

Andover Budget Committee
Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 16, 2023
Approved



1) Open Meeting

Chair Donna Crisp Duclos called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm. Committee members present: Aimee Herling, Mark Cowdrey, Kayla Chandler, Jim Reed, Greg Stetson, Dana Swenson. Not present: Jessica Rand

Others present included: Kimberley Edelman

2) Minutes

Selectman Swenson made a **motion** to approved the meeting minutes of October 2. Kayla Chandler **seconded**. The **motion passed** with all in favor.

3) Emergency Medical Services

a. EMS Operating Budget

Andrew Perkins presented the EMS budget. He noted 2023 was the first year there would be compensation for everyone. Last year, they added \$5,000 to share among the members based on a point system as used by the Town of Salisbury. Points are earned by responding to calls, attending meetings and doing a work detail. This would at least cover the cost of fuel used to get to the station for calls. The money would be provided at the end of the year. The department hopes to get additional members on the roster.

The Telephone budget line would go up \$500 to \$2,500.

Training and Licensure would stay at \$4,000. Recertification classes cost about \$1,500 per person.

Due to increases in prices, Andrew recommended increasing Medical Supplies to \$5,500. He also wants to increase the Office Supplies line to \$350.

With a new ambulance, Andrew did not expect to have a lot of Maintenance costs. He recommended keeping that budget line at \$2,000. Fuel was purchased through the State and was good at \$500.

The Comstar budget line was not currently used. Keep it, just in case.

Oxygen needed to be increased by \$50 to \$250.

PPE clothing was good at \$1,200 for now. They would be purchasing some additional bunker gear in the near future. That usually cost about \$500 per set.

Physio Control covered a contract for a stretcher, cardiac monitor and LUCAS chest compression system. No change to that line at \$3,600.

Andrew noted that the Chief in Franklin had not yet provided a number for their services. The Chief said it would not be more than a 5% increase. The number would be coming in soon. Payments were made twice a year, but the Franklin fiscal year was July to June. So, the two payments would likely differ by a small amount.

Overall, the proposed EMS budget was increasing \$1,250 or 1.1%, without taking into account any increase for Franklin.

Call volume was down to 200 per year.

Greg Stetson asked if Andrew could get a copy of the revenues for Franklin's department. He was interested in seeing those numbers.

b. EMS Capital Reserve Fund

Andrew noted that in 2023, they requested that the Town establish a CRF for a replacement ambulance. The Select Board chose not to put it on the Warrant due to other Warrants requesting a lot of funds.

Greg Stetson explained to Andrew that the Capital Improvements Committee was starting up again and he should present that need to the committee. Greg would get the CIP information to Andrew.

Andrew said he believed the current truck would last 18 more years; 20 years total.

Discussion about ambulance transport in the future followed. It was noted that local small Towns were covered by Penacook, New London, and Franklin. The partnership with Franklin was working well. The Andover truck was really good and just needed to be maintained at that level.

c. EMS Donations

Andrew Perkins talked about the fact that the department does accept donations.

4) Highway Department

a. HW Operating Budget

Selectman Swenson presented the proposed HW Department.

It was noted that until the Social Security Administration announced the COLA for 2024, the Select Board was working with 3% for wage increases.

Greg Stetson noted that the 2023 budget had funds set aside for all of the Town employees to be added into the NH Retirement System. Selectman Swenson said that it had not been discussed with the employees, so it was not implemented. Employees did not want a cut in take home pay. Greg expressed concern that not offering it would reduce the number of qualified candidates for open positions. Discussion followed regarding how to handle wages if retirement was implemented, including a single year bump up.

The Plow & Sand line was level at \$158,000. Contracts for the 2023 - 2024 season were in place.

Sand & Gravel was being reduced to \$20,000 due to stock piling done in 2023.

A new hire would be joining soon. He had a CDL and could operate a grader.

It was recommended to keep Office Supplies level as well as Maintenance.

The budget line for Fuel was being increased from \$15,000 to \$22,000 due to increases in pricing.

