

Advisory Budget Committee

Minutes

October 17, 2023

This meeting was at the Barrington Town Hall with remote participation available.

Members Present: Steve Saunders, Michael Houst, Scott Shephard, Dannen Mannschreck, Bill Irving, and John Morris

Alternate Members Present: Peter Royce (acting member)

Others Present: Amy Doherty, George Joy, Richard Walker, Ken Grossman

Steve Saunders called the meeting to order at 4:30.

The group discussed the positions for the 2023/2024 Advisory Budget Committee. The group consensus is that Steve Saunders will be Chair and Scott Shephard will be Vice Chair.

George Joy discussed the Police budget which can be found on the town website www.barrington.nh.gov/2024budget. A lot of their cost increases are driven by contract and cannot be negotiated at this time. There is a request to increase their part time wages line to add an accreditation specialist position. The new accreditation process will help protect the police department by having policies and procedures in place. John Morris asked what the cost of the position is. Amy Doherty pointed out that the wages and benefits of this position can be found on the Wages and Benefits spreadsheet for the police department. The two-year window for this position will be able to train the new deputy police chief to take on the accreditation in the long term. The legal prosecution will be an increase for Jean Reed based on her contracted rate. The Strafford Country Dispatch line is also increasing. Police Communications line is up due to the purchase of cell phones for cruisers. There is a slight increase in the uniform line. There is an increase to the vehicles line. George Joy explained that this year was supposed to be a two-cruiser purchase year. Since the Board approved a purchase of an Equinox during the 2023 budget, they will only need one cruiser in 2024. Steve Saunders asked about a contingency plan on the open boarder. George Joy explained that there haven't been any issues in town this year and they will continue to monitor town owned property.

The group discussed the \$50,000 warrant article request for the purpose of upgrading equipment in accordance with the replacement schedule to be placed in the Police equipment Capital Reserve Fund. Steve Saunders applauded George Joy for keeping a stable warrant article request so that the town isn't caught by surprise for unexpected expenses.

Peter Royce asked if there were any immediate plans for the police details. George Joy said he has no immediate plans but that in the next couple of years he will probably use the funds to supplement cruiser purchases.

John Morris asked about construction plans for the Police Department Renovation. George Joy explained that they are asking for funding for a needs assessment. The group discussed other options for a police department location.

The group thanked George Joy for his attendance, and he left the meeting at 5:28 pm.

Richard Walker entered the meeting at 5:29 pm.

The group discussed the Fire Department budget which can be found on the town website www.barrington.nh.gov/2024budget. Steve Saunders asked for some clarification on the overtime budget. Richard Walker explained that his employees are looking for overtime hours and he's providing that to them for retention purposes. He also explained that he has lost several employees to the City of Rochester over the past few years because they have overtime opportunities. Steve Saunders suggested that the \$50,000 increase in the overtime line is too much and if there were options to meet the needs of the department but also reduce the amount requested. Richard Walker explained that he wants to staff the department with two individuals 24 hours a day and it's hard to calculate how much overtime you will need. Bill Irving asked how long it takes to get an uncertified fire employee. Richard Walker explained that he cannot hire a full-time position without them being certified as Fire 1. Richard Walker also explained that he takes the opportunity to cover many unfilled shifts and it doesn't cost the town any money because he is a salary employee. That might not be the case when he retires, and a new Chief is hired. The group discussed the use of the Revolving Fund for overtime. The group discussed the vehicle maintenance line, which had some unanticipated expenses in 2023. Peter Royce asked for details on the Ambulance Income line. Amy Doherty explained that the current month's quarterly transfer hasn't been made and wouldn't reflect on the current report. Richard Walker explained that it would take about 36 months to get an ambulance. A rough number for an ambulance will cost the town about \$320,000. Michael Houst asked about the Contracts line increase. Richard Walker explained that Frisbie Hospital is driving that increase. Frisbie Hospital will now bill the town for every paramedic intercept. Scott Shephard asked how the increase in population will affect the town. Richard Walker said that the increase in population hasn't really affected the schools because of the older population but it will affect the use of ambulances.

The group discussed the Fire-EMS warrant article requests which can be found on the town's website.

[fire-ems warrant article requests narrative 20230919.pdf \(nh.gov\)](#)

[fire-ems truck replacement schedule 20230919.pdf \(nh.gov\)](#)

John Morris agreed to create a spreadsheet that shows the funding and purchasing vs repair options for the replacement schedule.

The group discussed the Cemetery budget increase. The increase is due to the cancellation of the school's mowing contract and having to find an alternative option. Dannen explained that the Board approved a position for a Part Time Landscaping and a Part Time Preventative Maintenance position. Richard Walker explained that cemetery lots are priced lower than other communities.

The group thanked Richard Walker for his attendance, and he left the meeting at 6:26.

Ken Grossman from the Conservation Commission attended the meeting to discuss the town dam responsibilities. He explained that the town has a responsibility to create a safe crossing. The town has been out of compliance with the rules. The Conservation thinks it's fair for the town to contribute to the dams. The Board and the Conservation Commission have agreed to make a financial split with the town. The Conservation Commission is willing to come up with a percentage of a split, but they don't feel they should be solely responsible. Ken Grossman recalls a conversation with Conner MacIver that there might be grant money available to take down the dam, but no money would be available to rebuild it. Ken Grossman's opinion would be to keep the dam because of the popularity of the area. The Winnie the Pooh Trail exists there and the Richardson Pond. Bill Irving pointed out that if the dam is removed, there will be no more costs related to the area in the future. Peter Royce suggested that there is a study done to show the options rather than just requesting \$200,000 to fix the dam. Ken Grossman said that it would be best to talk with Conner MacIver to discuss this option.

The group suggests the recommendation to the Select Board consider doing a study on this topic. The group consensus is to wait to speak with Conner MacIver about the next steps in this recommendation.

The group thanked Ken Grossman for attending the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 6:58 pm.