



# TOWN OF NORTHFIELD



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## NORTHFIELD BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING Minutes of the meeting of January 7, 2016

Present: Linda Luedke, Leif Martinson, Keith Murray, Lisa Swancott, Dennis Allen, Bob Southworth

Also Present: Chief Raffaely, Andy Buteau, Glenn Smith

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm

Keith Murray said that he would like to see more detailed minutes of Budget Committee meetings. Glenn outlined the legal requirements for minutes. Committee members discussed the amount of detail that should be in the minutes, whether they should record the major topics discussed, include a list of questions and answers or be a verbatim report. Glenn was asked that the draft minutes include more detail.

**Swancott/Allen** moved to approve the minutes of the meeting of December 17, 2015. **Motion passed.**

### I. Request to Record Minutes

Glenn noted that a citizen has requested that the Budget Committee record its meetings and post the recordings on the website. Committee members discussed the advantages and disadvantages. Leif Martinson said that a decision should be deferred until George Corliss is in attendance.

### II. Highway and Sanitation

Glenn presented information on Highway Department salaries. The increase seen in 2016 in the full time salary account is attributable to several causes: one salary was listed incorrectly, this has been corrected, resulting in reduction of approximately \$6,000; the Mechanic/HEO position was new in 2015 and thus only budgeted for six months while it is in the 2016 budget for a full 12 months, this accounts for \$19,700 of the increase; a Truck Driver/LEO position was turned into a Working Foreman position, adding approximately \$3,100 to the bottom line. In addition there were 'standard' changes that result from normal turnover over the course of the year. In the part time salary account he reported that there was also an incorrect salary amount in the calculation. In addition, during 2015 the Selectmen had turned the full time Laborer/Recycling Attendant position into a full time Laborer position and a part time Recycling Attendant position, resulting in an increase to this account. As part of this process the 1,440 hours of summer help was reduced to 720 hours, providing a partial offset.

Keith Murray asked Andy Buteau if it was true that no other town garages had a lift. Andy responded that this was not true; he has seen a lift in Franklin Public Works. Dennis Allen reported that Tilton also has a lift.

Lisa Swancott asked if a special pad were required for the proposed lift. Andy responded that it was for outside use.

Keith Murray asked how much site work is required to for the pad. Andy responded that the cost is \$3,500 and that this is included in the overall \$40,000 cost estimate.

Keith Murray asked Andy where the lift would be stored. Andy responded that it would be stored in a bay at the garage.

Bob Southworth asked if a special pad is required in the garage for the lift. Andy responded that is was not, the garage floor was already designed to handle this weight.

Bob Southworth asked inquired about the cost of the unit, saying that Andy had started out saying the unit would cost \$23,000, then said \$40,000 and then \$30,000. Andy responded that this had been covered in the Selectmen's meeting, the overall cost of the unit, including site work for the pad, is \$40,000. Bob responded that he has not seen a \$30,000 estimate.

Bob stated that he does not think we need to spend this money as it will only be used for oil changes and pressure washing, *and we do not a lift for these* ~~which does not need to be done~~. Andy responded that when he was hired he was told that the town wanted to get serious about maintaining its equipment, this lift will allow for such maintenance in a safe and efficient manner.

Bob inquired as to how the lift will help increase the life expectancy of our equipment and suggested that consideration of the purchase of the lift be postponed for a year.

Dennis Allen said that in recent times the town has not been maintaining its vehicles. Now the Selectmen are turning that around, the lift is needed to properly maintain the vehicles, they are a common tool in maintenance shops.

Leif Martinson asked if the town has explored the option of leasing lifts or developing an arrangement under which we could use another town's lifts.

Lisa Swancott asked about the extent they could be used outside in the winter.

Dennis responded to Lisa that in the winter they can be used inside.

Chief Raffaely responded to Leif that it is unlikely that another town would allow us to use their equipment for liability reasons.

Dennis said that the lifts are a good investment for the town that will improve our ability to maintain our vehicles in a safe and efficient manner.

Leif asked if a cost benefit analysis has been performed. Andy responded that it has not been formally but that we can do one. Keith inquired as to the overall savings of having a lift.

Committee members asked for a cost benefit analysis of the proposed lifts.

I. 2015 Budget Proposal – Police Department

Chief Raffaely reviewed staffing for his department. Leif Martinson asked why the Selectmen had cut his part time salary request. Chief Raffaely responded that he would like to increase the request amount over what was asked for earlier as he would like to bring on a part time detective for two days per week; the total cost for this position alone would be \$14,900. Leif asked if he has considered hiring a full time detective. Chief Raffaely responded that he does not want to do so at this time. Glenn responded to Leif's initial inquiry, the Selectmen reduced the part time request as the department had just achieved full staffing after several years of being understaffed.

Chief Raffaely reported that he feels that police officer salaries are too low and that it is impacting retention of officers. Lisa Swancott stated that Northfield has become a training ground for officers who leave a few years after getting their certification. Committee members discussed police officer salaries and how Northfield salaries compare with Tilton, Laconia, Franklin and other communities. Glenn stated that towns which pay their officers more than Northfield are also experiencing recruitment problems.

The Budget Committee asked Chief Raffaely to prepare a recommended salary schedule that will reduce officer turnover. The Chief responded that he is already working on this.

Committee members asked Chief Raffaely about Safety Grant overtime. Chief Raffaely noted that at the time the budget was prepared certain grants were still in process. This account was changed to reflect anticipated revenue amounts.

Chief Raffaely told the Budget Committee that the telephone service account needed to increase by \$600 to account for the Metrocast upgrades required to implement IMC.

Chief Raffaely said that the dues and subscriptions request can be reduced by \$75.

Committee members asked the Chief why the Selectmen had reduced the gasoline account request. Glenn noted that the town is currently paying \$2.33/gallon for gasoline and that fuel usage was 7,300 gallons in 2013 and 6,900 gallons in 2014. Leif reported that gas prices are expected to drop by summer. Chief Raffaely noted that it is difficult to predict the price of gasoline for the second half of 2016.

Bob Southworth said that he would like to increase the Selectmen's recommendation for the building maintenance account by \$4,800 to accommodate the purchase of a new furnace. He will bring this up to the Selectmen at Tuesday's meeting, at which time he will ask that they purchase the furnace from the Facility Emergency Repair Fund. If the request is approved he will not need the \$4,800 in the 2016 budget.

Chief Raffaely said that he would like to reduce his Department Supplies request by \$2,000.

Committee members inquired as to the increase in New Equipment. Chief Raffaely responded that two of his six tasers are down; he has requested replacing four of them.

Lisa Swancott asked about the request for a new desk for the Administrative Assistant. Chief Raffaely responded that the old desk is falling apart and has been repaired with tape.

Keith Murray reported that he did not think \$600 was enough for the new printer and recommended that the Chief purchase a Dell 5130, with a cost of \$1,200. Leif concurred.

Keith Murray asked if the Chief had considered FBI training for his employees. Chief Raffaely responded that this is not appropriate at this time.

There being no other business the meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm.

APPROVED BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE ON JANUARY 14, 2016