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**Town of Hooksett  
Town Council Budget Review Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, September 16, 2020**

The Hooksett Town Council met on Wednesday, September 16, 2020 at 6:00 in the Hooksett Municipal Building.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Sullivan called the meeting of 16 Sep 2020 to order at 6:05 pm.

**PROOF OF POSTING**

Administrative Services Coordinator Donna Fitzpatrick provided proof of posting.

**ROLL CALL**

**In Attendance:** Councilor James Sullivan, Councilor John Durand, Councilor Roland Lapierre, Councilor David Boutin, Councilor Clifford Jones, Councilor Timothy Tsantoulis, and Councilor Alex Walczyk

Councilor Robert Duhaime arrived at 6:23 pm.

Councilor Clark Karolian attended remotely.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Sullivan called for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**OTHER**

**Supervisors of the Checklist – computers**

A. Garron: At the September 9, 2020 Town Council meeting, Moderator Cindy Robertson asked for the Council’s help in purchasing three new laptops for the Supervisors of the Checklist. A motion made by Councilor Duhaime and seconded by Councilor Walczyk directing me to provide the three necessary laptops for the Supervisors of the Checklist was tabled.

***Chair Sullivan motioned to remove this item from the table. D. Boutin seconded the motion.***

***Roll Call Vote #2***

***R. Duhaime Not present***

***J Durand Aye***

***C. Jones Aye***

***R. Lapierre Aye***

***A. Walczyk Aye***

***D. Boutin Aye***

***C. Karolian Aye***

***T. Tsantoulis Aye***

***J. Sullivan Aye***

***Voted unanimously in favor (8-0).***

46 Javier Olivarez, Supervisor of the Checklist: At the September 8th election, I had an internet connection  
47 problem.  
48

49 Michael Horne: When I was a Checklist Supervisor, I had a 2009 computer. I was using the one I had  
50 as a Cemetery Trustee to do my work as a Checklist Supervisor.  
51

52 J. Olivarez: We pick up items three times a week from the Town Clerk's office and work from home  
53 about ten hours a week.  
54

55 Chair Sullivan: We need to get something for you for the November election. Mr. Garron will work with  
56 you on that.  
57

58 A. Garron: We purchased two computers in January that are working well.  
59

60 A. Walczyk: If the Supervisors of the Checklist can't do their job with the tools provided from the Town,  
61 it is frustrating. I know that adjustments have already been made, but I am not confident they have  
62 been resolved.  
63

64 A. Garron: Of the three computers, one has problem. It is under warranty and can be repaired at no  
65 cost.  
66

67 A. Walczyk: We need to get them what they need. There is an election this year.  
68

69 R. Duhaime: We need to make sure they are not disappointed with the results. I understand there is a  
70 Wi Fi problem  
71

72 M. Horne: Havier's computer has an external Wi Fi that was not working properly.  
73

74 D. Boutin: I echo what Councilor Walczyk said. There will be thousands of voters in November. We  
75 shouldn't do this half way.  
76

77 ***D. Boutin motioned authorize the purchase of three laptops for the Supervisors of the Checklist.***  
78 ***R. Duhaime seconded the motion.***  
79

80 D. Boutin: We've heard clearly that there is a problem. These computers can't fail.  
81

82 R. Lapierre: My understanding is that two of the computers are working fine.  
83

84 J. Olivarez: Barb Brennon has issues; her computer was heating up.  
85

86 C. Karolian: I understand that there were problems in January. Were there problems at the March  
87 election as well?  
88

89 Chair Sullivan: There were issues in January, and replacements were purchased.  
90

91 C. Karolian: Was this problem presented in the past?  
92

93 A. Garron: If one of the computers we purchased in January is acting up, it is under warranty.  
94 Replacing the computers is a cost item we did not plan for.

