60/40 and then did the figures for all of company costs for health, dental, disability, ICMA and all of the other supportive costs.

He said on page 3 of the Fund 12 budget it would give them an idea of what they spend for time on doing inspections this year. He said Nov. and Dec. are estimated hours they were able to use from last year because this is how they have been tracking the hours for the position. He said it looks like they will have 476 hours in inspections and 462 hours in enforcement and where the funding for permits is funding inspections it should be funding inspections, permits and some of the admin time.

He said all of the enforcement time is being accounted for hourly and he is tracking those because if they have to go to court and they are looking to recoup costs he needs to track them so this is why they are keeping track of these hours like this. I operate on a calendar, my time is color coded but that's how I track how much time I'm spending on each of these different disciplines he said.

Mr. LeMere said this gives them an idea of what that breakdown is and why they were moving towards splitting this because otherwise if they go to page 4 and follow the yellow line for income 2023 across to columns for the Total and the Percent we will be looking at about a 24% decrease in fees collected this year. We've seen a decrease in new home building permits but we're also trying with this money to fund all of this Code Enforcement Officer and Health Officer time and we need to look at this a little differently and say permits are permits and that's how we should be funding that otherwise we're looking at another 24% increase in permit fees he said.

He said the time itself is done on averages and these are the monies that they received over the past years and this has helped them to develop a trend as to where we're going and what they can expect for the following year and this is one of the reasons why they're looking to do this split.

Building Inspection Dept. General Fund 01- Mr. LeMere said this is basically support to the

Bldg. Insp. position. He said they would see in the CEO/Health Officer line that they increased the amount from \$1 to \$29,800 to accommodate the 60/40 split.

He said the Land Use Asst. amount is based on \$19 per hour and they are proposing 24 hours per week. He said this position has already been funded and they are looking at a \$1 an hour increase and this is the position Melissa Drury was working and they are looking to fill this gap to be able to give support Tabby Scott's position and help off load some of the work that they've been putting on her also. We need to get some assistance in there to be able to help with this globally so we have to look at we are the Planning and Community Development Dept. with Planning, Bldg. Insp. and support position budgets that all works together so that's why a Land Use Asst. is really important to maintain in the budget.

Mr. Vachon asked if that position is currently \$19 an hour.

Mr. LeMere said it was \$17.87, it was \$18 prior to that and they are moving it to \$19.

Mr. Vachon said the \$19 is what he would like to see for next year.

Mr. LeMere said that's correct. He said the next line is for the cell phone allowance and that reimbursement is for his position and they are looking at a \$240 increase there. He said previously that was set at \$30 a month and they are moving that to \$50 per month as a supervisory position. We have been able to work on the IT side of it and get the Google calendar, e-mail and everything moved to the phone also so that I have remote access so I'll be available to most of our contractors, all of our depts. and it's basically what we've been trying to do to move ourselves to that position to be more available as a lot of people like that instant online connection and we are trying to move in that direction he said.

He said there is a \$130 increase in dues and there are more trainings coming up on the Health Officer side of it. He said they now have a regional Health Officer meeting which will be in Rochester and there are some other groups they're paying dues to so there is a slight increase there.

He said Office Supplies was reduced by \$850 because they don't have to order any code books this year and the Postage is presently being charged to the admin side so that is not funded.

He said the Gasoline for the vehicle is based on approx. 7,200 miles traveled per year at about 12 miles to the gallon x \$3 a gallon so that is funded at \$1,800 for the year.

Mr. LeMere said there is a \$1,000 increase for Vehicle Repairs because the 2023 estimated cost to repair the vehicle he has now is around \$2,610. He said it's in for repairs now so he should be getting a final tally from Mr. Brannan and he thinks it's going to fall right around that for the year.

He said Equipment Replacement is not funded and the Wage Adjustment is based upon 3% including the FICA, Medicare and ICMA for the Land Use Asst. and the wage adjustment, FICA and Medicare for the CEO/HO are split.

He said the Mileage Reimbursement has a \$400 increase because they have to yearly repair the vehicle that he has to supplement with the use of his personal vehicle and this year's estimated

amount will be \$1,240. He said when you start looking at the \$2,610 and the \$1,240 we're getting close to \$4,000 a year in repairs and extra mileage so at some point they probably should take a different look as to how they fund something for a vehicle for that dept.

Mr. LeMere said the Capital Projects Special Revenue Fund is in Fund 12 and that will give them what the base rate is and they are requesting \$66,625 and that is the carryover from Fund 12 and they have to show that in the budget line.

He said the Health is not funded for the Land Use Asst. and the CEO/HO is funded at the 60/40 split. He said the Disability/Life and the ICMA are not funded for the Land Use Asst.

