

GILFORD BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES

November 13, 2007

6:30 p.m.

Gilford Town Hall

Members Present: Doug Lambert, Skip Murphy, John O'Brien, Bob Brent, Sue Greene, Dick Hickok, Bill Phillips, Margo Weeks, Gus Benavides, Dale Dormody and Phyllis Corrigan

Members Absent: Terry Stewart

Also in attendance were Town Administrator Evans Juris, Assistant Town Administrator Debra Shackett and Administrative Secretary Sandra Bailey.

The Budget Committee recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Hickok advised the Committee that the Police Department budget would be presented tonight, beginning with a taser demonstration. Chairman Hickok turned the presentation over to Chief John Markland, who was accompanied by Captain Kevin Keenan and Belknap County Deputy Sheriff Bill Wright. Chief Markland advised the Committee that Deputy Wright is a Taser Instructor and is available to provide information on the device, as well as to answer any questions that the Committee has.

An extensive question and answer period followed, covering subjects including how the body reacts from a taser, individual law enforcement agency policy on tasers, how the action is considered pro-active, health concerns and financial issues. Deputy Wright also provided data on surrounding communities that are using tasers, as well as the NH State Police. The issue of providing another alternative for law enforcement agencies was also thoroughly discussed, in addition to pepper spray and guns. Chief Markland reiterated that the use of a taser avoids having to use lethal force.

Officer Dustin Parent volunteered to have the device demonstrated on him. Following various precautions, Officer Parent was prepared for the demonstration, including eye protection and two police officers (Detective Eric Bredbury and Officer Dan O'Neill) to assist him. Selectman Benavides, with direction from Deputy Wright, fired the device at Officer Parent. During the demonstration, Deputy Wright provided a detailed explanation of what was happening and how the device functions. Officer Parent was further assisted by firefighters Dominic DeCarli and Rick Andrews, following the demonstration. The Budget Committee thanked the police officers for providing the demonstration, especially Officer Parent.

Dale Dormody, a member of the Police Department Sub-Committee, proceeded to review the information sheet that his sub-committee provided after their review of the Police Department budget. Under non-discretionary spending, salaries were briefly discussed, with an increase from 2007 of only 0.53%. Some discussion ensued on the matter of holiday pay increasing at a higher rate than regular wages. Assistant Town Administrator Shackett explained that the two items are not relative to one another and the difference is due to 2007 budget calculations not being the same as the actual amount spent. Brief discussion also ensued on the Town's floating holiday policy.

Dale Dormody then briefly reviewed the cost of oil and tires, as well as that of training and

ammunition. Discussion then ensued on vehicle replacements. The Police Department had provided a listing of their vehicles and their mileage as of August 31, 2007. This provided a general means of comparing the age and mileage of each vehicle.

The purchase of tasers was discussed next. The budgeted amount is \$11,500, which will provide the devices for the front line officers. Sue Greene asked if the Police Department would be requesting more devices next year and Captain Keenan replied no. Captain Keenan also stated that the use of a taser affects only one person, whereas the use of pepper spray can affect many persons. Further data was also provided on the matter of increased officer safety and decreased lawsuits.

The Budget Committee proceeded to vote on the Police Department budget, which would be divided into three categories – general budget, vehicles and tasers.

Phyllis Corrigan moved to approve \$1,414,492 for the Police Department budget. John O'Brien seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Phyllis Corrigan moved to approve \$91,302 for the purchase of three police cruisers. Doug Lambert seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Doug Lambert moved to approve \$11,500 for the purchase of tasers. John O'Brien seconded. Motion carried with Phyllis Corrigan opposed.

Skip Murphy stated that he is glad that the Police Department is only outfitting its front line officers with tasers and will not be returning each year with an additional request.

General discussion followed on the fact that the Police Department does present a tight budget.

Skip Murphy moved to approve the minutes of the November 1, 2007 Budget Committee meeting. Bob Brent seconded. Motion carried with Phyllis Corrigan abstaining. The November 8th minutes will be approved at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p. m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra J. Bailey
Administrative Secretary