95  
96 **J. Durand motioned to amend the previous motion to call for the purchase of one computer**  
97 **instead of three. C. Jones seconded the motion.**

98  
99 C. Karolian: Do you have a dollar amount?

100  
101 A. Garron: We had to find the money for the computers purchased in January because we were at mid-  
102 year and these computers were not in the budget. A new laptop would cost about \$1,000.

103  
104 N. Germain: We could get a refurbished computer for about \$400; a new one would cost about \$1,000,  
105 as Mr. Garron said. We have employees using computers which are several years old.

106  
107 D. Boutin: Your argument is suspect, claiming that if you are not buying new computers for employees,  
108 you shouldn't buy them for the Supervisors of the Checklist. That is foolish. I say we should defeat the  
109 amendment and approve the original motion.

110  
111 Chair Sullivan called for a roll call vote on the amendment.

112  
113 **Roll Call Vote #3**  
114 **D. Boutin Nay**  
115 **C. Jones Aye**  
116 **A. Walczyk Nay**  
117 **J. Durand Aye**  
118 **R. Duhaime Nay**  
119 **T. Tsantoulis Nay**  
120 **R. Lapierre Aye**  
121 **C. Karolian Aye**  
122 **J. Sullivan Aye**  
123 **Voted in favor (5-4).**

124  
125 Chair Sullivan called for a roll call vote on the motion as amended.

126  
127 **Roll Call Vote #4**  
128 **A. Walczyk Aye**  
129 **R. Lapierre Aye**  
130 **C. Jones Aye**  
131 **R. Duhaime Aye**  
132 **J. Durand Aye**  
133 **C. Karolian Aye**  
134 **T. Tsantoulis Aye**  
135 **D. Boutin Aye**  
136 **J. Sullivan Aye**  
137 **Voted unanimously in favor (9-0).**

138  
139

140 **BUDGETS**

141

142 ○ **Library (Tab 16)**

143

144 Matt Broderick, Library Trustees Vice Chair: I am here with Mary Farwell, Chair of the Library Trustees,  
145 and in the audience are Trustees Linda Kleinschmidt and Barbara Davis. Tammy Hooker is a Trustee  
146 and was not able to be here tonight. Heather Rainier, Library Director, is here as well. For the second  
147 year in a row, we are proud to have no increase in our proposed budget, in spite of the fact that it was a  
148 difficult year. In fact, our proposed budget is over \$2,100 less than last year. We have focused on what  
149 is necessary, and we expect to return to normalcy in the 2021 budget year.

150

151 Chair Sullivan: That is fantastic.

152

153 A. Walczyk: You are showing a reduction in custodial hours. Can you explain that?

154

155 H. Rainier: That is purely a result of tweaking.

156

157 A. Walczyk: That is very precise. I am impressed. Looking at Building Maintenance, I have encouraged  
158 the Board to plan on handling this as much as possible - which they are already doing – but it is worth  
159 mentioning again. I am curious about which online resources you are reducing. I personally have used  
160 all of them.

161

162 H. Rainier: We tried out Creative Bug from Joanne Fabric, and the response was not strong. It offers  
163 short crafting videos and for a return on investment (ROI), it doesn't qualify.

164

165 A. Garron: The Library budget is presented to the Council but not to me separately, so I have a few  
166 questions. The first is about Maintenance. You budgeted \$11,500 this year and your actual is \$42,890.  
167 Was this underfunded? Also, you have budgeted only \$13,500 for 2021. Will this be adequate?

168

169 M. Farwell: That is chronically underfunded. In response to the pandemic, we installed touchless  
170 faucets and new water bubblers. Because no one was going in and out, we took advantage of that and  
171 did porch repairs, LED lighting replacements, and other items on the list.

172

173 A. Garron: I expect much of this will be covered by GOEFRR funds.

174

175 M. Farwell: We are hoping so. We have nothing critical planned for 2021 in terms of maintenance and  
176 repairs.

177

178 M. Broderick: We have a relationship with the Town whereby major work is done by the Town, the big-  
179 ticket items. Our budget is for small repairs and routine maintenance. This year was an anomaly; it  
180 gave us an opportunity to do some delayed maintenance.

