

Municipal Budget Committee Meeting
Community Center
8 Whitten Street
Allenstown, New Hampshire 03275
November 1, 2018

Call to Order

The Allenstown Municipal Budget Committee Meeting was called to order at 6:06 p.m. by Chairman Keith Klawes.

Chair Klawes called for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

Present on the Board: Kris Raymond, Keith Klawes, Carol Angowski, Dave Coolidge, Melaine Boisvert, Deb Carney, Jeff Venegas, Ron Cox

Allenstown Staff: Derik Goodine, Town Administrator; Debbie Bender, Finance Director; Paul St. Germain, Fire Chief

Review of Minutes

Mr. Coolidge made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 25, 2018 meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Angowski.

Ms. Raymond presented two corrections. On page two, the last name for Matt is Monahan. At the top of page three, the date for the review and voting on the budget is November 19th, not November 12th, which is a holiday.

Ms. Angowski moved to approve the amended minutes. Ms. Carney seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Fire Department Budget

Ms. Angowski asked the Fire Chief to explain the breathing air trailer.

Chief St. Germain said that this is a single axle trailer which is out of service now. It was used to store air packs, a compressor system and other items needed to fill breathing apparatus to bring to a fire. It was originally a HAZMAT trailer, built in 1990 and repurposed as a breathing air trailer before being taken out of service. That equipment is now mounted on a wall in the Fire Station.

Chair Klawes noted that the proposed budget is 12.9% over last year's default budget. He asked if the Town is still attempting to keep the budget in line with the changes in the CPI.

Mr. Goodine responded that the directive from the BOS was to allow 2.5% step increases (COLA) and otherwise to hold the budget as flat as possible. He said that the Fire Department has been behind and underfunded.

Ms. Bender stated that the overall budget increase for the Town is just a little over 0.5% as compared with the 2018 default budget and less than the 2018 proposed budget.

Ms. Raymond noted that the Town runs on a calendar year and the School is on a fiscal year. Therefore, she said, the Town does not have a default budget yet, and incurs expenses from January through March before the budget amount is approved by the voters. The School, on the other hand, has its default budget about one year prior.

Ms. Bender stated that the towns in New Hampshire are about 50% fiscal and 50% calendar.

Ms. Angowski asked about the Holmatro Rescue Tool.

Chief St. Germain explained that this is the brand name for their jaws of life tool.

Ms. Angowski asked about the Plymovent Exhaust System.

Chief St. Germain said that, when diesel engines are started inside the Station, this diverts the exhaust outside.

Chair Klawes asked about a budget spike in the line for heat in the 2017 default budget. The amount is \$7,500; the actual expense was only \$3,800.

Ms. Bender said that the average for the past two years was \$3,200. Other people were preparing the budget at that time, so she has no explanation for the budget spike.

Ms. Raymond asked why the training line went from \$1,000 to \$16,000.

Chief St. Germain explained that this is the result of an effort to accurately track hours employees spend in training. Dollars have been moved from the part-time salary line to the training line. It is still a salary because employees are paid their regular salaries for hours spent training.

Ms. Raymond asked why this comes out of salary.

Ms. Bender explained that this is not the training itself but the part-time pay for hours spent training.

Ms. Raymond asked why the part-time salary line shows an increase.

Ms. Bender explained that, in the default budget, the Chief's salary was in the full-time salary line. The Chief was actually part-time, so that line is overspent and the full-time line is underspent. There is only one full-time firefighter, Captain McIntosh.

Ms. Angowski asked for an explanation of the per diem line.

Mr. Goodine responded that these employees are paid at the full-time rate without benefits. They cover 45 hours per week, replacing the second full-time firefighter.

Chief St. Germain added that there are three per diem employees who are paid the full-time hourly rate, Monday through Friday, making slightly less than Mr. McIntosh because he is a captain. The on-call employees cover emergencies nights and weekends. And, the Department shares an administrative assistant with the Building Department.

Ms. Boisvert asked about the rate of pay.

Ms. Bender said that the average rate is \$21.13 per hour.

Mr. Cox asked if this is enough funding.

Chief St. Germain said that it is sufficient. He and Chief Murray worked for months with the Finance Director, the Town Administrator and the BOS on this budget proposal. He said they could use more people on the roster, but they can manage.

Ms. Bender referred to the spreadsheet, saying the amount by which the proposed budget is over the default budget by about \$45,000, which is roughly equal to the funding for the per diem, full-time equivalent firefighters for 45 hours.

Ms. Angowski asked who performs the in-house training.

Chief St. Germain said that they have staff members who are certified to perform some of the training; sometimes people from other entities do the training without charging a fee; and there are funds available if they need to pay an instructor for a special situation.

Mr. Cox asked about the food line amount of \$150, saying that it seems low.

