

## Chichester Board of Selectmen

### Minutes of Meeting

Tuesday December 19, 2023

**Members Present:** Edward Millette, Richard Bouchard, and Jodi Pinard Town Administrator, Kristy Jobin Administrative Assistant

**Advisory Budget Committee Members Present:** Frand Swirko, Don Peterman, Corie St. Germain, Tara Blaney, and Marlene Hammond.

**Others Present:** Sanford Way, Donna Chagnon, Michelle Parent, Todd Hammond, Chief Quimby, Craig Sykes, Ewen MacKinnon, Paul Sandborn and other members of the public.

**Call to Order:** Mr. Millette called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm

#### **Budget Presentations-**

##### **Highway-**

Mr. Sykes presented for the Highway budget. He stated there was a 3% raise for personnel and he added a line for a new full-time position. He would also like to keep a seasonal part timer for 24 hours per week.

He stated that he would like to keep Advanced for a contractor for snow plowing when needed.

Mr. Sykes stated that the workload has increased, and employees need time off for doctors' appointments etc. and for safety reasons no less than two people should be going out to watch each other's back. Rt. 28 & 4 are main roads and there are a lot of corners and blind spots, and he does not want the crew out there alone.

He stated that contracted service was not reduced due to intent to keep Advanced, but it also encompasses a lot of different things besides plowing, such as hazmat for waste oil, grading, tree services, guard rails, vacuum tuck to clean basins and culverts. *Truck*

He stated that the difference between 3 to 4 people allows to put 2, 2-man crews to go out and work. As of now its odd man out because he has to go meet with contractors, make phone calls, complete administrative tasks, and work orders.

Mr. Sykes stated that he started a new program to update records on catch basins and pipes per the Board of Selectmen request. He found a lot of items to repair and have them on a list for next year to complete. He has also been marking the road with grade stakes.

Mr. Sykes stated that weather conditions have continued to get worse, getting 3-4 types of precipitation during each storm. He stated that the roads are thawed out now and are getting muddy.

He stated that the Town has continued to grow and the demand for services is getting larger and larger. They are doing the best they can with what they have and doing preventative maintenance.

He stated that there are more expectations from citizens, and the current crew is having a difficult time plowing and would do better to have more crew for the routes. He also stated that they cannot use the big trucks to plow dirt roads, so they have to use advanced and the one Town truck.

Mr. Sykes stated that with a new employee, they could complete more projects and stay ahead instead of just answering emergencies. He hopes to provide better service and having an additional person will speed up the process of answering those calls. Chichester is growing, with many new houses. He is asking for a full-time job for those reasons as well as keeping the part-timer for at least half a year. That extra person is going to help a lot with vacations, sick leave, doctor's appointments etc.

He would like to have a part timer year-round but understands the budget. He would like to have him at least six months. He ideally would like 3 full time employees and one part timer year-round.

Mr. Millette asked if the part timer would stay the first half next year.

Mr. Sykes stated they would work with his schedule to keep year-round.

Mr. Peterman asked if the budgeted amount of overtime would really be needed.

Mr. Sykes stated that it would depend on how much snow they got over the winter.

Mr. Swirko asked Mr. Sykes if he had to compromise, would he choose a part-time job or overtime?

Mr. Sykes stated that he needs manpower, and they have to have the overtime due to the storms.

Mr. Millette asked if the asking for overtime is the same for 2023?

Mrs. Pinard stated that if they hire another full-timer, he should be able to cut overtime due to shorter routes.

Mr. Sykes stated that was not necessarily true. He stated that in his experience, it depends on the type of storm.

Mr. Swirko stated that typically when you ask for more staff you cut overtime.

Mr. Millete stated that he has been underspent on overtime, so it could be cut it but if we do get a very bad winter, we will need it.

Mrs. Pinard stated that for a full-timer it would be \$40,583.00 for a full benefit package, on top of the salary line. She stated that this has not yet been added to the budget.