181

182 Chair Sullivan: Major projects completed would include the elevator and the pillars.

183

184 A. Garron: Regarding your remote access database, your current year budget is \$6,500 and actual  
185 expenses are \$13,082. Will your budgeted amount of \$6,785 be adequate?

186

187 H. Rainier: We saved a lot of money by doing a three-year contract for our A-Z Resources. This was a  
188 one-time opportunity of which we took advantage.

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237

C. Karolian: I strongly suggest we deal with the hiring freeze and the July property tax payments in arrears.

M. Broderick: We just want to let you know that the Library is open. People are coming in and taking out books, as well as accessing electronic resources. Our children’s librarian has a number of great programs, and our tech superstar is working with our citizens.

M. Farwell: The Hooksettites are using Zoom.

***D. Boutin motioned to accept the Library budget in the amount of \$883,527.00. T. Tsantoulis seconded the motion.***

T. Tsantoulis: This is the only budget we have seen or will see without an increase. Some are double-digit increases.

***Roll Call Vote #5***

***T. Tsantoulis Aye***

***C. Jones Aye***

***R. Duhaime Aye***

***A. Walczyk Aye***

***R. Lapierre Aye***

***C. Karolian Abstain***

***J. Durand Aye***

***D. Boutin Aye***

***J. Sullivan Aye***

***Voted unanimously in favor (8-0). Councilor Karolian abstained because he did not have enough information to vote.***

- **Police (Tab 8)**

***T. Tsantoulis motioned to have the Police Department return with a five percent (5%) budget reduction. C. Karolian seconded the motion.***

T. Tsantoulis It was not easy to make this motion. We all have a responsibility to the taxpayers of Hooksett. These are uncharted waters – in Hooksett, the State, the United States and the world. We don’t have a handle on the health or the financial impact. An awful lot of people are struggling, and there is no stimulus package available. I hope I am wrong, but these are tough times and we are in dire straits.

C. Karolian: I thank Councilor Tsantoulis for echoing what I have been saying for the last couple of months. No one wants to make these decisions, but we have to. I hope I’m wrong as well. I appreciate the work of the department heads. There is not much information coming from the State regarding a revenue deficit, perhaps because it’s pre-election. I believe the best person to reduce a department’s budget is the department head. For us to go line-by-line is not appropriate.

D. Boutin: I concur with Councilor Tsantoulis. This is no reflection on the Police Department and how it is running. We need to get down to a less than two percent (2%) overall increase as in past years. And, new positions have been added to the Police and Fire departments.

