

**TOWN OF EXETER, NEW HAMPSHIRE
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT
FIRE BUDGET REQUEST RECOMMENDATION
BUDGET YEAR 2014**

Subcommittee: Allan W. Corey, Chair, Fran Hall, Nelson Lorenzo and Harry Thayer

Chief Comeau has proposed a 2014 operating budget increase of \$184,153 or 5% to \$3,831,093 from \$3,646,939 the previous year. Chief Comeau attributes \$138,000 of the increase to contractual obligations.

As in years past, the question of reclassifying the Assistant Health Inspector position from 32 hours part time to 40 hours full time was introduced. The additional cost is budgeted at \$11,500 in salary and \$18,978 in benefits for a total annual increase of \$30,298. Assistant Chief Berkenbush diagramed the Fire Department's centers of responsibility noting the Office of Emergency Management, of which he is head, is being given or foisted additional responsibility at a rapid rate. His ability to adequately supervise all is being stretched and making the Health Inspector a full time position would relieve him of some administrative duties. It was noted that the Health Inspector is charged with overseeing local health, inspecting food service operations (restaurants, academy dining halls, hospital dining halls) daycare centers, trash, mold and landlord issues. Additionally, Public Health is served such as the recent hepatitis - C clinics. It was also noted, unless the Health Officer hours are cut to less than 30 hours a week, under the new ACA health care rules, health insurance would need to be provided. It was also noted that the Health Officer Cost is mitigated, by inspection fees of \$25 -\$30,000 annually.

The Committee recommends making the Health Officer a full time position 3 to 1.

A new item this year is \$14,732.00 for comprehensive physicals for half the fire force. The other half of the Fire Force would have the comprehensive physicals the following year and so forth so the entire force would have comprehensive physicals every two years. This physical would not be available to "On call" fire fighters. The Chief pointed out the high incidents of heart attacks incurred by firefighters while performing their duties and the increased cancer rates from carcinogens due to the nature of Firefighting. When asked why the physicals can't be performed under the health insurance provided, Chief Comeau responded that physicals under a primary care doctor might not include extensive stress tests and the like nor cancer testing. Furthermore, Chief Comeau stated he could not make employees take the tests on their own time. Concern was also expressed that "On call" Firefighters were not included. Though it thought the physicals a good idea, the committee was not convinced it could not be paid for by existing health insurance.

The Committee does not recommend the physical funding 3 to 1 abstention.

The Fire Alarm line item increased \$3,000 to replace the Keltron System computer.

The Committee recommends the fire alarm increase 4 to none.

The Uniform line item increased \$3,325 or 16.5% from \$20,100 in Budget year 2013 to \$23,425. The items in question are everyday uniforms and work clothes but still must be fire retardant.

The Committee recommends the uniform increase 4 to none.

General Equipment at \$49,846 is up \$4,846 or 10.8% from \$45,000 the previous year. The increase is for a Fit Trax Machine to replace various outdated weight systems. Chief Comeau says the exercise equipment contributes to both the physical and mental wellbeing of the fire fighters.

The committee recommends the general equipment increase 3 to 1 abstention.

Breathing apparatus (SCBA) at \$4,835 is up \$2,335 or 93.4% from \$2,500 the previous budget year. The increase represents new and replacements.

The Committee recommends the line item 4 to none.

Water Quality Testing. As health Officer, Assistant Chief Berkenbush has been charged by the Select Board to oversee the water quality testing at the Exeter Sportsman's Club site. Budget is \$1,500.

The Committee recommends the line item 4 to none.

Protective Equipment (Turnout gear) at \$27,000 is up \$750 or 2.9% from \$26,250 the previous year.

The Committee recommends this line item 4 to none.

Radio repairs at \$4,000 is up \$500 or 14.3% from \$3,500 the previous year.

The Committee recommends this line item 4 to none.

Office Equipment at \$3,499 is up \$411 or 13.3% from \$3,088 the previous year.

The committee recommends this line item 4 to none.

CIP ITEMS

Utility Pick Up replacement. The current truck, though with only 105,000 miles on the engine, is rusting out and has incurred \$16,000 of maintenance cost. It is not dependable as an emergency vehicle. The Utility Pick up is a work horse and used to move all manner of emergency trailers and equipment. Cost of a new vehicle is \$45,483 less \$3,000 trade in value for a net cost of \$42,483.

The Committee recommends this line item 4 to none.

Fire Alarm Truck. The Fire Department is again requesting a bucket truck. The current truck, is in good shape but the bucket cannot reach high enough for the new alarm lines. Line item request is \$90,000.

The Committee does not recommend this line item 4 to none.

Water Tower Radio Improvements. Repeaters to broaden the range of fire and police radio contact.

The Committee does not recommend this line item 4 to none.

Fire Sub Station. The Committee Felt the Staffing and equipment cost where still in question.

The Committee does not recommend this line item 3 to 1 abstention.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Allan W. Corey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Allan W, Corey, Chairman