

Town of Farmington
Board of Selectmen Public Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 9, 2023
Selectmen's Chambers
356 Main Street-Farmington, NH 03835

Board Members Present:

Gerry Vachon, Chairman
Charlie King, Vice Chairman (5:30 p.m.)
Doug Staples
Penny Morin

Board Members Absent:

Ann Titus, excused

Others Present:

Ken Dickie, Town Administrator
Scott Orlando, Police Chief
James Reinert, Fire Chief
Ron LeMere, Bldg. Insp./ CEO
Mike Morin, Town Moderator
Joyce White, Goodwin Library Director
Amy Cornwell, Library Asst. Director
Linda McElhinney, Trustees Treasurer

1). Call to Order:

Chairman Vachon called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

2). Pledge of Allegiance:

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

3). Non-Public Session A:

Motion: (Morin, second Staples) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (a, c) Compensation, Reputation passed 3-0 by a roll call vote (Vachon, Staples, Morin-aye) at 5:03 p.m.

Motion: (Morin, second Staples) to come out of non-public session passed 4-0 at 6:09 p.m.

4).Reconvene Public Session:

Chairman Vachon reconvened the public session at 6:14 p.m.

5). Public Input: None

6). Review of Minutes:

December 19, 2022-Public Session- No errors or omissions

Motion: (Morin, second Staples) to accept the minutes as written passed 4-0.

December 19, 2022-Non-Public Sessions A & B- No errors or omissions

Motion: (Morin, second Staples) to accept the minutes as written passed 4-0.

7).Old Business:

Presidential Elections- Town Moderator Mike Morin said with the uncertainty and the political

climate that's out there between Republicans and Democrats and everything like that he feels the Town Hall is not going to be a large enough facility to take care of the presidential primary or the presidential election coming up in 2024. He said by statute the Selectmen are supposed to provide a space big enough to handle all of the voting and there are limited places in this town that can handle that amount of people.

Mr. Morin said they had very good feedback during COVID when it was held at the high school and the voters loved that there was plenty of parking and the ease of getting in and out. He said the auditorium at the junior high is actually a Town auditorium though it is in a school building maintained by the school district and asked if the Selectmen could broach the subject with the School Board to see about using that facility for the presidential primary and the presidential election in 2024. I know that seems far away but the presidential primary is a year away and it's going to take time to organize, get the 2 boards to agree on the use and whether or not they cancel school that day or have a teachers' workshop while they are working on their timeline for next year he said.

Mr. Vachon asked if he knew the dates for the primary and the election.

Mr. Morin said he thought it was the primary was on Feb. 7 and election is the first Tues. following the first Mon. in Nov. 2024 and the Town elections are fine where they are at. He said he believes there are approx. 4,100 registered voters in town and they need to have a booth for every 100 voters for the presidential so they will need 41 booths and they only have 24 actual booths and the rest will be table tops and the handicapped booths. He said it is getting kind of tight in the (Town Hall) gym along with the parking even though it is handicapped accessible it's not the easiest handicapped accessible building in town.

He said he didn't know if the Chief has anything to do with the parking in the area or if they are having any troubles with it and then asked the board for their consideration in this.

Mr. Morin said the second thing he wanted to discuss is in the election procedure manuals that were issued to all the election workers in the state, the state has come up with a Continuity of Operations Plan which is basically what happens if there an emergency- a fire, an electrical outage, someone has a heart attack and what will happen to the voting, what they are going to do, how they will secure the ballots and the checklists, how they will know who has/has not voted and where they would move to.

He gave the board copies of the list to review and asked that once they review it that maybe the Town Clerk, one of the Selectmen or the Town Administrator, the Police Chief and Fire Chief could form a committee to look it over. He said the plan would also include the contact information for the election officials, the phone number for Eversource if the power goes out, who knows how to start the generator hooked up to the Town Hall or is it automatic, the last time it was tested and those questions were never answered. He said he thought that in 1 or 2 meetings after the Town election, maybe in April or May they could start touching on this and go through it and put names, numbers and faces to what needs to happen. He asked the board

if they wanted to make a committee for it or hold a round table discussion some afternoon to do this. He said he would like the board to look at it and keep it in the background as it doesn't have to happen now but it should start happening pretty soon.

Mr. Morin gave the example of someone having a heart attack and they would have to stop until the person is revived or removed by EMS and then they would need to know how to restart, if they would have to stay open longer and if they have to contact the Attorney General or the Secretary of State. He said there are a lot of people they would need to contact and tell them that voting has been postponed for 2 hours.

He said other questions would be where do they go in the case of a fire, where is their assembly point and they should at least plan for it. He said all the people involved should know this and if possible he would like to see a booklet, pamphlet or Standard Operating Procedure come out of this so the next Moderator or Town Clerk that comes in doesn't have to reinvent the wheel and they would just have to cross out his name and put in whoever took over his spot and they could just read through it.

