**Budget Sub-Committee: Town Public Safety**

Includes the following 5 budgets:

* Police department - Fire Rescue – Forestry - Emergency Management - Fire Protection

The budget subcommittee for Town Public Safety 2023 budgets met on Thursday, November 10th in the conference room at the Gilford Town Hall. In attendance were Police Chief, Kris Kelley; Police Captain, Dustin Parent; Fire Chief, Steve Carrier, Deputy Fire Chief Brad Ober; Town Administrator, Scott Dunn, and Budget committee members, Gaye Fedorchak and Angelo Farruggia.

**Police Department 2023 Budget Proposal Review**

The 2022-23 budget request as recommended by the Board of Selectmen, shows an overall increase of 2.88% from last year. Most of this increase is accounted for by this year’s general increase in salaries and includes 1 new FT position with requested allocation for that position reduced to reflect a mid-year start (See Accts. 4210-101 through 4210-133). In addition, part-time wages have been impacted by Glendale parking enforcement personnel who have had to extend their day and evening work by several weeks past the Labor Day holiday due to increased Glendale activity. Fuel cost increases (Acct. 4210-414) have also contributed to this year’s increase. A modest increase in expenses for Testing and Supplies (4210-325) of $3,700.00 has also been requested to bring in a tester to conduct polygraphs to prevent other staff being pulled away from duty to cover this task during periods of short staffing. A shortage of dispatch staff - down 2 positions- caused increases in overtime this year. The requested polygraph testing support should help reduce this cost.

In discussion the committee noted that use of employee accrued leave has been increasing each year, but has been purposefully under-budgeted (for multiple years) at a level of 2 days of leave accrual use per employee per year - which does not represent the actual number of days employees use each year. The current year budget request continues to underestimate this known use of accrued leave. Each year this mismatch has been anticipated and covered by other unused funds (i.e. vacant staff positions and funds therefore not spent have been used to cover actual employee leave accrual use). The committee discussed this pattern and expressed concern that the department was not accurately budgeting for this known and consistent expense. Members of the committee asked the department staff to consider, in future years, increasing the annual number of budgeted ‘days of leave usage’ per employee per year from 2 to 3 (or more) to more accurately capture this consistent funding need.

The police department continues to provide a very robust professional development program for its employees. The funding request for this line item (Acct. 4210-241) has remained fairly level since 2020, but tends to be somewhat underspent. As much as possible, training is conducted onsite helping to save money. This year marks year 3 of two 5-year cycle programs: The TASER Assurance Program (TAP Program) and related Augmented Reality (AR) Simulator Program to provide professional training in as close a scenario as possible to the physical, social and emotional situations likely to be encountered when the weapons are deployed. Such training has been found and is expected to result in more effective learning outcomes as it replicates elements of the natural stress response that occurs in real-life circumstances.

Angelo Farruggia made a motion to support the proposed Police Department budget, as recommended by the Board of Selectmen, in the amount of $3,492,891. Gaye Fedorchak seconded the motion. Both voted in favor.

**Fire Rescue 2023 Budget Proposal Review**

The 2023 Fire Rescue budget, as recommended by the Board of Selectmen, shows an increase this year of 14.12% over the 2022 budget. As with other departments, increases are primarily due to: a. general raises provided this year that impact all personnel costs (Accts. 4220-101 through 4220-133); and b. Substantial increases in vehicle fuel, heating fuel, and electricity costs during the past year (Accts. 4220-414, 4220–510, and 4220-513). The initial request for building maintenance expenses has been reduced by $5,000.00 at the request of the Board of Selectmen. Due to improvements made last year in siding, exterior lighting, flooring, and living quarters lighting it was determined that the maintenance request for this year could remain level. Most accounts in this budget request are actually remaining level funded from the prior year. Angelo Farruggia moved to support the budget as recommended by the Board of Selectmen in the amount of $2,495,974.00. The motion was seconded and the motion to support the Fire Rescue 2023 Budget, as recommended by the Board of Selectmen, was passed.

**Forestry 2023 Budget Proposal Review**

This budget request totals $1,000.00 covering two line items only(Accts. 4229-421 and 4229- 451): $500.00 for Forestry Vehicle maintenance expenses, and $500.00 for new equipment. This request is half that requested in 2020 and level with that requested in 2022. The Board of Selectmen recommended support of the entire 2023 budget request. The committee reviewed the budget. Angelo Farruggia moved to support the budget, Gaye Fedorchak seconded the motion and the recommendation to support the request for a Forestry 2023 budget in the amount of $1,000.00 was passed.

**Emergency Management 2023 Budget Proposal Review**

The accounts in this budget (Accts: 4291-106, 122,125, and 451) cover strictly stipends, and related Medicare, retirement, and supply costs for both an Emergency Management Director and Deputy Emergency Management Director. These are steady-state stipends that have remained stable since at least 2020. This year’s request is slightly lower (-0.98%) as compared to last year’s approved budget. Gaye Fedorchak made a motion to support the Emergency Management 2023 funding request as presented in the amount of $3,245.00. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by the committee.

**Fire Protection 2023 Budget Proposal Review**

The two accounts in this budget represent dues owed to local municipalities in agreement for use of shared resources necessary to support local fire protection services. Dues owed to the Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid services have just been confirmed in the amount of $100, 620.00 (Acct. 4299-216). Dues owed for use of Laconia water, hydrants are confirmed for $44, 254.00 (Acct. 4299-514). Gaye Fedorchak made a motion to approve the updated Fire Protection 2023 budget request in the amount of $144, 874.00. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by the committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Gaye Fedorchak, 11/10/2022