



Finance Committee
Regular Meeting
01/31/23

I. **Call to Order**

1. **Roll Call**

II. **Board of Selectmen**

Chris Manni, Board of Selectmen

Salary increase contractual for Executive Assistant new five year contract. The increases, all across town, are really focused on retention. This specific increase is not an increase in hours, over the years the scope of work has increased including adding the on-boarding of all new employees. The only expense increase is for the Town Audit which is contractual.

III. **Council on Aging**

Brienne Walsh, Director

Salary increases do not include any increase in hours, but next fiscal year there will be a request for an increase in hours for the Outreach position to increase to full time from the 18 hours it is now. Regionally there is a staffing issue with organizations such as elder services and they are relying heavily on the individual communities for help. The Town already is at 1/3 of the population over 60 years old. Most of the line items that are under spent is due to there not being staff, as of this week there is a full staff for the first time since March 2022. No increase in expenses just transfers from other line items. To provide the level of service for the residents it would be difficult to do a regional the Council on Aging. A new van was purchased through a grant.

Town Nurse increase of 7% for the hourly rate. A new nurse was just hired. The 14.5 hours cover both the Council on Aging and the Board of Health, with the COA taking the bulk of the hours and Brienne overseeing the position.

IV. **Library**

Kelly Unsworth, Director

Salary and wages increase request per the salary compensation study. There are two positions in year two of an increase, one in the first year, and one was given half of the increase from reallocating other budgeted positions. The increases this year will bring everyone into the mid range of the study. The library is currently fully staffed. Collection materials is any materials purchased for the library that people can borrow- physical materials, books, dvds, e-books, items that can be download, and museum passes. Most of the big budget items are due in the spring which is why the current budget looks under spent. 19% of the total budget needs to be spent on collection materials to qualify for the state grants. Each year collection materials has to increase, the other increase is the network membership which is part of the consortium which is billed to the library based on a formula. Due to the overall decrease in expenses the library is operating on a budget \$3,000 less than five years ago. The State Grant funds come in at \$42,203 and are all allocated to building expenses, collections, a new web site and media set up for the meeting room. Business travel doesn't always get used but majority used for training, events or meetings.

V. **Fire, Emergency Management**

Larry Fisher, Chief

Each year the Department's budget needs are prioritized after meeting with the full staff. The mutual aid calls have increased, private ambulance companies are short staffed and are collapsing. The budget request as submitted will be adjusted to reflect a \$30k decrease in request on the expense side. Salary increase requested is for four additional new full time staff members that will be able to do both Fire and EMS. Fire wages speak to full time staff. EMT wages are per diem. Additional requested staff is for four overnights of two people, to keep the station fully staffed. The increase also includes an hourly rate increase. The ambulance revenue per year is approximately \$400,000. The severity of the calls are increasing substantially and the Town is aging dramatically. About four years ago we switched billing companies which helped evaluate what we were charging for calls and bring us up to the same as

surrounding towns. The decrease in the admin position is a decrease in hours while keeping the cost of living increase. Current spending is down as we are trying to save money for later in the fiscal year. Calls take approximately 2 hours per call, the most in the last year has been 16 calls a day and we rarely rely on mutual aid. The trend was 994 calls last year to 1,503 calls in the calendar year, on pace for 1,600 calls. Without the appropriate amount of staff we are unable to begin help at the scene. The amount of mutual aid has increased as surrounding communities are also experiencing staffing shortages. If there is a transport we are able to charge for it, but if there is a call with no transport we can not- as you will see reflected in the ambulance fuel line as it is significantly overspent already. The fire salaries line is the per diem for coverage, historically haven't spent that line. On the vehicle side we will shortly have a new engine which was tied into the ladder truck purchase, which will see both vehicles delivered this calendar year. Will be applying for a grant for a new forestry truck. The chief's truck is also at the end of its life. One of the engines has been out of service for a few months due to a parts shortage.