Mr. King asked if he was looking for a decision or an indication on the elections tonight.

Mr. Morin said no and he knew the board needs to discuss whether or not they are going to broach it with the School Board as to if they can use the school gym.

Mr. King asked if he was looking for both the primary and the presidential election.

Mr. Morin said those are our two biggest elections where we're north of 70% of the people coming out and especially if Donald Trump is running he would rather have a larger area to spread out. He said the Town Hall gym is roughly 65' x 40' and the middle school gym is 100' x 60' so there's 6,000 sq. ft. vs. 2,400 sq. ft. so there is a lot more room there.

He said there would be more people wanting to register to vote and that takes up time with people needing to sit and fill out paperwork and with everybody crawling in that front entrance at the Town Hall it's very jammed and tight.

Mr. King asked if he could get them the statistics for the last 3 presidential elections. He said he worked the last 3 presidential elections as an election official and he would like to see what the difference is between the primary and the main election.

Mr. Morin said he has a spreadsheet with that information going back to 2010. He said at last presidential election in 2020 there were 5,000 people on the checklist and at the end of 2021 or the last election we had with the purge we were down to 3,600 and since the state primary to now they've had 400 people register when before they only had 40. He said this information is on an Excel spreadsheet and he would forward it to Mr. Dickie to give to the board and it would be accurate to the last election we had. It will have the number that we started out with and the number of same day registrations so you'll have to add the 2 together to come up with what's there he said.

He said there is a lot of animosity between people and people don't want to talk to each other anymore it's always yelling. He said they didn't have any problems at the last one but at the

presidential there were a couple of people they had to turn in to the Attorney General for some stuff and there were resolutions made based on that. There was an incident at the election that the Police were involved in but that got taken care of fairly quickly. It's happening he said.

Mr. King said since his involvement there has always been some minor event almost every time we had an election.

Mr. Staples said he saw one guy that had a side arm when he was voting at the Town Hall and asked how they could let him into the school with a side arm.

Mr. Vachon said because if it's a polling location you're allowed to carry.

Mr. Staples asked if they could by law use a school as a gun-free zone.

Mr. King said typically what has happened is they have closed the school and if we make this request the school would likely if they grant the request not have school.

Mr. Morin said he had a discussion before with SAU Superintendent Ruth Ellen Vaughn and she indicated that she would probably do a teacher's workshop day and the teachers and the custodial staff would be in the building but no students would be in building and there couldn't be any sports or other activities that night because of the voting and how long it took.

Mr. Vachon said he kept referencing the Henry Wilson Middle School.

Mr. Morin said that is because the gym there is technically a Town gym which was funded by the town not the school district.

Mr. King said they just put in an almost instant backup generator at the high school and that is typically where they hold the Deliberative Session. He said it would be better suited in a power outage and based on meeting some of the other needs in the emergency plan that would be a better facility.

Mr. Morin said that's a discussion that the Selectmen and the School Board have to have.

Mrs. Morin said it was really nice having the last election at the high school and the distance and people could be inside vs. standing outside waiting to come in. It was a really nice facility to do that in she said.

Mr. Morin said he liked tradition as much as everybody else and he didn't want to abandon the Town Hall but there are times when we need a little more elbow room.

8). New Business:

Police Dept. Hiring- Chief Orlando said they already discussed the hiring issue in non-public session and came forward to update the board on the cruisers. He said he was talking to the Claims Manager at Primex regarding the motor vehicle incident with the Police cruiser back in Aug. He said he remained in contact with Lori from Primex and explained the situation about having the equipment removed, it's called professional removal of equipment and Primex agreed to pay 100% of that cost so we will be getting a check from them for that.

He said in addition he talked to Nevo and Adamson's regarding outfitting one of the new cruisers and their equipment that was in the 4 door sedan can't be put into the SUV because of the cost effectiveness of it and they have to retrofit it and a lot of the pieces can't be used.

Chief Orlando said Lori spoke with her Supervisors at Primex and she responded to him on Dec. 28 saying they will pay 100% of the labor costs but they depreciate the equipment costs 10% per year so they will take 50% off the parts cost. He said that means they will be receiving an additional check for \$7,597.50 to be applied towards one of the cruisers being outfitted at Primex which is \$12,996.

He said the board voted to approve \$22,000 out of the ARPA funds and it turns out they are not going to need all of that \$22,000 so when everything is final and the checks have been received by the Town to let him know how they want to proceed forward.