Chief St. Germain explained that there is an auxiliary division which prepares meals for large incidents and special events such as FEMA drills. They do their own fundraising. The \$150 is just for rare occasions when they need to purchase food. The employees pay for their own meals, coffee, etc.

Ms. Boisvert stated that if the Fire Department is working toward hiring another full-time firefighter, this budget won't work.

Chief St. Germain said there is no plan in place for hiring another full-time firefighter. They first want to see if this plan works because the Town saves money by not having to pay benefits for the per diem employees.

Ms. Boisvert asked about the EMS supplies line of \$2,150, which is a significant spike. She asked if budget dollars are used to purchase Narcan.

Chief St. Germain said he believed that Tri-Town obtains Narcan through the hospital. He said he would get back to the Committee with a definite response. He added that the Fire Department does carry Narcan, and though he has paramedics on staff, Tri-Town does the paramedic work.

Mr. Cox asked if the full-time firefighter is hourly or salaried.

Chief St. Germain said that he is hourly, working 45 hours per week. If he works more than 53 hours, he receives the overtime rate.

Mr. Cox asked if there is anything which prevents him from being salaried because that might be mutually beneficial, for him and the Town.

Mr. Goodine said that he doesn't directly supervise employees regularly so he probably can't be salaried.

Chair Klawes asked why he is paid straight-time for 53 hours.

Chief St. Germain said a decision was made years ago, having something to do with changes in the exempt/non-exempt rules, but this is certainly a downside for the person on this job.

Mr. Cox asked about the overtime line of \$1,000.

Chief St. Germain explained that this is for coverage when Captain McIntosh has a day off or a sick day.

Mr. Venegas asked how the new boat was working out.

Chief St. Germain responded that it is much better than the old one and that most of the staff has been trained on it. They would like to have had more training, but the season got short on them.

Mr. Venegas asked what would be done with the old boat.

Chief St. Germain said it would probably be sold.

Mr. Venegas asked about repairs and projects for the Fire Station.

Chief St. Germain said that the foundation has been repaired and the HVAC has been repaired. The fire alarm system is 17 years old. They have done some upgrades but it still needs more work. He said they would like to insulate the second floor and turn that into usable space. There have been several fire chiefs over the last several years and plans have been through many evolutions. He said that Chief Murray completed a lot of important projects during his tenure. The building is 17 or 18 years old and is getting shabby.

Mr. Venegas asked Chief St. Germain to make him a list of projects he would like to have done. He told him that, the budget aside, he would like to help in any way he can, as he does in other areas of the community.

Chief St. Germain said that his door is open and he hopes people will communicate with him freely. He noted that fire stations used to be the centers of communities.

Mr. Cox asked about the condition of the second floor of the Fire Station.

Chief St. Germain said that the walls have been studded and there is a staircase. There are no sprinklers and no fire alarms. There is no insulation. There is some electricity.

Mr. Cox said that some fire departments have a finished second floor which can be rented out.

Chief St. Germain stated that he hoped to work on the insulation project within the year.

Ms. Angowski asked about the \$12,000 cost associated with municipal hydrants.

Chief St. Germain said that this is a fee paid to Pembroke Water Works to have the hydrants available and working properly. He said it used to be somewhere else in the budget but it is now in the Fire Department budget.

Chair Klaus asked if this is based on gallons used.

Chief St. Germain responded that it was not. It is basically water works insurance. He said the Fire Department shovels around the hydrants.

Mr. Coolidge said he is from Boston where they shovel their own hydrants.

Mr. Cox asked about the hoses and if testing is based on a failure rate or the age of the hoses.

Chief St. Germain said that they only have older hoses. They have been lasting longer because there are fewer fires.

Ms. Carney asked about the personal protection line. There was no expenditure in 2017 and this budget has \$7,000.

Chief St. Germain said that this is turnout gear – helmets, pants, coats and boots. None was purchased in 2017. He said they have no spare gear or second sets for the busier guys. Because they must be washed and air dried after use, that firefighter is out of commission for at least one day after a fire. They have not been keeping up with this line. When someone's gear reaches the half-way point of its life, they should provide new gear and use the other as a spare set. When these items are past their service life, they cannot be used, due to liability.

Mr. Cox asked about if all training done is required or if some is elective.

Chief St. Germain responded that it is mostly required training. EMTs have a whole recertification program. Fortunately, Tri-Town has a certified trainer who does this at no cost. Firefighters have no recertification but some mandatory training. He continued, saying that employees need professional development to get into supervisory roles. Some of this is offered free of charge at the Fire Academy. Employees use their own time to take these courses. The department tries to help with the expenses because it benefits the Department to have employees interested in supervisory roles.

Mr. Cox asked if the dispatch fee is a flat rate.

Chief St. Germain said it is a formulated fee and part of the mutual aid system. It is based on population, property values and call volume, and is divided among the 23 communities. It is a non-negotiable amount based on statistics from the previous year. He said that Allenstown has been part of this group since 1966 and it has been great for the town.