He said the Unemployment and Workers' Comp is funded and on the very bottom is where they start to move into some software upgrades for the Building Dept. for permits. He said he has been getting some estimates on what it would cost to upgrade their systems to allow online permitting and payments and electronic notifications for inspection requests and inspections. He said part of what they want to be able to do is the company they're getting estimates from and the \$8,500 that is there is an estimate from Civic Plus to do an upgrade for the software system that they have. He said they are presently with Avitar and they have an annual cost and this is the first year that they take it from the admin side and put it in this budget where it belongs and that's \$1,562 but they are looking to work with Civic Plus.

He said they are fine tuning this and he needs this as a placeholder here and he has some estimates from Civic Plus because they offer many different modules and in the future this could be expanded over to the Planning side and to the CEO side but they would have to look at the cost and the feasibility and what would we get for our investment there. He said it would cost \$8,500 to do that over a 4-6 month process that would happen through 2024 because they would have to take all of their information and transfer it over and then go through the training process, develop their inspection fees and how that's calculated in the system but that's all the stuff that they do. We're getting a real big call for can I do this online and this year there has been a drive for that and people are looking to do business away from here they don't want to have to come in and they want to be able to fill out the permit online. They should be given that opportunity especially where we work with a lot of companies that are all over the country and Canada. He said a lot of the solar companies are sending their applications online and they're printing those out and then calling them to tell them how much it's going to cost and this would eliminate that back and forth with having to print all of this paper and develop all of these documents. We're looking to streamline this for the future he said.

Mrs. Morin asked if they are going to streamline and go into the online permits and they're increasing hours if they are taking away the need for the extra hours by going to online permitting because you're not going to have the people in the office having face-to-face interaction with the customers.

Mr. LeMere said they always have to offer that face-to-face because there are a lot of people in the community that want to deal with you directly so you have to be available for that. He said

this is going to give the option to the industries for us to be able to work closer remotely with the industries and have the help that we need to give them that personal service here. He said so many times during the day and during the week people will come in and they need 10,15 or 20 minutes of your time or they have a question and then the staff that they have and the knowledge that they have is very important because they have to offer that service. That service will never go away it has to be there but we also have to put in place a system so we can accommodate the other types of businesses that we have to deal with also he said.

Mrs. Titus said she understood that and asked for the percentage of people asking to go online.

Mr. LeMere said this year they are seeing the largest influx of requests for permits online are coming from the propane industry or companies who are mechanical contractors and solar and a lot of the solar companies are out of state. He said the increase from last year is pretty close to 50%. He said a lot of people want to pay by credit card so they have a machine available for that and they would still have that ability but it would be done in a different format because Civic Plus has their own credit card system that they operate by.

Mrs. Titus asked if other towns have this online service.

Mr. LeMere said another town that deals with Civic Plus is Nashua and they have another system to do remote inspections but he is not doing remote inspections because he needs to be there. He said other communities are still doing it with paper and pencil and a lot of them haven't moved forward with that. There are other companies out there but we have to be careful when moving in this direction that it's user friendly because it's important to be successful because you don't want to launch something that's not user friendly because we're wasting everybody's time. We need to figure how we get there and that's what we're working on he said.

There were no other questions for Mr. LeMere so he thanked the board for their time and left the meeting.

T Buck Contract for Hornetown Rd. Bridge- Mr. Dickie said he had a good meeting with T Buck and Hoyle & Tanner where T Buck made a presentation and then they went over their exceptions with them and at the end of the exceptions they wrote back that they accepted all of the exceptions with no increase to the cost. He said they questioned them about if the project ran into 2025 due to permitting issues or whatever pushes it into 2025 what would be the cost impact to the Town. He said at the meeting they made a statement and he questioned it again when they sent back the amendment to the contract and then they sent back the amendment with the last statement to question #7 which reads "What were the implications to the Town would there be if something happens in the design or construction process that prevents the construction in 2024 and thus pushing the completion to 2025". He said they wrote back and he has here in writing that "As we previously mentioned we have a vested interest in completing this project in 2024 however if unexpected delays are incurred we commit to the Town that there will not be any cost implications and the price that was

submitted to the Town is good for construction in 2024 or 2025". He said he printed out the e-mail and put it in front of the board.

Mr. Dickie said as requested last week he sent the concept to Hoyle & Tanner and replied by e-mail and at the bottom of the paragraph it says "All this said we do believe this approach and the proposal from T Buck/Calderwood Engineering will provide a suitable solution". He said there are some concerns about the hydrology study as we understand this drawing was just a conceptual drawing it wasn't thoroughly engineered on their side. He said they drew a conceptual drawing of what they saw to be the best fit for the bridge replacement.

He said at Wednesday's meeting they said Calderwood Engineering hadn't done the hydrology study yet but they intend on doing that and they put this together at their cost and they're not going to dive into the weeds of it until they know they have the contract and will get paid for it. My suggestion would be based on the price which is \$1.5 million that you allow me to reach out and tell them that we'll be moving with T Buck he said.