Fire Dept. Potential Warrant Article- Chief Reinert said he was looking to get the “flavor” of the board on how to approach the possible replacement of an ambulance and a fire truck. He said they have a 2011 ambulance that has 100,000 miles on it but it didn’t come with the hour thing to determine how many idle hours are on it so that is hard to factor into it. He said they have a 7-10 year replacement plan for ambulances and they have had continuous Diesel Exhaust Fluid issues with this ambulance and it’s currently out of service and is going to the Town mechanic tomorrow.

Mr. King asked if this is the GMC.

Chief Reinert said this is the white Chevy 3500 and the other ambulance is a 2018 Ford F-550.

Mrs. Morin asked if he knew what is in the Capital Reserve Fund now.

Chief Reinert said he believes there is less than \$1,000 in that line because the last several vehicles they purchased were lease purchases. He said he talked to several different vendors on the ambulance and if they were to place an order today they cannot guarantee delivery until the 4th quarter of 2025 so that is why he is trying to put the parts and pieces in motion and he heard that from 2 different vendors.

Mr. King said that makes this decision pretty easy unfortunately. He asked if they can’t do it until 2025 why they would want to raise and appropriate in 2022.

Chief Reinert said he wasn’t asking to raise and appropriate the money he is looking to see if he can move forward with the RFP to put out for bids and get into the queue for the order, order it and set up the funding mechanism and he didn’t know how that would work out with the legalities of a warrant article.

Mr. Vachon said the problem is if they do all that and warrant article gets shot down then we have an ambulance we’ve got to pay for no matter what.

Chief Reinert said usually there is an opt-out clause depending on how they fund the ambulance. He asked if they wait the 3 years are they still going to be down another 18-24 months once they order it. He said typically it’s between 9 and 12 months on a normal year when they order an ambulance to get delivery and they’re pushing that out now to 24 to 36 months.

Mrs. Morin said they can’t ask this year’s taxpayers to fund something 3 years from now.

Mr. King said in his opinion the supply need is not going to continue especially with the way the

economy is going because people just aren't spending as much money. He said we've seen that trend change with general vehicles it's starting to subside and he believes with emergency vehicles that is going to subside back to what is more normal. I am hesitant to make a commitment that is long term on a price that may not be elevated at this point but may not be as elevated as I'd like us to be when we get close to actually purchasing it he said.

Mr. King said he would like to see the repair list on the 2011 over the past few years to give them a feel for what it has been in for and unfortunately with DEF and diesels it's a common repair item. He said hopefully with the 2018 they have better success with the emissions on that as it gets older.

Chief Reinert said they've had air conditioning issues on the 2018 and they had to send it back to Bulldog last year because the AC just disintegrated and when they first took delivery of it, it had an AC issue which was covered under the warranty then and that has been the only significant issue with that ambulance. He said he was trying to pre-plan and make sure they have all their resources moving forward.

Mrs. Morin asked if that ambulance is paid off.

Chief Reinert said for 2 years they diverted \$40,000 each year from the ambulance revenue and the remainder was raised by taxation and they paid \$220,000 for that ambulance in 2018.

Mr. King asked how they diverted the \$40,000 a year.

Chief Reinert said they had a warrant article that started in 2016 and in 2017 and they purchased it in 2018 using that fund and raised the rest through taxation. He said the 2011 was a demo that was purchased before his tenure as Chief and he thought they somehow paid cash for it.

Mr. King said they had a CRF and typically that is how the money was raised.

Mr. Vachon asked the Chief what he is seeing for prices right now.

Chief Reinert said currently they're seeing \$370,000-\$400,000 for an ambulance.

Mr. Vachon asked for the price for the fire truck we just bought.

Chief Reinert said the truck's price was \$525,000.

Mr. King asked how we paid for that.

The Chief said that one was a lease purchase. He said it was approx. \$500,000 for the truck and \$25,000 for the ancillary equipment that came on it.

Mr. King asked if he was looking for the board to consider purchasing a new fire engine.

Chief Reinert said that is correct and Engine #4 is a 1999, it has 60,000 road miles on it, it is having continuous body frame issues and it has exceeded the NFPA life recommendation of 20 years as a front line vehicle and 5 years in reserve status. He said he started getting preliminary pricing and they are looking at 24 months out from date of order unless anything else drastic happens.

Mrs. Morin asked for the going price.

Chief Reinert said going from a 2,000 gallon pumper tanker to a Miring Engine 1 minus 1,000

gallons is currently \$600,000-\$620,000. He said Engine 1 with 2,000 gallons is their mutual aid piece in the non-hydrant district for water supply, the 1,000 gallon Engine #4 is their in-town hydrant district and Engine #3 has 750 gallons and they use that for rescues, motor vehicle accidents and car fires so they each have their own lane to share the wear and tear on them. Mr. King said he would like to see the details on the fleet and the repairs and maintenance logs on this one that he is looking to replace before he makes his final decision. He said he was giving the Chief every opportunity to talk him into it because right now he is not so inclined. He said the Highway Dept. came in looking for 2 new trucks and he was considering one of them but after some of their warrant articles he is not considering any of them because they have some very big warrant articles going before the taxpayers- 2 bridges and consideration for investment in a well and they may not even get approval for those.

