

1 Town of Exeter
2 Budget Recommendations Committee
3 Town Offices
4 Nowak Room
5 October 30, 2024
6 6:30 PM
7 Draft Minutes
8

9 **Members Present:** Chair Robert Kelly, Christine Soutter, Anthony Zwaan, Andrew Elliot, Don Cloutier,
10 David Kovar, Fran Hall, Judy Rowan, and Christopher Zigmont.

11
12 **Others Present:** Select Board Chair Niko Papakonstantis, Dan Chartrand, Select Board, Finance Director
13 Corey Stevens, Town Manager Russ Dean and Asst Town Manager Melissa Roy
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15 **1. Call to Order and Member Introductions**

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17 Chair Kelly called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM and asked the members to introduce themselves.
18

19 **2. Police**

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21 Dr. Rowan introduced Police Chief Stephan Poulin and Deputy Chief Josh McCain. She noted the
22 department was fully staffed and had high morale. Retention has been a key issue. Dr. Rowan reviewed
23 contractual, salary and overtime. She noted there has been an additional training of 24 hours mandated
24 by the state in addition to regular training. Dr. Rowan indicated that where the overtime came from was
25 reviewed. Dr. Rowan reviewed lines 51111 and 51121 and 51124. She noted the less lethal firearms
26 trainer left, and the Exeter firearms trainer left. Dr. Rowan reviewed line 51435 which has a new canine
27 patrol for drug search and rescue. Dog training and equipment is supported by a grant. Chief Poulin
28 reviewed the additional state training coming from the George Floyd incident. He explained the focus on
29 ethics, bias, and de-escalation. He indicated the training can't include basic training like firearms but can
30 focus on drugs, computer crimes, crime scenes, and sex offenses. Dr. Rowan noted that there needs to
31 be coverage for those shifts. Chief Poulin indicated some of the training is free and some are seminars
32 that can cost \$200-\$300 per person to send. Seminars are located all over New Hampshire and there are
33 courses in Massachusetts and Maine. He hopes with the new complex there could be some training
34 here.
35

36 Dr. Rowan reviewed line 55001 for national accreditations and line 55043 where she noted Jason
37 Schreiber stopped providing services in September.

38
39 Chair Kelly asked about line 55043 community relations and whether in the absence, someone will be
40 taking responsibility for that. Mr. Kovar noted that Bob Glowacky could do it and someone has reached
41 out to him.
42

43 Mr. Elliot asked about the canine officer and whether the grant covers it every year. Chief Poulin noted
44 that the grant can be reapplied for. Mr. Elliot asked about veterinarian bills and Chief Poulin indicated
45 there are donations that pay for that.

46
47 Mr. Elliot asked who manages the training and Chief Poulin indicated there is a professional standards
48 lieutenant whose job is to track training and accreditation which is also tracked and audited by the state.
49

50 Dr. Rowan noted line 55047 decreased as computer maintenance services moved to the IT Department.
51 She noted on page 15 the line may appear underspent but has already been or will be.

52
53 Chair Kelly asked about line 55138 the mechanics of grant matching, a new item. Chief Poulin indicated
54 per the NH Office of Safety there is a 20% matching grant for equipment and the \$2,000 line is a one-
55 time expense. Chair Kelly asked if that could be paid out of reserves. Mr. Elliot asked if the line could be
56 kept in equipment. Mr. Stevens noted he recommended putting something there rather than hindering
57 other line items. Dr. Rowan indicated there was more transparency. Mr. Dean agreed. Mr. Kovar agreed
58 there was more accountability and visibility. Mr. Zigmont also agreed that Mr. Stevens needs to show
59 the amount, and it is easier sitting out on a line. Dr. Zwaan agreed and stated he liked the transparency.
60 Ms. Hall asked if the expense for grants is annual, and Chief Poulin indicated no. Chair Kelly noted that
61 even if spent out of, for example, remaining bond funds, there would still be a discussion in public before
62 expending the funds. Dr. Zwaan asked if the purchase was already approved and Chief Poulin indicated
63 he might see it this year. Chair Kelly asked the year-to-date amount of the equipment line and Mr.
64 Stevens indicated it was just under \$30,000. Chair Kelly noted there is enough in the line item.

65
66 Dr. Zwaan asked about the computer maintenance in IT and Chief Poulin explained they had a five-year
67 contract with the current provider and put out an RFP. He noted there is more than IT can take on and is
68 supplemental to other specific computer support services.

69
70 Mr. Stevens reported the new figures for health, dental and total benefits:

71
72 Health \$654,636
73 Dental \$ 46,569
74 Benes \$1,457,361

75
76 Mr. Stevens indicated the new total was \$4,197,809 an increase of 6.2%.