Mr. Bouchard asked if the grading is hired out who buys material?

Mr. Sykes stated that the Town pays for materials.

Mrs. St. Germain asked if hiring another full timer would that lessen contracting services for plowing?

Mr. Sykes stated that he is trying to bring the level of service up.

The paving is up and asphalt.

Road Reconstruction for next year is for Ring and Kaime Road and Deer Meadow if there is enough left in the budget. Overlay on Fredwood is also needed.

Mr. Sykes reported that salt costs have gone down almost \$5.00 a ton but sand has gone up. Asphalt is going up \$4.00 a ton for a steep increase. Aggregates are going up \$7.00 a ton. Increases shown are from these and he tried to hold the line the best he could.

Crack sealing was not completed last year.

Mr. Millette stated that 3 culverts failed and needed to be fixed which took away time and manpower and cost \$60,000.

Mr. Swirko asked if tree removal did not get done due to trouble finding contractors?

Mr. Sykes stated that funds were added in for the Cemetery trees into his budget but the two trees that need to be removed on Main St. need a crane and he was unable to find someone to do that work.

Mr. Millette suggested discussing the tree line at the next meeting on Jan 9, 2024.

The total highway budget is up almost 13 percent.

Highway does not have any warrant article submissions, but Mr. Sykes wants to put \$30,000 to create a new line for Culverts. (Drainage Improvements)

#### **Fire-**

Chief Quimby presented for the Fire Department. In 2022 the ambulance and the Fire Department became one department for budget purposes. Payroll was combined but split into 3 categories. Per diem, nighttime and call/admin pay. Per diem staff is to provide a service to Chichester residents for calls. They are paid an hourly wage with a 3% wage increase and added an extra \$7,000 to retain membership. Chief Quimby stated that this summer the Department tried to do some nighttime per diem shifts which worked well. They would like to continue with 3 nighttime per diem shifts per week. There is a total of \$12,000 increase for this.

Chief Quimby discussed the Cap area mutual aid annual payment which allows response of central nh hazmat team and provides mutual aid with other towns. Additional funds were added for the hazmat team which is beneficial due to RT. 4 and 28 running through town. If there was an incident with transported materials the Fire Department could call them.

The goal in 2024 is to go to new software for the ambulance reporting to replace current company and switch to the State program.

Chief Quimby reported that the Town obtained a new dry hydrant on Horse Corner Road. He would like to explore more access to natural bodies of water to add more dry hydrants.

Mr. Peterman asked if the Police Department grant writer could assist in grant requests for the Fire Department.

Chief Quimby stated that they have been successful with two grants but are open to help. He stated that the Police Department does their grants in house. The Fire Department has received one every year for forestry the past 4 years.

#### **CIP Requests-**

\$13,000 Turn Out Gear Replacement

\$15,000 SCBA Replacement Fund

\$80,000 Fire Apparatus Equipment Reserve Fund

Chief Quimby stated that the Department is exploring demo units for the forestry truck at lower costs. His request is \$190,000 for this item.

Chief Quimby is unsure if that needs to be on warrant or not. The grant was denied, and they would like to purchase out of the Capital Reserve Funds.

Mr. Bouchard asked about the Stryker warrant article.

Chief Quimby stated that last year there was a maintenance agreement for the power cots. This maintenance agreement covers the stair chairs and stretchers.

Mrs. Pinard will update the spreadsheet and get it out to the Boards. The school budget committee meets on Wednesdays. She suggested that the Boards schedule meetings for every Tuesday in January. The Board agreed. They will meet at the Fire Department for workshops.

The Boards will not meet on January 23, 2024, due to Election Day.

A public hearing will be held on February 6, 2024.

**Adjournment:** Being no further discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Millette and seconded by Mr. Bouchard to adjourn the meeting at 7:11 pm. Roll call vote. Millette, aye. Bouchard, aye. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Jobin, Administrative Assistant

  
Richard Bouchard

  
Edward Millette

Stephen MacCleery