He said the tax rate is already going to be up over \$1.25 or \$1.30 no matter what happens based upon some fixed costs and they are going to be looking at 2 contracts from the school and we need to make a good case to get the consent of the voters or else they are going to say no down the line because they're asking for too much and we really need to get some of this stuff. I'd really like to have this information and take a tour of this '99 and the 2011 he said. Chief Reinert said as a possible funding mechanism he is always a proponent of taking the ambulance revenue and earmarking it for large capital expenses like ambulances, fire trucks and power stretchers.

Mr. King asked if there is a trend where the total revenue has been dropping annually. Chief Reinert said over the last few years they have been averaging about \$230,000 to \$250,000 in ambulance revenues and it has been steady at that number. He said the Medicare and Medicaid are always an issue and the uninsured that are not collected.

He said he would pull his reports and compare them with the Highway Dept. reports and have the requested information to the board for their next meeting.

Letter of Resignation- Mr. Dickie said he received a letter of resignation from the Welfare Director by e-mail and he was looking for an acceptance of her resignation from the board.

Motion: (Morin, second Staples) to accept her resignation as of January 6, 2023 passed 4-0.

9).Budget:

Mr. Dickie said he ran the numbers again following their budget workshop and gave the board copies of the revised budget numbers and pointed out some the changes that were made.

Mr. Vachon said according to this right now we are looking at \$1.35 (tax rate increase).

Mr. Dickie said that's with the Police coming in, the 2 officers as they discussed at the budget workshop. He said he reloaded the Chief's line and called him to make sure the hourly rates he provided were solid and it was so he used the number he had and put that back in the budget to give them a picture of what the cost would be and what the impact on the tax rate would be.

Mr. King asked on the executive budget if he put back in a part time position or if he left it out.

Mr. Dickie said he didn't put it back in he left it out. He said he amended the Fire Dept. Per

Diem line and put the officers back in for his manpower line and the other lines that are affected by that as far as the retirement, FICA, etc.

Mr. Vachon asked for the change on the Per Diem line.

Mr. Dickie said it went from approx. \$543,000 to \$490,000. He said he had the Finance Dept. print out what he expended through the end of the year from his Per Diem line and it was kind of convoluted from last year because they had some that were Per Diem that went full time and then he saw that he didn't spend all the \$543,000 so he adjusted that down.

Mr. King said that ended up being a decrease of \$36,000 on the Fire Dept. budget and the Police Dept. budget went up about \$80,000.

Mr. Vachon said as of right now the total increase is \$764,940.22.

Mr. Dickie said they also have some conversation with the library tonight.

Goodwin Library Board of Trustees Treasurer Linda McElhinney asked what number the board has slated in the Town budget for the library.

Mrs. Morin said they have \$324,891 as their requested amount for 2023 and their current year budget is \$264,204.

Ms. McElhinney said to clarify the actual budget for 2022 was \$289,204 and she could go into a little history in that regard for them and passed out copies of their budget history to the board.

Mr. Staples said it says they had \$25,000 left over from the previous year's budget.

Ms. McElhinney said that's correct they encumbered that to offset as they did in 2021 which the amount was \$99,000. She said the paper before them is a snapshot of the last 10 years of what the Town portion for the library budget has been. She said if you go all the way back to 2013 the Town's portion for the library was \$281,117 and if you look through they're actually reduced or level funded going right up to 2021 where the Town's portion was \$280,837 which is even less than what they received in 2013.

She said if you look at the 2021 and 2022 there was a reduction due to the fact that they encumbered some funds because of COVID so as a result the tax impact on the town was reduced by that amount per the instructions of the Board of Selectmen at that time. She said when they came forward and said that they came in under budget and weren't sure how to proceed the board's recommendation to use that money to offset the budget the following year but keeping the mindset that it is actually pretty much level funded.

Ms. McElhinney said going forward for 2023 they have a column of the far left of their budget that shows each item that was increased and the reasons for it. She said a lot of it has to do with supplies, electricity and fuel so what they are looking to ask for this year is an increase over last year's budget of \$35,687 which brings it to the \$324,891 they presented to the board.

Mrs. Morin said they are predicting about \$4,000 more in heating costs next year.

Ms. McElhinney said that's correct and they did get onto the Town fuel rate which is definitely an advantage but at this point that is their best guesstimate. She said they increased the electricity by \$2,000 which is again an estimate but since they as a board have a bottom line

budget as well they have the opportunity to revisit and adjust each line as needed in order to offset any of the more costly expenditures.

