

BUDGET COMMITTEE

November 15, 2022 in the Selectmen's Meeting Room

Chairman Harake called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Chairman Harake led the pledge of allegiance.

Introduction of Members (Roll Call)

Katherine Harake, Chairman

Steve Henderson

Brian Warburton

Mike Plouffe

Bob Ladd, Village District Representative

Rusty Bridle, Selectmen's Representative

Frank Deluca, School Board Representative

I. New Business

A. Fire Budget Review with Fire Chief McMahon and Deputy Chief Paine

Chief McMahon and Deputy Chief Paine gave an overview of the proposed budget

Administration:

- Ms. Harake asked for clarification regarding the gas and diesel budget.
 - Chief McMahon noted that the default budget for this item is \$17,400. He also noted that the EMS revenue fund is not reflected here.
- Mr. Warburton asked about the status of potential grant money to offset the cost of the four new firefighters.
 - Chief McMahon confirmed that the grant money is not likely to come through.
- Ms. Harake asked if the increase to the administrative budget is only due to increases in gas and diesel prices.
 - Chief McMahon confirmed that to be true.

Suppression: No comments or questions. No changes.

Fire Prevention: No comments or questions. No changes.

Communications: No comments or questions. No changes.

Repair Services: No comments or questions. No changes.

Stations and Buildings: No comments or questions. No changes.

Sick and Vacation Requests:

- Ms. Harake asked how it would have impacted the budget if four more firefighters had been hired earlier in the year.
 - Chief McMahon said it would not have impacted the budget because that was approved via warrant article.
- Mr. Warburton asked for a justification for the proposed increase in this section of the budget.
 - Mr. Bridle noted that over the past 3-4 years money has been consistently

added to this section due to the importance of manpower for the ambulances.

- Mr. Ladd asked for more details about what the new ambulances are capable of.
 - Chief McMahan explained the different ways that the new technology benefits the patients. When Mr. Ladd described it as an “emergency room on wheels,” Chief McMahan agreed.
- Ms. Harake stated that she would like to understand more about how the proposed 10% increase impacts the town of Hampton. She noted that 10% is a lot in two years no matter how badly it’s needed.
 - Chief McMahan explained that in previous years the Chief would often be “home alone at the station” while an engine was still there. He estimated that an occurrence like that took place 30-40 times last year. Noted that the goal would be to have that happen zero times.
 - Chief McMahan will come up with targets to present to the committee.
- Mr. Henderson noted that he is happy with the budget that has been presented.

B. Emergency Management presented by Chief McMahan

- No comments or questions. No changes.

C. Police Budget with Chief Hobbs and Deputy Chief Reno

Announcement: Chief Hobbs announced his retirement at the end of this year. He thanked the public for their support. He thanked past and present members of the Hampton Police Department.

Budget Overview:

- Ms. Harake asked about staffing shortages in the State Police.
 - Chief Hobbs noted that the State Police is down about 30% of their agency and it is unlikely that those numbers will change before the summer season.
 - Deputy Chief Reno noted that assistance from the State Police has been cut by about half. He notes that further speculation on the potential help from the State Police would be inappropriate.
 - Mr. Sullivan (Town Manager) noted that if the State Police were fully staffed, they would send 10-12 officers at most. They have always been a tremendous help and a great partner, but it’s a separate issue from the staffing issues we are facing in-house.
- Mr. Warburton stated he does not feel that the Hampton Taxpayers should foot the bill for all public safety at the beach.
 - Mr. Henderson noted that historically there have been solutions that have involved the State Police taking on more of the burden of public safety.
- Mr. Bridle notes that the Police Chief and Deputy Chief are presenting a prudent budget that shows us what they need. He notes that he feels it is important that they have the resources to staff the beach.
- Mr. Ladd noted that the state does bring a lot to the beach and has spent money on many projects. He gave a brief history on when and why Hampton gave the land to the state. The deal included the town providing police.

Administration: No comments or questions. No Changes.

Crime Control and Investigations: No comments or questions. No Changes.

Traffic Control and Patrol: No comments or questions. No Changes.

Training: No comments or questions. No Changes.

Support Services:

- Regarding Outside Agencies, Ms. Harake asked for an idea of what would happen if the town does not pass the proposed budget and we do not see staffing improvements.
 - Chief Hobbs stated that the cost of outside agencies will go up.
- Ms. Harake asked Mr. Sullivan how it would impact other parts of the budget if the proposed budget does not pass, and money is shifted to pay for the outside agencies needed.
 - Mr. Sullivan stated that public safety is paramount. There are certain things that have to be done by law. There are many options on where the money could be taken from depending on what is needed. He stated that no matter what, the town will offer the best services they can with whatever budget is given.
- Mr. Ladd asked Chief Hobbs if he has seen or heard of anything being done around the country to successfully address staffing issues.
 - Chief Hobbs stated that they have tried some different things that other parts of the country have done.
- Mr. Warburton suggested making an adjustment to the way part-time retired cops operate. He noted requiring one full shift per week.
- Mr. Ladd asked about the rate for outside agencies.
 - Chief Hobbs stated that they have talked about setting a rate and throwing that out to outside agencies.
- Mr. Henderson noted that it doesn't seem like the patrol people have all of the equipment they need to do their job (riot gear). He asked if there is a plan to obtain that equipment.
 - Chief Hobbs agreed. He noted that they do have some equipment. He stated that there have been some preliminary discussions about starting a more localized unit to supplement the State Police.

D. Animal Control with Chief Hobbs and Deputy Chief Reno

- **No comments or questions. No changes.**

E. Parking Administration with Chief Hobbs and Deputy Reno

- **Seasonal Wages: Mr. Warburton asked for clarification.**
 - a) Kristi Pulliam (Town Finance Director) noted that money was budgeted so that they can hire more enforcement officers in the future.
- **Mr. Warburton asked if there had been any downtime in the meters.**
 - a) Mr. Sullivan stated that although there were some issues at first, they have it figured out and it has been going great.

II. Other Business

III. Adjournment

Mr. Warburton MOTIONED to adjourn the meeting at 7:38 PM. SECONDED by Mr. Bridle.
Vote: Unanimous.