77
78 ***Dr. Rowan motioned to approve the proposed FY 2025 budget for Police in the amount of \$4,197,809.***
79 ***Ms. Soutter seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed***
80 ***unanimously.***

81
82 Dr. Rowan reviewed the leases line item and indicated two new police cruisers were being purchased
83 from capital outlay to replace the 2011 Ford Taurus and 2016 Ford Explorer. Mr. Elliot asked how many
84 vehicles there were and Chief Poulin indicated 17 which a rotation plan of two per year. He noted some
85 vehicles get more use than others and are recycled down the line for use by detectives, for police details,
86 with the goal not to have the whole fleet at once.

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Mr. Stevens reviewed leases and explained that the Town does not lease vehicles but that is a finance mechanism for five years.

- Pumper Truck Year 2031 \$72,000
- Fire Equipment 2028 \$51,000
- Patrol Motorcycle \$2,100
- Sidewalk Tractor \$ 38,583

Dr. Rowan motioned to approve the proposed \$296,317 for vehicles. Ms. Soutter seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

3. Fire

Dr. Rowan introduced Fire Chief Justin Pizon and Assistant Chief Donald Matheson. Dr. Rowan noted the proposed FY 25 budget was close to level. Mr. Dean noted there are no results from the CBA in the budget. Dr. Rowan reviewed the overtime numbers with the subcommittee, the decrease in line 51300 and vacation and overtime. Chief Pizon explained staffing and 24-hour shifts and the Collective Bargaining Agreement five person minimum in 2005. He noted in 2007 shifts dropped from six to five and in 2019 there was a study, and it recommended eight, seven per shift. In 2020 staffing went from seven per shift to five. He explained there could be two on vacation for example. He noted the department is super busy, especially with ambulance calls. He noted in 2019 there were 2,067 calls, 2,233 in 2023 and 2,141 in 2024 so far with two months to go. Mr. Zigmont asked about additional dwellings and businesses. Chief Pizon noted they spend a fair amount at over 55 housing but hope the new location will allow response from both ends of town and he expects more calls. Ms. Hall asked about Riverwoods new facility and Chief Pizon noted the three campuses being combined into one building would make things easier. Chief Pizon compared staffing to other towns such as Hampton which has the same call volume but has a ten person shift in summer and nine off season. Dr. Zwaan asked about having a separate ambulance core and Chief Pizon noted they would lose revenue. Dr. Zwaan asked if the volume was out of proportion to other towns and Chief Pizon indicated a lot of ambulance calls billed to Medicare. Mr. Dean noted that towns like Hampton who have the beach result in larger assessed value. Chief Pizon discussed the effect of Exeter Hospital’s decision to cut services and the rapid sequence intubation (RPS) service. He noted he would not send one paramedic on duty out of Exeter but if it were an RPS service event he probably would assist. Chief Pizon indicated that he put together a budget that serves the Town of Exeter. He noted they are meeting regularly in Epping to put a plan in place to supplement the services being lost by Exeter Hospitals’ cuts. Mr. Kovan noted communities will step up to fill the gaps.

Mr. Elliot asked about retention and Chief Pizon noted he has staff that have been with the department under three years.

Chair Kelly asked about the line for physicals being underspent. Chief Pizon noted there is a line for pre-employment and new hire physicals and other physicals are funding through the EMS Revolving Fund. He noted the loss of Exeter’s Center for Occupational Health would mean traveling to Portsmouth or

131 Somersworth for those services but that items like stress tests could still be done at Exeter Hospital. Mr.
132 Dean noted that Primex may have a list of providers.

133
134 Dr. Rowan noted a freeze in the budget in May to purchase new PFAS free protective gear. \$100,000 will
135 be funded by ARPA. Chief Pizon noted the department had to come up with \$28,000 from its own
136 budget.

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138 Mr. Stevens indicated changes in the wage line 51110 for full-time salary and wages is now \$2,255,765, a
139 decrease of \$3,630. Line 51121 is now \$19,170 and 51420 holiday pay is now \$115,367. The new salary
140 total is \$2,550,028.

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142 Mr. Stevens indicated total health, dental, Medicare, Retirement and Benefits:

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144 Health: \$673,453
145 Dental \$ 49,515
146 Medicare \$36,975
147 Retirement \$735,405
148 Benes: \$1,511,961

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150 Mr. Stevens indicated the new total is \$4,339,763, a 2.5% increase for Fire.

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152 ***Dr. Rowan motioned to approve the proposed FY 2025 budget for Fire in the amount of \$4,339,763.***
153 ***Mr. Zigmont seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed***
154 ***unanimously.***

155
156 **4. Dispatch – pg. 18**

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158 Mr. Stevens indicated the changes in full-time salary and wages \$242,059. Line 51420 holiday pay is now
159 \$11,267. Total Salaries \$293,866.