Mr. King said from last year which \$289,000 was the budget and the Town's portion was \$264,000 that would be a 12% increase.

Ms. McElhinney said she didn't feel it was fair to base it off the \$264,000.

Mr. King said he used the \$289,000 total in his calculations.

Ms. McElhinney said unfortunately it's due to inflation and that over the last 10 they have been level funded. She said it's to the point where they had to cannibalize the other lines just to make ends meet. She said for example in 2013 their book fund was about \$30,000 and today they were asking \$17,500.

Mr. King said some of those lines have shifted because now they have e-books and other electronic items.

Ms. McElhinney said that's right and this is just random snapshot of where they're at right now and unfortunately with the current budget they have and with the cost of everything rising they're at a point where they need to increase the budget. I feel that the fact that we have gone 10 years basically level funded shows that we are very fiscally minded and always keep the taxpayers in the forefront of making the budgets and in any of our spending and I think that's it's not unreasonable that finally after 10 years we ask for an increase she said.

Mrs. Morin said she needed to see all of this and thanked Ms. McElhinney for coming.

Mr. King said their budget with their increase on average is at 12% and some things they increased like the Police Dept. which has historically been pretty much level funded over the last 7 years and that's up and there other depts. that are up based on commitment to the community and fixed costs they don't have any control over. Hopefully we can justify it to the voters with showing a list of fixed costs we have no control over and what percentage that is of that 12% I don't know he said.

He asked if any of the board members were looking to decrease what they proposed.

Mr. Staples said he has a hard time swallowing that they are open 40 hours and it's costing the taxpayers \$156.20 an hour to have that library open.

Mr. King said he was trying to be fair to them because when they leave the board could just decide to change it and he didn't want to do that. He said it's certainly an area they could recommend to it but based upon it being consistent with what they're going forward with for an increase he was not in favor of proposing a decrease. He said if it was out of line with what they're asking the taxpayers for he would but in this case it's not.

Mr. Staples asked if they jumped on with the Town's fuel supplier.

Mr. Dickie said they gave him the number of gallons needed and they piggy-backed off and worked with the school and got the price.

Ms. McElhinney said if it makes them feel any better, if the Town does have a 12% increase from last year they have a 12% increase from 10 years ago.

Mr. King said the Town hasn't gone up every year either and this board has been fiscally responsible and last year there was no give back because of some other things but typically we've had some tax money that could go back. He said last year there wasn't and he didn't know how much of an increase there was last year but there were increased costs this year and there is no way to prevent it from going to the taxpayers without major cuts in several areas. Mrs. Morin asked if their membership has increased and if they've seen more people using the library in the hours they are open.

Ms. McElhinney said yes.

Mr. King asked for some follow-up information on where they see the trends and how they track it.

Ms. McElhinney said they can do that and asked how soon they would like it.

Mr. Vachon asked if that would include the total number of patrons or library card holders.

Ms. McElhinney said yes and that would include the number of members using both the online subscriptions and the basic card holders.

Mr. Dickie said next Wed. there is a budget workshop with the Budget Committee where they will present the Town budget to the Bud Com and on Jan. 25 in conjunction with the Bud Com meeting there will be public hearing on the Town budget.

Goodwin Library Asst. Director Amy Cornwell said she would like to address Mr. Staple's point about costing the taxpayers more money. She said it may look that way but they actually save the taxpayers a lot of money because they don't have to go out and buy a \$30 book or a \$20 movie they can rent from them for free (it's paid for by their taxes). She said they also come to them for internet and computer use so they don't have to pay for that type of thing.

She said they also offer them services like helping them on the computer and helping them with job applications so they can get jobs and build their resumes. She said they offer programs so people don't have to take their kids to expensive things they can come to the library and come to programs that will save them money in the long run. I think the taxpayer seems to be okay with the cost that library costs them because it saves them in the long run she said.

Mr. Staples said it's costing us \$210 an hour to have the Police Dept. out for 13 guys patrolling and doing all that and justifying to the taxpayers that the library is going to cost us \$156.20 an hour is hard. He said energy and stuff like that is up but it is them that are getting attacked. He said being on the Bud Com, whatever the school brings forward and whatever the Town brings forward he is not going to vote to cut anything because times are tough and he didn't think the 5 Selectmen should whack the library or the 8 members of the Bud Com should attack the school or let one of them attack the Town budget. He said at Town Meeting they can say we're cutting them or level funding them or do anything they want to do. We're doing the best we can if you don't like it go to Town Meeting and vote he said.

Ms. Cornwell said she appreciated the board listening to them.

Mr. King asked if they were going to talk about the possible warrant articles tonight.

Mr. Dickie said he redid what the board asked for the other night plus he added the well in there as well.

