



**TOWN OF NORTHWOOD
BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Town of Northwood 818 First NH Turnpike Northwood, NH 03261
(603) 942-5586**

**Board of Selectmen Work Session Minutes
October 31, 2023**

ROLL CALL: Chairman Hal Kreider, Vice-Chairman Tim Colby, Select Board Member Beth Boudreau, and Select Board Member Pam Sanderson. Select Board Member Jim Guzofski was excused for a bereavement.

STAFF PRESENT: Town Administrator Neil Irvine, Finance Director Cheryl Eastman

6:00 P.M. Chairman Kreider opened the Northwood Board of Selectmen work session with a roll call and led the pledge of allegiance.

Police: Chief Drolet said there is nothing in the proposed budget that is not a need. All wage lines include a one-step increase based on performance evaluations. He feels we are competitive right now with other small towns. In the past couple years, the Police Commission has used funds from vacant positions to fund wage adjustments to stay competitive. Chief Drolet's plan is to purchase one new cruiser each year. Last year he utilized the Special Detail fund to purchase the cruiser. When there is not enough in the account to do that, it comes out of the operating budget. Keeping the vehicle purchase in the operating budget allows it to be included in the default budget should the Operating Budget fail. B. Boudreau said voters wanted it in the budget because we buy one every year. The only other increase is under the Contracted Services line. They changed to Microsoft 365 with a new website and IT contract included for \$1,050 per month.

Emergency Management: The cell phone was removed from the budget because Chief Drolet already has a personal cell phone and a town issued phone.

Animal Control: The cell phone expenses were removed from the budget due to not being able to fill the vacant position.

Fire: Chief Tetreault spoke about his budget. The electricity line was decreased due to the new fixtures that were installed are much more energy efficient. Paramedic Intercepts has been increased to cover those costs. We have paramedics scheduled every weekend, but it is the luck of the draw when they will be needed. Full-time employees have been encouraged to pursue becoming Paramedics and one is interested but it will take a while for all the training. A part-time employee will be certified as a paramedic within the year. The problem with paying for paramedic intercepts is that the expenses come out of the

43 operating budget, but any revenue we might receive for supplying a paramedic to a neighboring
44 community goes into the General Fund. Chief Tetreault increased the line for contracted services due to
45 increases in software. There was discussion around building maintenance and repairs. Last year funds
46 were moved from the Fire budget into the General Government Buildings account, but Chief Tetreault has
47 been expending everything out of his Fire budget this year. TA Irvine said there should be an
48 understanding with the fire department for maintenance, just like the Board did with the library MOU.
49 The department is responsible for minor general maintenance costs, but anything major would come from
50 the Building Maintenance ETF. The Uniforms line was cut back last year in hopes of using ARPA funds
51 instead, but that never happened. Vehicle Maintenance is down due to newer equipment. Hydrant repair
52 and installation has been budgeted \$1,000 every year, but that is not enough to actually do anything. TA
53 Irvine will be asking to set up an expendable trust fund for that purpose. Money in an ETF won't lapse
54 and there will be enough to be useful if they are needed. Chief Tetreault asked to reduce the training
55 line to \$5,000 because of the funds included in the EMS lines. There was discussion about the wage
56 increases granted every year by the Police Commission and Library personnel, but all other town
57 employees sometimes don't get increases at all. This is not good for the morale of all the other
58 departments. The Board discussed asking the Police Commission and Library Trustees if they will be
59 granting increases and trying to coordinate the rate to be fair to all employees.
60 Warrant articles requested by Chief Tetreault are \$35,000 to re-roof the Narrows station and replace
61 Engine 3, a used fire truck is approximately \$400,000 today. There is currently about a two-year wait for
62 new engines. The Lucas CPR device should also be replaced because it is out of warranty and support.
63 This would be about \$35,000.

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65 **Highway:** PW Foreman Chris Brown asked to have \$11,500 included in the On-Call wage line. The
66 overtime line is just to cover Chris and Jeff. There was discussion about equipment rental and Chris's
67 request to purchase a new mini excavator in 2024. The Board recognized that the current year budget
68 for winter maintenance was already over-expended and increased the line for Snow – Contracted Services
69 to \$75,000. The line for sand was increased to \$50,000. TA Irvine suggested a warrant article to set up
70 an ETF to have funds set aside for a severe year of snow removal based on a multiyear average. He
71 recommends funding it with \$20,000 to start.

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73 **Transfer Station:** The hours and/or days of the week operating schedule may need to be changed, due
74 to staffing reasons. It is very hard to hire people for weekend work. In order to hire the most recent
75 employee, we had to increase the rate. Recycling options for cardboard and plastics with baling were
76 discussed.

77 **Warrant Articles:** PW Foreman Brown asked for a paving article for the usual \$350,000. This will include
78 two small roads with reclaiming and a large amount of overlay. This is all within the road surface
79 management plan. H. Kreider asked to get bids out as soon as the vote passes in March to expedite the
80 process. C. Brown also wants to ask to replace the 550 with a medium-size truck. It is a 2016 model and
81 doesn't really work well for plowing. There was discussion of truck replacement, funding sources, and
82 options.

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84 **Meeting adjourned at 8:45.**

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86 Minutes respectfully submitted by
87 Cheryl Eastman
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