

## TOWN OF HOLLISTON

### SELECT BOARD

February 25, 2021  
7:00PM

Town Hall  
703 Washington Street

**Present:** John Cronin, Chair; Tina Hein, Vice Chair; Ben Sparrell, Clerk.

**Also Present:** Travis Ahern, Town Administrator; Michael Cassidy, Fire Chief.

At 7:00pm J. Cronin called the meeting to order.

#### **FY22 BUDGET & REVENUE REVIEW:**

**FIRE DEPARTMENT FY22 BUDGET:** Chief Cassidy presented the proposed FY22 Fire Department Budget. The proposed budget a level service, zero dollar increase. Several items changes as follows, to increase the dispatcher overtime. Increase weekend duty pay as well as an hourly increase for regular (weekday) pay. There is also an increase in longevity. A decrease in service lines as there has been no participation by fire fighters to attend conferences or any other type of meeting held offsite. The solar array at the Fire Station has been in service for one year, resulting in the station now being self sufficient.

The Chief stated that the instillation of the Antenna which falls under the Public Safety Infrastructure Improvements is now operating and has improved communications dramatically. When asked about the possible impact of the proposed project at 555 Hopping Brook on the Fire Department the Chief responded that at this point there would be no impact in FY22 based on the timeline provided by the Planning Board.

The Chief highlighted various equipment related improvements. The purchase of the Gear Drying Equipment voted at Town Meeting in 2018 has proved very effective and the department is awaiting the arrival of additional equipment which has been ordered. There is also traffic preemption equipment which was installed at Cole Court in January 2021. Public Safety Infrastructure was completed as of today.

The Chief does not anticipate requesting any funding for equipment until the Fall Town Meeting.

**AMBULANCE FY22 BUDGET:** Chief Cassidy presented the FY22 Ambulance Budget. The proposed budget is also a level service. The proposed budget looks to reduce regular salaries. There is an increase in the dispatcher line to reflect additional coverage. Also an increase is EMT salary in an effort to recruit and retain on-call EMT's. No change in purchased services from FY21-FY22.

The Chief stated that there is flexibility within the line items if a need for an unexpected purchase was to arise and beyond that a request could be made through a reserve fund

transfer. J. Cronin voiced his concern around the risk of Level Funding budgets of departments which sole purpose is to insure public safety. T. Ahern stated that when looking to the Capital Plans (5 year) would be sufficient to the anticipated needs. T. Hein noted that the Chiefs focus seemed to be on the responsiveness and skill of the department employees, which he is addressing within the proposed budget. The Chief did state that recruitment would be easier if the budget allowed for a competitive hourly rate rather than a stipend form of compensation. He added that the on-call model is still viable to the community.

Christian Pierce a resident joined the meeting via Zoom. He is a Fire Fighter/Paramedic in a neighboring town. He stated that in his opinion Hollistons' pay rate is far below what it should be and that the response times are an issue. Captain Pierce went on to state that he feels Holliston would benefit from a full time Fire Department or if it is to remain an on-call department that salaries must be increased. The Chief invited Captain Pierce to meet with him and further discuss the matter.

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT FY22 BUDGET:** The proposed budget includes compensation for the role of the Emergency Management Director.

The Professional Services has been added to cover the local match required for a BRIC federal grant.

B. Sparrell stated that he would like to have more discussion on long term budget planning and not always look to level funding. T. Hein noted that she would like to see the possible impact of the proposed project in Hopping Brook Industrial Park be factored into the Fire and Ambulance budgets if possible. J. Cronin stated that he would like to insure that the budgets are being properly funded for the services they provide for the community.

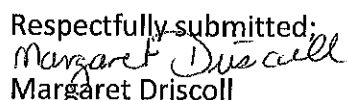
The Board agreed to vote on the proposed FY22 Emergency Management Budget however asked that the Chief and T. Ahern review the Fire and Ambulance Budgets and return to the Board next week with any revisions.

B. Sparrell made a motion to approve the proposed FY22 Emergency Management Budget in the amount of \$22,589. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0.

#### **TOWN ADMINISTRATOR COMMENTS:**

Monday March 1, 2021 will be the last scheduled budget review meeting. The Finance Committee will continue to review the proposed budgets. T. Ahern will present a list of all eligible items under the CARES Act. He will also present updates on the status of Town Articles approved over the past 2 fiscal years. The Facilities Manager will also have an update regarding projects, proposed, completed and upcoming.

At 8:32pm B. Sparrell made a motion to adjourn. T. Hein second. Vote 3-0

Respectfully submitted:  
  
Margaret Driscoll

Approved 3-15-21