Mr. King said Chief Reinert talked about some of the funding that would pay for ambulances was set aside from the ambulance revenue by a warrant article and asked if he was proposing that one of those would added to this list (of possible warrant articles).

Mr. Dickie said yes.

Mr. King said he didn't see that on the list.

Mr. Dickie said he wanted to see what the flavor was first.

Mrs. Morin asked what year that article appeared on the warrant.

Chief Reinert said it was 2 years in a row and he believes it was in 2016 and 2017 or 2015 and 2016. He said he keeps copies of everything and he would find out.

Mr. King said he would be agreeable to doing something like that to come out of that revenue and to set that aside. He said in essence it's the same as raise and appropriate and they'd be setting money aside whether it's through that or thru raise and appropriate to go into a CRF. He said they would probably need to do that also for the Highway Dept. vehicles because there are some replacements that need to happen there also. He said he is not inclined to buy all new shiny stuff today but they certainly have to put some significant money away.

Mr. Vachon said especially looking at the cost of a new ambulance and it's almost as much as a new fire truck.

Mr. Dickie said he wanted to give the board the updated warrant articles to look at and see where they are at.

Mr. King asked if they have any estimate of the undesignated fund balance is going to be.

Mr. Dickie said not yet and he will consult with the Finance Dept about that tomorrow.

Mr. King said they would need to know what that estimate is before considering making any changes to what they raise and appropriate in some of the proposed warrant articles. He asked if they could state both to come from the undesignated fund balance or through taxation.

Selectmen said they thought that would have to be 2 separate articles.

Mr. King said for example if we have \$400,000 in the undesignated fund balance and \$450,000 worth of warrant articles the last one isn't going to get funded. He said he would like to see a warrant article regarding the purchase of a new ambulance because Chief Reinert said they only have about \$1,000 and he would like to see a minimum of \$50,000 that's coming from an ambulance refund fund.

Mr. Staples asked if the ambulance revenue fund is set up like the Police Details fund where the pay of the...

Mr. King said no the revenues would just be transferred into that fund. He asked if that warrant article stated when that would happen.

Chief Reinert said it was after Town Meeting and he didn't think there was a specific date and that it was just left as pass or fail.

Mr. King said they want to address that even if it's just how they process it so it doesn't affect the cash flow especially with what they have to give to the school in increments. He said if they are going to put say \$50,000 into that out of the ambulance revenue they may want some requirements on the Town side on when that gets transferred whether its incrementally or at a certain point when they feel they are not going to be in deficit or strapped.

He asked if the list of possible warrant articles have been reviewed by legal counsel or by the NH Dept. of Revenue Administration at this point.

Mr. Dickie said he submitted the first one to legal counsel and when he amends it he'll send it again.

Mr. Vachon asked if he has the date for print yet when this all has to be submitted for printing for the elections and voting.

Mr. Dickie said it's a 10 day turnaround for printing and they have located all the files needed.

Mr. King asked if they have all the public hearings set up and scheduled including the hearing for the bond.

Mr. Dickie said they were trying to tie that in with the hearing they are having with the Bud Com.

Mr. King asked if they would hold their public hearing on that night or do it before that.

Mr. Dickie asked if they wanted a separate hearing for each article.

Mr. King said not necessarily and asked if they need to schedule 1 or 2 public hearings in consideration for the bond.

Mr. Dickie said they have to have a hearing on the bond but according to legal counsel they usually combine them with the budget hearing so that is what he was looking to do.

Mrs. Morin said usually it is its own meeting.

Mr. King said they should have it at their own meeting before their final budget hearing because if they come up with any issues at the public hearing and they have to make any adjustments to the wording, the dollar amount or any procedural things they want to make those adjustments before it goes to the Bud Com. He said they could have a bunch of residents come in that could convince them not to move it forward and he didn't want to belabor the Bud Com with that.

Mr. Staples said Thursday, Feb. 7 is the last day to submit warrant articles.

Mr. Dickie said they could have a separate meeting and he would line that up.

Mr. Vachon said hopefully they will hear back from the DRA and legal counsel because the board also has to vote on these before print and they would want to hold a public hearing for these before they vote on them as a board. He asked when they were presenting the budget to the Bud Com.

Mr. Dickie said the Town budget would be presented to the Bud Com on Wed., Jan. 18 and the public hearing on the Town budget is on Wed., Jan. 25.

Mr. Vachon asked about the turnaround time for these from legal and DRA.

Mr. Dickie said he didn't know and he would check with Finance Administrator later.

Mr. King said they have to notice the public hearing for 7 days so the soonest they could do it would be Jan. 23.

Mr. Vachon asked if they could post it for 7 days out and do it next week.

Mr. King said if it was posted tomorrow they couldn't do it at their next board meeting (Jan. 16) because that would only be 6 days.

Mr. Vachon said it doesn't have to be on a Monday and it could be posted for whenever they post it for.