Mrs. Morin said the contract price was \$1,541,026.

Mr. Vachon said his concern last week was to have Hoyle & Tanner put their eyes on the idea of this type of bridge they want to build and it seems like the secondary engineering firm feels it is a suitable solution to replace that bridge with that style bridge. He asked Mr. Dickie for the original budget for the bridge.

Mr. Dickie said the original budget was \$1.6 million. He said they had a bond for \$1.4 million and they were taking approx. \$200,000 from the Capital Reserve Fund. He said if the board goes with this he would work out a contract and have Att. Roman review it and then get the contract in front of the board at the next meeting. He said he would like the board's decision tonight because they are committed to start on 11/27/23 and the board is not meeting that night.

He said he talked to Tighe & Bond PE Dana Huff and there was no concern with the pylons going down to the bedrock and he said the concept was fine. He said they are erring on the side of caution on their engineering firm because they're still trying to figure out who is overseeing the project. That's the other thing we're going to need to decide at some point whether it's going to be Hoyle & Tanner that we originally had working on it or are we moving to Tighe & Bond he said.

He said for tonight they gave us a statement that the design and concept is okay and they have to do the hydrology and the survey and all that stuff to satisfy NH DES for permitting anyways.

Motion: (Morin, second Titus) to award the bid to T Buck Construction in the amount not to exceed \$1,541,026 passed 3-0.

Mr. Dickie said he would have the contract before the board on Dec. 4.

BOS E-mail-Mrs. Morin said someone asked her about posting their e-mail addresses to the Town website so they don't have to go through the website to e-mail the board and they could just copy and paste their e-mail addresses and asked to have that done.

Road Posting-Mrs. Morin said there is a road posting still on the website for Poor Farm Road from April and asked to have that taken down.

6). New Business:

NH Dept. of Transportation- Farmington One-Time Highway Payment-Mr. Dickie said he got a letter from the Commissioner stating that Farmington will get a payment above and beyond our normal Highway Block Grant in the amount of \$46,156.21. He said last year we got about \$135,000 but it's still above and beyond what we normally get. He said he would have to schedule a public hearing for the board to accept it because it is above \$10,000.

He said he is waiting for a second payment for the bridges as we got last year so once he gets that he will schedule that in so they can accept that and then move on it.

Goodwin Library Trustees-Mrs. Morin said she went to the Trustees' meeting and they are working on finalizing their budget to come before the town.

Toy Drive-Mrs. Titus said the Fire Dept. and some businesses in town are doing a toy drive and you can drop toys off at the Farmington House of Pizza, Studio 393 and at the Fire Station.

Board Members Needed- Mrs. Titus said the Nov. EDC meeting was canceled because they didn't have enough people and they are looking for new members. She said the Conservation Commission is also looking for new people and we need people to step up.

Mr. Dickie said the Planning Board is also looking for help.

Happy Thanksgiving! - Mrs. Titus then wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Plowing Request- Mr. Dickie said he received an e-mail from the library asking if the Town would be willing to plow the former TD Bank parking lot and he replied that it's a privately owned parking lot and the Town is not allowed to go on private property. He said he advised them to get an agreement from the owners of the property...

Mrs. Morin asked if there are so many spots allotted to the library.

Mr. Dickie said no. He said when Beulah and Jim owned it they allowed the library to park there and that just continued on when it became TD Bank but now that's gone. He said the owners of the parking lot have pretty much said they're not plowing it and he told them they need to figure that out, put it in their budget and find someone to plow it for them because the Town can't do private property.

Mrs. Morin said that was discussed and they are looking for quotes.

Setting the Tax Rate-Mr. Dickie said the school district submitted their MS-25 and the forms they needed to the NH DRA and the DRA is scheduling with him and the Finance Admin when they come back to work with them on setting the tax rate. He said it would be about the same time as they did last year.

Mr. Vachon asked if we will be alright.

Mr. Dickie said we will be okay and he may have to work with the school and throttle back work on payments to make sure that our general fund is okay because we have the county tax that

we have to pay. We'll be fine we're just going to have to work and be creative like we were last year and we'll get through it he said.

7).Next Meeting: Monday, December 4, 2023

Mr. Vachon said they discussed briefly last week the meeting on Nov. 27 with some members not being available and not holding that meeting and asked if that was still the board's feeling. Consensus of the board was to not meet on Nov. 27 and their next meeting would be on 12/04.

8). Adjournment:

Motion: (Morin, second Titus) to adjourn the meeting passed 3-0 at 7:48 p.m.

Kathleen Magoon
Recording Secretary



Gerry Vachon, Chairman



Ann Titus



Penny Morin