

Selectmen's Meeting
January 23, 2006

The Selectmen met for their weekly meeting at 7 p.m. at the Town Office. Present were Selectmen Charles Wheeler, Donald Johnson, Jr., James McGarr, and Jon Homer. Selectman Cheney had to work tonight due to the snow. The Board spent the first half hour reviewing and signing the manifest. They also signed two warrants for land use penalties, and approved four new residents.

Police Chief Chris Warn came in to present the first draft of his 2006 proposed budget. He started with the overtime budget line item which he is increasing slightly this year. He commented that it is not an easy line to determine as it comes without warning, and last year was over the budgeted amount due to a shortage in officers. Under the wages line item, he presented the Board with three options, option A included no raises but there was an adjustment from a 40 hour workweek to a 42.5 workweek. Federal law does not require overtime for police agencies until after 43 hours. This time adjustment assures that officers start on the clock 15 minutes before and after a shift so they can share information and proper preparation for the shift. Option B shows a 2.5% COLA, followed by a merit increase. and Option C is a 2.5% COLA, and 42.5 workweek. This line item also includes holiday and longevity for full time employees with 10 years and over in service. The Board discussed the fact that they were not leaning at automatically giving cost of living raises each year, and like the option A that the Chief was proposing. They also discussed filling the vacant officer's position, and all agreed that it was costly to hire someone and have them leave a year or two later. They would like to be able to hire someone who already lives here, and has experience, and would be interested in staying here for a number of years. The Chief did have an individual in mind that he would like to approach, but that would mean adjusting the rate of pay based on the experience. The Board agreed that if they could get some stability in this position, it would be worth the extra money, and save in the long run on training, uniforms, recruitment etc. Based on this conversation, the Chief lowered his line item on recruitment from \$1,500 to \$250 and raised is wage line up to \$250,018. The line item for office, printing, computer etc. went down from \$15,200 to \$10,700. Unfortunately the fuel line item had to raised significantly due to the cost of fuel. In January of 2005, the PD was paying \$1.43 a gallon, and at the end of December it was up to \$1.78 a gallon with the trend still continuing to rise. The Chief raised the line item from \$8,500 to \$14,500. The Chief increased the part-time account from \$14,352 up to \$21,632. He indicated that this increase will allow him to reduce the need for overtime, help in scheduling vacations for full-time employees, and having the ability to do more follow up on investigations. The hourly rate will be increased up to \$13.00 an hour, and the department presently has two part-time officers. Cruiser maintenance remained the same, and telephone increased by \$500. Selectman McGarr advised the Chief to look into DSL for internet service. It is available here now, and can help save some money. The Chief and the Board also discussed replacing the oldest cruiser, and the Chief pondered replacing it with a 4x4. The Board agreed that

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this was the way to go as they were going to be replacing the Ford Explorer next year anyway. The Chief agreed that he would cap the expenditure for a cruiser at \$30,000. The Board and the Chief also discussed the Animal Control Officer position, and Chief Warn indicated that Dave Moser was still willing and able to do the job. Chief Warn indicated that the biggest help was that Dave was willing to bring the dogs down the Humane Society, and this helped the department. The position will be kept under the line item for Advertising and Regional which includes the Humane Society's annual fee. The Chief will meet with the Board again on February 6th to finalize his budget, and in the meantime talk with the individual he had in mind for the vacant position.

Ann Marie had some other department budgets to go over with the Board. She had met with Bob Barach last week, and got some figures for the Zoning Board of Adjustment budget. Even though postage went up this year, the ZBA had only spent half of their budgeted amount so they lowered it by \$300. The same thing was done with public notices, and that line item was decreased from \$800 to \$550, and miscellaneous was lowered to \$100. The bottom line of the budget was down by \$600. The Board had no problems with this budget. Selectman Homer brought up a question he had about a meeting the ZBA had in December, and Ann Marie will contact Bob to see what he knows about the particular variance granted. Ann Marie had also sat down with Cemetery Sexton Woody Timson, and had worked with him on his budget. The rental of equipment will be increased by \$2.00 an hour to allow for the increase in fuel so the labor and equipment line was raised by \$3,000. Supplies was increased by \$10.00. Removal of trees was decreased from \$3,000 to \$2,000, and \$3,500 was put in to finish the fence work. The overall budget increased by \$1,500. Ann Marie also advised the Board that she had put a chart together comparing our present health and dental rates with rates supplied by the NHMA Health Trust which shows what would happen if we joined under the SAU 48 group rate. While the dental would go up slightly under this group, the health insurance goes down so we can save approximately \$2,600. The Board agreed that this would certainly be a help in trying to keep our costs down. Ann Marie also discussed the life and disability rates which had gone up as well. She indicated that as wages go up so does the life insurance, and found that if we cover our employees for a year's wages rather than twice their wage, we can save over \$1,100 a year without any real impact to our employees. The Board agreed to this change as well.

The Board then went over their weekly correspondence. Ann Marie advised the Board that she had put a copy of the latest Pemi River Local Advisory Committee meeting minutes in their boxes. The NH DOT sent us notification of our 2006 Highway Block Grant money which will be \$94,247.70 which is now approximately \$2,000 due to the change in formula that the State uses to distribute this money to the Towns. The Plymouth Fire Chief sent a letter inviting Town Officials to come to a meeting in Plymouth on March 23rd at 4 p.m. to

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discuss the ambulance billings and adjustments that may be needed to realize better revenue returns on it. Chief Thibeault was looking for Town Administrators and EMS Directors to attend. The Board Members would like to be reminded about this date again in March, but in the meantime Selectman Wheeler suggested that Fire Chief Tobine and Ann Marie plan on attending. Selectman Wheeler had some correspondence from Health and Human Services that he passed along to Selectman McGarr as Health Officer.

Ann Marie indicated that she had spoken with Terry Roper, and she and Mr. Hawes could meet with the Board to discuss the land purchase either tomorrow night at 7:30 p.m. or the following Tuesday. The Board agreed to do it tomorrow night. Ann Marie will contact Terry. The Board then reviewed the minutes of January 16th. Selectman McGarr made a motion to approve them with one change, and Selectman Homer seconded it, with all voting in the affirmative. Under other business, Selectman McGarr indicated that he would like to see the Town begin looking at a Capital Improvement Program.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Marie Foote
Administrative Assistant