After some discussion about conflicting meeting and personal schedules consensus of the board was to post the public hearing for Wednesday, January 18 at 5 p.m.

Mrs. Morin asked if the board would meet on Jan. 16 as it is a holiday (Martin Luther King Day).

Mr. King asked if the Town offices would be open on the 16th.

Mr. Dickie said no they are closed that day for the holiday.

Mr. Staples then said it's \$129.56 an hour to run the Fire Dept.

Mr. Vachon asked Mr. Dickie to post a notice for a public hearing for the 2 bonds (bridge projects and improvements to the Town water system which may include a replacement well) and add the one for the Fire Chief and hopefully they can get them back from DRA and legal pretty quick so they can vote on them.

Mrs. Morin asked if they always take them to legal before the DRA.

Mr. Dickie said as soon as he gets the articles from the Chief he will resubmit them to legal and it is not that long a turnaround time with legal.

Mrs. Morin said DRA costs them nothing and asked why they go to legal first.

Mr. King said they are on retainer so it's part of their service and in the current contract set-up it doesn't cost us any more money because they're not paid by the hour. He said speaking of that, at one of the past meetings they asked for an itemized list from legal.

Mr. Dickie said they got one and he sent it to the board by e-mail.

10). Additional Board Business:

Next Meeting- Mrs. Morin asked if they were going to meet on Jan. 16.

Mr. King said they should as they have a memo from Josif Bicja of Hoyle Tanner and he would like an update on the FEMA requirements for the levee because they are going to put forth a warrant article asking the taxpayers to put \$100,000 in a levee CRF and they might want to be updated as much as possible to be able to explain why.

Mrs. Morin said she thought they should meet then as well because they have too much on their plates to not meet.

Re-keying Municipal Office Building- Mrs. Morin said over a month ago they talked about re-keying this building.

Mr. Dickie said he has been working with the Town's IT Technician Eric Miles to give him some names to try get a pod instead of using keys and he is sick with COVID right now so he is waiting

for him to come back.

Mrs. Morin said she thought the board's direction was to just re-key the building and then they would go forward to look at other avenues.

Mr. Dickie said he could do that but he was trying to look at the technology side of it first.

Mr. King asked if he could get them estimate of that cost for the next meeting and if it doesn't seem too bad then they'll re-key it otherwise to keep looking at it.

Mr. Vachon asked if he had a cost to change the tumblers out and re-key the building.

Mr. Dickie said no.

Mrs. Morin said it would be just the 2 doors.

Mr. King asked who they have used in the past.

Mr. Dickie said he didn't know.

Mr. Vachon said the companies usually put a sticker on the door.

Dirt Road Repairs- Mr. Vachon asked Mr. Dickie to find out how things are looking with the dirt road repairs from the last storm and that he was contacted by some Reservoir Rd. residents.

Mr. Dickie said they have a rut across the road that is deep and they want to get it filled in.

Mr. Vachon asked if he knew when they planned to get the rut filled even if they don't grade and fix everything.

Mr. Dickie said they did what they could do with his road and he thought Reservoir Rd. is next.

Mr. Vachon said so they should be moving there by the end of the week. He said he wanted to know when they would get it because he has had multiple complaints on 2 major ruts one right after the other.

Mrs. Morin said 5 mph is about the top speed you can go on Ten Rod Rd. and that is probably too fast.

Mr. Vachon asked Mr. Dickie if he got a list from the Highway Dept. Supervisor on when the repairs to the dirt roads would be done.

Mr. Dickie said he hasn't received an itemized list yet and that he is compiling it and he is waiting for him to get done all these roads.

Mr. Vachon asked if he has an idea of when he is going to be on each of the dirt roads so when residents call or reach out to the board they can say it will be roughly on this date.

Mr. Dickie said he would get that for the board.

FEMA Numbers- Mrs. Morin asked where we are with the FEMA numbers for this last storm.

Chief Reinert said he got some preliminary numbers from the Highway Dept. Supervisor and they were around \$168,000 (est. to repair damage from the storm) so far and he was sure those numbers will come up and they are still waiting for a declaration on whether they meet the disaster level.

Mr. King asked if they have given any indication that it may or may not.

Chief Reinert said he hasn't received any of that and all he got was the initial from Homeland Security and Emergency Management asking for preliminary numbers and they give him 48

hours to do that. He said the rough numbers are around \$168,000 and he was sure that will go up once they get more details on that.

11). Next Meeting: Monday, January 16, 2023

12). Non-Public Session B

Motion: (Vachon, second Staples) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (c) Reputation passed 4-0 by a roll call vote (Vachon, King, Morin, Staples-aye) at 7:29 p.m.

Motion: (Morin, second King) to come out of non-public session passed 4-0 at 7:58 p.m.