Ms. Angowski asked if the budget for the Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) was listed anywhere.

Ms. Bender said that they were now looking at the operating budget and the SCBA is a Capital Reserve item, approved through a warrant article. Warrant articles can be financed from the undesignated fund balance, thus having no effect on the tax rate, or through the budget, which would affect the tax rate.

Chief St. Germain said that the original SCBAs were purchased through a grant. They need to be replaced in 2020. They will be purchasing fewer than the original number and hope to find a grant to help with the purchase. They also plan to stagger the purchases.

Ms. Boisvert asked if there were any large purchases anticipated which would require warrant articles.

Chief St. Germain responded that there were not.

Ms. Boisvert asked about the spike in the sewer line.

Chief St. Germain explained that this is an error. The Fire Department allowed Pembroke Water Works to plug in their hose at the back of their building during the Whitten Street project and were

erroneously charged for that water. This has been corrected and the budgeted amount will be reduced by \$10,000.

Chair Klawes asked if Mr. Goodine would be presenting the Town Admin budget this evening.

Mr. Goodine said that the budget has been prepared but not yet approved by the BOS. He advised waiting until next week.

Mr. Cox said that the Fire Chief did an excellent job presenting great information. He would like to wait until next week to vote. He asked Mr. Goodine if the BOS approved the Fire Department budget.

Mr. Goodine said that they corrected a few errors but otherwise had no concerns.

Ms. Raymond said that they don't yet have the default budget.

Chair Klawes said that this has nothing to do with the default budget.

Mr. Coolidge said that the only way to further question the Fire Chief is to vote 'no' on approval.

Ms. Bender said she could change the designation from 'preliminary' to 'proposed.'

Ms. Angowski made a motion to approve the proposed budget. The motion was seconded by Mr. Coolidge.

Chair Klawes called for a roll call vote, which was not completed.

Ms. Angowski withdrew her motion.

Mr. Cox said that he would like the Committee to vote at the beginning of the next meeting. He said that last year the Committee went through the budget quickly, and they resolved to take more time this year.

Ms. Boisvert stated that she would like to have a week to review the Fire Department budget.

Chair Klawes reminded the Committee members that they must present their budget recommendations to the voters on January 12, 2019. He suggested that members email him with any questions they have so that he can relay them to the Fire Chief.

New Business

Ms. Bender explained that she figured out that the revenue figures they looked at during the last meeting seemed extremely high because the budget was not included.

Ms. Bender said that the Personal Protection line is indeed for uniforms – shirts, pants, shields and jackets.

Ms. Bender reported, regarding School Department warrant articles, that Amber Wheeler is working on them, but the dollars have not yet been transferred.

Mr. Goodine asked if the Committee wished to review the small budgets, such as the Library, the Planning Board, the ZBA, and the Old Meetinghouse. He said that the Planning Department has to update the CIP as part of the Master Plan in order to calculate impact fees per lot.

Chair Klawes suggested that Mr. O'Meara attend a meeting because there might be questions about this. He asked Mr. Goodine to call him tomorrow to talk about which budgets to review. He asked Committee members to let him know which budgets they want to review.

Chief St. Germain told the Committee that he would not be able to attend their next meeting but would be glad to answer questions via telephone or email.

Ms. Raymond said that the School Budget presentation must be on November 29th because it is the only date which Amber Wheeler will be available.

Chair Klawes asked if the members needed the television projection of the documents, and those responding said they like paper copies.

Ms. Bender said they would bring some paper copies to the next meeting.

Mr. Venegas asked if he could join the meeting via telephone next week if he is needed for a quorum. He will be in Colorado.

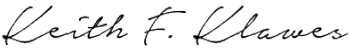
Ms. Raymond said that this can be done, but that there is a protocol to be observed.

On motion of Mr. Venegas, duly seconded by Mr. Cox, it was voted to adjourn at 7:44 p.m.

TOWN OF ALLENSTOWN
Budget Committee
16 School Street
Allentown, New Hampshire 03275
Signature Page

Budget Committee Meeting

November 1, 2018

Original Approval:	
	12/03/2018
KEITH KLAWE, CHAIRMAN	DATE

Amendment Approvals:		
Amendment Description:	Approval:	Date:
	KEITH KLAWE, CHAIRMAN	DATE

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Keith Klawes

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Keith F. Klawes

Multi-Factor
Digital Fingerprint Checksum

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Timestamp

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Audit

All parties have signed document. Signed copies sent to: Keith Klawes and Derik Goodine.

Document signed by Keith Klawes (chefkk@comcast.net) with drawn signature. - 50.237.188.146

Document viewed by Keith Klawes (chefkk@comcast.net). - 50.237.188.146

Document created by Derik Goodine (dgoodine@allentownnh.gov). - 64.222.96.214



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