

# **NORTHFIELD BUDGET COMMITTEE**

## **Minutes of the meeting of January 16, 2020**

**Present:** Carl Bartlett, Steve Randall, Kaitlin Lounsbury, Morris Boudreau, Kevin Waldron, Sel Rep. Glen Brown;

**Others Present:** Stephanie Giovannucci, Wayne Crowley, John Raffaely;

Meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm by Co-Vice Chair Steve Randall.

**Lounsbury/Boudreau** moved to approve minutes from January 9, 2020 as written. **Motion Passed.**

- **Police Department 2020 Proposed Budget:**

Committee reviewed the Police Department budget request.

Mrs. Lounsbury asked Chief Raffaely about the part-time wage increase. Chief Raffaely stated that he has been down three full time officers and his other three part time officers have been picking up the hours. Chief Raffaely also stated that he recently hired two new full time officers, but they won't be on their own until October, and added they will be going to the academy in May. Mr. Randall asked Mrs. Giovannucci if the Health Insurance had been accounted for in the budget. Chief Raffaely stated that the health insurance was included in the budget and Mrs. Giovannucci also confirmed.

Mr. Boudreau asked what a HRA was and Mrs. Giovannucci stated it is part of the insurance. Mr. Crowley stated that it covers the first \$7,000 of a family plan and \$3,500 for single plan deductibles. This allows the Town to purchase the Insurance Premium at a lower rate.

Mrs. Lounsbury asked about the decrease in the heating. Chief Raffaely stated that a new furnace was installed and also added that electricity is down due to the new LED lighting.

Mr. Bartlett asked if all the Police Cruisers were SUV's now. Chief Raffaely stated that they still have a Ford Taurus.

Mr. Randall made the Committee aware that there are no vehicles on the warrant this year, but there are radio replacements for 4 cars. Chief Raffaely stated that his radio is 18 years old and it does not work, and added that has a hard time communicating when he receives a call, so they have to call his cell phone.

Mr. Randall asked about Special Detail money from 2019. Mrs. Giovannucci stated approximately \$15,000.

Mr. Randall updated Mr. Bartlett on the article passed a few years ago that they created an account called PD Special Detail fund to cover expenses for police equipment. Mr. Waldron asked if the detail fund is where the money for the portables is coming from. Chief Raffaely stated that the money is coming from a Warrant article. Mr. Waldron asked why we aren't using that money from the fund instead tax money. Chief Raffaely stated he was under the assumption that the money in the fund was for a cruiser. Mr. Crowley stated that we have a cruiser capital plan for the next ten to fifteen years. He also stated that there's a request to set up a cruiser fund and add \$8,000 a year so that when they do need a cruiser there will be enough funds to cover. Mr. Crowley added that they will utilize both funds to purchase a cruiser when needed.

Mr. Waldron asked about building maintenance if we overspent in 2019 then why aren't we asking for more next year. Chief Raffaely stated the additional expenditure was from installing LED lights. Mrs. Giovannucci stated that we should be getting some money back from Eversource for that installation. Mr. Waldron asked what needed to be adjusted on the ADA ramp. Chief Raffaely stated that it needed to be replaced and Mr. Waldron agreed and was asked by Chief Raffaely to take a look at it and provide a quote.

Mr. Waldron stated that their 3 vehicles with over 100,000 miles why aren't we purchasing a cruiser. Chief Raffaely stated that they have been down 3 full time officer and won't be filled until at least October, but they will definitely need one next year and the year after. Mrs. Lounsbury asked what the older car is. Sel. Brown stated that we have two cruisers that are 2013 one is the detail car and one is the Taurus.

Committee decided to wait until a quote was provided for the ADA ramp to finalize the Police budget.

- **General Town Government 2020 Proposed Budget:**

Committee reviewed the General Town Government budget request.

Mr. Randall said the budget for Selectboard went down by \$4,000 due to not needing a head hunter. Mrs. Giovannucci stated that the Selectboard was going to be doing the hiring of the next Town Administrator.

Mr. Waldron asked about the salary increase for the Town Administrator. Mrs. Giovannucci stated that the \$80,000 is already allocated for and we are stilling paying Tracey until the end of April. Mrs. Giovannucci added that half of her salary is also in this budget line.

Mr. Crowley informed the Budget Committee that of all of the tax money there is only about \$50,000 left for a fund balance and that is very tight.

Mr. Randall stated that postage was higher then what was budgeted for. Mrs. Giovannucci stated that there is still more postage in the machine that has not been used, once used it is allocated out to each department.

Mr. Randall asked about the merit pool and if it was a 2% increase. Mr. Crowley stated that it's a flat rate that the Selectboard allocates out appropriately which also includes, benefits, retirement and taxes. Mr. Randall asked what was allocated out last year. Mrs. Giovannucci stated that it was approximately \$24,000.

Mrs. Giovannucci stated that there will be an upgrade for the accounting system. Most of the fees are one time fees and it may be a little a less because 2020 support has already paid for in 2019. Sel. Brown stated that the BMSI system was over 20 years old, Mrs. Giovannucci agreed.

Mr. Randall asked about the cleanup of server room. Mrs. Giovannucci stated that this is for a cabinet and cleaning up the wire.

Mr. Randall asked if the legal budget will be enough. Mrs. Giovannucci stated she hope so because most of the utility appeals have been settled.

Mrs. Lounsbury asked about the \$20,000 difference for the Information technology. Mr. Crowley stated it was for GIS mapping, but that we don't have anyone that can do it at this time, and currently Lakes Region Planning Commission can handle some of our mapping needs.

The Committee decided to finish discussing the General Government budget at the next meeting on January 23, 2020.

Being no other business the meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

**Meeting minutes approved January 23, 2020**