

**Town of Franconia
Board of Selectmen's Regular Meeting
Monday, December 4th, 2023
at Franconia Town Hall**

Board Members Present: Jill Brewer, Eric Meth, Dan Walker

Others Present: Jenny Monahan, Jan Cole, Karen Foss, Steve Schwartz, Ginny Mike, Dawn Steele

The meeting was called to order at 6:03pm.

Appointments/Work Sessions:

Departmental Budget Reviews - Police, Fire, Street Lights, Building Inspection, Patriotic Purposes, Property/Liability Insurance

Police Department: Chief Cashin reviewed each line of the Police Department budget with the board. There are some lines in his budget, such as ammunition and dues/training that appear overspent due to expenses booked to these lines that are part of the reimbursement grants the department were awarded through the state. He said these lines were not actually overspent and will be rectified with the state reimbursements when those payments are fully settled and accounted for.

Prosecution is increasing by \$2,000 this year but he feels this is still economical for the town compared to the other options.

The fuel line was decreased by \$2,000 after being increased last year due to unpredictable market prices.

The wages line was under spent in 2023 due to the department not being fully staffed. Chief Cashin is proposing a total wage increase of 23% over 2023's budget to compensate existing personnel and provide an attractive offer to a fourth full-time officer. After the wages budget discussion with the board, there followed an informal discussion about deficiencies in the town's health insurance offering making it more difficult to secure full-time hires for the department. Chief Cashin also suggested earmarking some ARPA funds for sign-on bonuses for 2024.

Public Comment

Dawn Steele commented that the town should research other insurance plans for the town and is supportive of the Police Department. Mary Grote commented that she is supportive of the Police Department. Steve Schwartz asked what types of calls are not getting responded to quickly by the police.

Fire Department: Chief Gaudette said the Fire Department budget is mainly unchanged, he has only requested an increase in the fire prevention line from \$400 to \$700. The first payment for the new truck that is expected to be received spring of 2024 has to be added to this budget still, which will be about \$55,000.

Street Lights: No changes to this budget, proposed at \$10,000.

Building Inspection: This budget was overspent due to a backlog of work from 2022. It is being

proposed at \$26,000 for 2024.

Patriotic Purposes: After being increased for the town's 250th celebration in 2023, this budget is back to being proposed at

Property/Liability Insurance: This budget is increasing from \$56,673 to \$68,472 due to increases from Primex resulting from the recent pandemic, inflation, catastrophic weather events and payroll increases from the town.

Public Comment

Dawn Steele commented about how budgeting is done in the private sector. Jan Cole commented on the MS-1 increase from 2022 to 2023 being low.

To Sign/Approve

The minutes of November 27th, 2023 were approved as amended.

The December 1st through December 7th transaction list was reviewed and signed by the selectmen.

The 2024 HealthTrust Renewal Transmittal was signed by Chairman Brewer on behalf of the board.

A supplemental tax warrant was signed for 14 Woodchuck Trail.

A letter to Littleton Select Board asking that the board denounce homophobic and hateful views expressed by Selectperson Gendreau was read by Chairman Brewer and signed by the board.

Committee Reports

Broadband Committee: Selectman Meth said there is a meeting Dec. 21st at 4:30PM via Zoom and he hopes to get information to update the board on how the broadband project is going.

Chamber of Commerce: Selectman Walker said Kevin Johnson is including information about broadband sign-up in chamber of commerce emails.

Conservation Commission: Meets tomorrow at 4PM at town hall.

Energy Commission: Selectman Meth said there are public hearings on Dec. 7th and Dec. 14th at the Profile High School library to discuss the town joining the Community Power Coalition.

Planning Board: Next meeting is Dec. 12th at 7PM at town hall.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:31PM.

Respectfully,

Jenny Monahan
Executive Assistant