13). Non-Public Session C:

Motion: (Morin, second King) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (d) Acquisition, Sale or Lease of Property passed 4-0 by a roll call vote (Vachon, King, Morin, Staples-aye) at 7:58 p.m.

Motion: (King, second Morin) to come out of non-public session passed 4-0 at 8:06 p.m.

14). Non-Public Session D:

Motion: (King, second Morin) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (c) Reputation passed 4-0 by a roll call vote (Vachon, King, Staples, Morin-aye) 8:09 p.m.

Motion: (King, second Staples) to come out of non-public session passed 4-0 at 8:32 p.m.

15). Reconvene Public Session:

Chief Reinert asked to speak with the board regarding his 2023 operating budget which would include employee wages, Cost Of Living Adjustments, merit increases and employment agreements. He said they were looking for a 2.5% COLA due to inflation and up to 2.5% in merit increases so it could be up to a 5% wage increase per Firefighter position.

Mr. King said the potential 2.5% merit increases should be put in a pool with the total number divided by the number of people that deserve it.

Mr. Vachon said the potential 2.5% increase is a merit based program so somebody might get a 1.5% increase and not the total 2.5%. He said the 2.5% COLA is new for this year.

Mr. King said they are not bound to give raises unless it is included in their contract and they can make adjustments as it is a bottom line budget.

Chief Reinert said he wanted to bring the entry level Firefighter position wage rate up to meet the entry level Patrolman position and he sent them the wage scale that was done in 2021.

Mrs. Morin said the wage study showed the average wage rate was \$19 an hour and asked what the wage rate is now.

Chief Reinert said at that time the low was \$12.50 an hour, the high was \$19 an hour and the current average wage rate for a p. t. Firefighter is \$18 an hour.

Mrs. Morin asked if they receive a differential for overtime.

Chief Reinert said overtime is after 53 hours and they get an additional \$4 for the weekend

shift. He added the Police Dept. does get shift differentials.

Mr. King said the Police get differentials for the second and third shifts.

Chief Reinert said the wage rate at hiring is based on the certificates they have but there is no way to account for someone who has been here for 12 years and is on the low end of the wage scale.

Mrs. Morin asked if they get longevity increases.

Chief Reinert said they do as per the employee handbook.

The board also discussed the Chief's request for a wage increase. Discussion included his current hourly rate (\$35.04), vacation and sick time used and accrued and his proposal to raise his salary either through a \$10 an hour wage increase or with a \$2 an hour wage increase and an increase to his Emergency Operations Center Director stipend from \$2,000 a year to \$7,000 a year. He said they do not make contributions to the state retirement system on the stipend. Selectmen expressed concerns about the legitimacy of that and possibly having to make up those payments if they were required and asked him to confirm they were not required. Chief Reinert said the COVID pandemic put a lot more responsibilities on his plate and he was looking for a way to be creative.

Mr. King said they would need to evaluate his performance and they would want objective evidence of what he is good at and any areas needing improvement. He said it would be a good opportunity to put a new set of eyes on his daily duties and his strengths and then justify a raise with that performance review.

He said he would also like more information on how many hours he spends on EOC matters monthly and overall for stuff like the yearly report and what those duties include.

Mrs. Morin asked if he does both jobs as part of the course of a day.

Chief Reinert said yes with the way that he does it.

16). Non-Public Session E:

Motion: (King, second Staples) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (c) Reputation passed 4-0 by a roll call vote (Vachon, King, Staples, Morin-aye) at 9:03 p.m.

Motion: (Morin, second Staples) to come out of non-public session passed 4-0 at 9:18 p.m.

16). Non-Public Session F:

Motion: (Morin, second Staples) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (c) Reputation passed 4-0 by a roll call vote (Vachon, King, Staples, Morin-aye) at 9:18 p.m.

Motion: (Morin, second Staples) to come out of non-public session passed 4-0 at 9:40 p.m.

17). Non-Public Session G:

Motion: (Staples, second King) to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (c) Reputation passed 4-0 by a roll call vote (Vachon, King, Staples, Morin-aye) at 9:40 p.m.

Motion: (Morin, second King) to come out of non-public session passed 4-0 at 9:47 p.m.

18).Adjournment:


Motion: (Morin, second Staples) to adjourn the meeting passed 4-0 at 9:47 p.m.

Kathleen Magoon
Recording Secretary

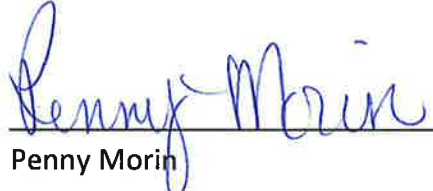


Gerry Vachon, Chairman

Douglas Staples



Charlie King, Vice Chairman



Penny Morin