160
161 Mr. Stevens indicated the total for health, dental, FICA, Medicare, Retirement and Benefits:

162
163 Health \$109,246
164 Dental \$ 7,459
165 FICA \$ 18,220
166 Medicare \$ 4,261
167 Retirement \$ 38,251
168 Benes \$177,677

169
170 Mr. Stevens noted the total for Dispatch is \$503,218, a 5.2% increase.

171
172 ***Dr. Rowan motioned to approve the proposed FY 2025 budget for Dispatch in the amount of \$503,218.***
173 ***Ms. Soutter seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed***
174 ***unanimously.***

175 **5. Health Officer – pg. 19**

176

177 Dr. Rowan indicated there is a new health officer. The education and training line reduced. Line 55308
178 includes travel reimbursement for her vehicle.

179

180 Mr. Stevens indicated the total for dental and benefits:

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182 Dental \$ 597

183 Benes \$16,523

184

185 Mr. Stevens indicated the total for Health Officer is \$140,270, an 8% increase.

186

187 ***Dr. Rowan motioned to approve the proposed FY 2025 budget for Health in the amount of \$140,270.***

188 ***Mr. Elliot seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

189

190 Mr. Stevens indicated the total for public safety was \$643,488.

191

192 **6. Other Business**

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194 Chair Kelly asked about the \$50,000 which was to be applied toward the difference between what the
195 water and sewer rate payers were paying for hydrants and the cost of services outside of those rate
196 payers beyond the water district. There was a recommendation to have \$750,000 funded and \$50,000
197 added each year up to \$250,000, which is one third of the standard. He noted the Executive Committee
198 decided not to add \$50,000 this year. Chair Kelly noted this is something he feels strongly about and Dr.
199 Zwaan agreed the subcommittee felt strongly that it be added. Mr. Zigmont agreed the fund should go
200 to where it should be.

201

202 ***Dr. Zwaan motioned to increase line item 55151 by \$50,000 so the balance will go from \$100,000 to***
203 ***\$150,000. Mr. Zigmont seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed***
204 ***unanimously.***

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206 Chair Kelly noted the miscellaneous line was now \$150,004.

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208 ***Dr. Zwaan motioned to approve the general expense total. Mr. Zigmont seconded the motion. A vote***
209 ***was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

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211 **7. Capital Improvement Program (CIP)**

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213 Mr. Dean noted the previously ordered ambulance has not arrived and the fire department deferred the
214 item given the funding of the substation. Dr. Rowan noted the Utility vehicle is 17 years old and will not
215 pass inspection next year and replacement will come out of fund balance.

216

217 Mr. Elliot asked the predicted fund balance and Mr. Stevens indicated it was \$5.2 million at the end of
218 2023.

219 Sportsmen’s Club Clean Up

220

221 Chair Kelly noted the item was tabled so that ownership and responsibility issues can be looked at. The
222 Executive Committee is working with town counsel so it will not move forward this year. Mr. Zigmont
223 asked if there would be proximity issues with water supply and the effect on waiting. Mr. Dean noted
224 the town is working with NH DES and there are different areas where they want sampling. The budget
225 line would be \$1 this year.

226

227 ***Chair Kelly motioned to approve \$13,017 for capital outlay – other. Mr. Zigmont seconded the motion.***
228 ***A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

229

230 **8. Insurance pg. 31-32**

231

232 Mr. Dean noted they got the 2025 invoices.

233

234 Unemployment is \$2,446.

235

236 ***Dr. Rowan motioned to approve the proposed FY 2025 budget for Unemployment Insurance in the***
237 ***amount of \$2,446. Mr. Elliot seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion***
238 ***passed unanimously.***

239

240 Worker’s Compensation is \$260,854

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242 ***Dr. Zwaan motioned to approve the proposed FY 2025 budget for Worker’s Compensation Insurance in***
243 ***the amount of \$260,854. Mr. Elliot seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the***
244 ***motion passed unanimously.***

245

246 ***Dr. Zwaan motioned to approve the insurance total of \$88,441. Mr. Elliot seconded the motion. A vote***
247 ***was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

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249 **9. Adjournment/Next Meeting:** November 6, 2024 at 6:30 PM (Parks & Rec, Library, Human Services
250 Funding

251

252 ***Dr. Rowan motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:27 PM. Dr. Zwaan seconded the motion. A vote was***
253 ***taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

254

255 Respectfully submitted,

256

257 Daniel Hoijer,

258 Recording Secretary