The Small Tools line was staying at level.

The Projects line was being reduced from \$85,000 to \$70,000. The Select Board may recommend bumping that up after seeing how the numbers looked at the end of the year. Selectman Swenson noted that \$275,000 of paving had been done in 2023. He believed that would come out of the operating budget.

The Training & Seminars line was increased from \$500 to \$10,000 to cover UNH Road Scholar training and other courses. The line would also cover any CDL training offered to new hires.

The Grass / Hay / Mulch line was remaining at \$1.

The Portable Lavatory line was still at \$1,500. It was going to be \$0 once the new building was available for use.

The Street Signs line was holding at \$2,000.

The Safety Equipment line was reduced from \$2,000 to \$1,200 as some expenditures were moved to the Uniforms line.

The Equipment Rental line was reduced from \$26,000 to \$15,000. In 2023, \$562 was for rental of a truck from Thompson Excavating. The rest were small projects.

The Calcium line was reduced from \$25,000 to \$20,000 since the Town was spreading the calcium instead of using another company to do it.

The Beach Mowing, Ball Park Maintenance and Town Office Mowing lines, all set to \$1, were believed to be use historically for tracking wages at a more detailed level.

Overall, the Highway Budget as presented was \$20,463.60 lower.

b. Department of Public Works

Selectman Swenson shared that since both the Highway Department and the Transfer Station did not currently have supervisors in place, the Select Board had begun talking about the overall structure of the departments.

One idea was to put the two departments, along with Town property maintenance, under one Department of Public Works. However, to do so, RSA 231:63 would need to be approved at Town Meeting.

Greg Stetson wondered what the job descriptions would look like in that organization. Selectman Swenson noted that they Select Board had only started discussing the idea. Mark Cowdrey added that to sell it, it would be important to explain it well.

Selectman Swenson noted that the job description for the Highway Supervisor had been expanded to include more managerial and computer skills.

5) Longer Range Discussion

Mark Cowdrey commented that the Town could not avoid growth, but that it needed to be managed in such a way that it didn't take on a life of its own. Employee retention was important. An up-to-date department in place was important. Deliberate growth was important.

Greg Stetson noted that over the past 15 years, there was a lot of growth in terms of the Town's infrastructure. The Town staffing levels had increased significantly, but not the Town's population.

Mark Cowdrey believed that moving to a Town Highway Department was a positive thing. He also commented about the context over the past 15 years; the great recession, technology, COVID. Society had changed.

Donna Duclos agreed that planning needed to be deliberate while balancing where the Town would be in 10 years time. It was agreed the Master Plan was an important tool for discussion and planning. Donna Duclos noted that the Master Plan discussions have not had a lot of attendees; she would like to see more citizens attend and participate.

It was noted that the School Board and SAU were also discussing future plans, yet to be disclosed, if approved.

6) Next Meeting

It was noted that the Police Department budget would be ready for review at the next meeting on Thursday, October 19.

The Transfer Station budget would be ready at the following meeting, along with Library.

Greg Stetson said the Fire Department may be ready to present soon, probably October 19.

The Budget Committee hoped to hear from the Cemeteries, Library, Conservation Commission, Village Water District, Recreation, 4th of July. Donna Duclos said she would take care of that. Normally the committees see the Select Board first.

TA Edelmann noted that the Library was ready. She had also sent budget sheets to the Town Office departments and expected those budgets to be ready soon.

7) Capital Improvements

Greg Stetson said that Doug Phelps would be asking department heads if they had presented to the Budget Committee.

TA Edelmann noted that the CIP requests for PD and HW had been forwarded to Doug.

8) Adjournment

There being no further discussion, Chair Duclos entertained a motion to adjourn. The **motion** was made by Mark Cowdrey, **seconded** by Greg Stetson. With all in favor, the **motion passed**. The meeting was adjourned at 6:47 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberley Edelmann
Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved at the
Budget Committee meeting of October 23, 2023.