238  
239 A. Garron: There are no new positions in Police and Fire.  
240  
241 D. Boutin: These were presented when you introduced your budget.  
242  
243 Chair Sullivan: The positions discussed are not new ones. They are due to attrition and vacancies.  
244  
245 A. Garron: At the last budget review meeting, we were asked to come back with revenue projections  
246 and tax collection history. I would ask that we move to these now before discussing other matters.  
247  
248 R. Lapierre: A large percentage of the Police budget is contractual amounts. There is not a whole lot of  
249 wiggle room to make an additional five percent (5%) reduction.  
250  
251 Chief Bouchard: I respect what is going on due to the pandemic. Our overall proposed increase is  
252 0.92%, less than one percent. As Councilor Lapierre pointed out, much of our budget is contractual  
253 items approved by the voters. There is nothing we can do about that portion. To cut five percent (5%)  
254 would mean cutting positions. Since I became Chief in 2017, we have worked hard to hire qualified,  
255 certified officers. This eliminates the expense of sending them to the Police Academy. It also means we  
256 have minimal turnover and are able to attract certified candidates. Having the force at 29 means  
257 keeping overtime low.  
258  
259 C. Jones: What does it cost to send an officer to the Police Academy? I think it is about \$30,000.  
260  
261 Chief Bouchard: I don't have that information with me, but it sounds accurate. We pay them while they  
262 are at the academy, and it is an eight-month process to have them fully trained to work shifts. Our total  
263 budget is \$4,888,000, and the amount which is not fixed is about \$360,488, and I just reduced it by  
264 about \$4,000.  
265  
266 Chair Sullivan: Assuming you have budgeted for the 30<sup>th</sup> officer, how much could you save by not filling  
267 that position?  
268  
269 Chief Bouchard: I can get that information; I don't have the calculation with me.  
270  
271 C. Karolian: You replace two vehicles per year, per the replacement plan. Is that in your budget?  
272  
273 Chief Bouchard: It is \$97,000.  
274  
275 C. Karolian: How many black & whites do you have now?  
276  
277 Chief Bouchard: We have eight cruisers fully set for patrol with cages, radar and computers. We have  
278 one used for K-9 patrol, which doesn't have a cage, and another for supervisors or lieutenants. Our  
279 newest vehicle has 25,000 miles on it. The next one has 50,000, the next has 90,000 and the next  
280 112,000.  
281  
282 C. Karolian: I can see all of that. I am trying to expedite things here. There is not a lot spent on  
283 maintenance. If you cut two new vehicles right off the top, you could save about \$100,000.  
284  
285 Chief Bouchard: Actually, we have six (not eight) black & whites, the K-9 vehicle and the supervisor's  
286 vehicle.

287  
288 A. Garron: I have the figure that Councilor Karolian requested earlier. It is \$89,000 for salary and  
289 benefits for the 30<sup>th</sup> officer.  
290  
291 C. Karolian: With the 30<sup>th</sup> officer and the two new vehicles, you are halfway to your reduction goal. This  
292 is for one fiscal year only; we have to tighten our belts.  
293  
294 D. Boutin: Why does the K-9 vehicle need to be used only by the K-9 officer?  
295  
296 Chief Boutin: He takes the vehicle and the dog home with him and needs to have it when on call. It  
297 doesn't have a cage.  
298  
299 Chair Sullivan asked for a roll call vote on the motion to reduce the Police Department budget by five  
300 percent.  
301  
302 **Roll Call Vote #6**  
303 **J. Durand Aye**  
304 **R. Lapierre Nay**  
305 **C. Karolian Aye**  
306 **D. Boutin Aye**  
307 **C. Jones Nay**  
308 **T. Tsantoulis Aye**  
309 **A. Walczyk Nay**  
310 **R. Duhaime Aye**  
311 **J. Sullivan Nay**  
312 **Voted in favor (5-4).**  
313  
314 Chair Sullivan: Ms. Soucie, what is the bottom line for the Police Department?  
315  
316 C. Soucie: It would be reduced by five percent (5%) of \$4,888,000, which means their budget must be  
317 \$4,635,711.  
318  
319 D. Boutin: Is the Town Administrator going to bring in a budget with no greater than a two percent (2%)  
320 increase?  
321  
322 Chair Sullivan: We didn't give him any directions. We have done that in the past, but not recently. That  
323 was your concern.  
324  
325 ***D. Boutin motioned to direct the Town Administrator to bring in a budget with no more than a***  
326 ***two percent (2%) increase over last year's budget. T. Tsantoulis seconded the motion.***  
327  
328 Chair Sullivan: Would this be 2% for each department or a bottom line 2% reduction? I assume the  
329 Town Administrator would decide this.  
330  
331 A. Garron: You just reduced the Police budget by 5%, even though it had only an increase of less than  
332 one percent.  
333  
334 D. Boutin: The ultimate percentage increase must be no exceed two percent.

335  
336 A. Garron: Do you mean to reduce the budget I presented by 1.7%?  
337  
338 D. Boutin: Yes. What did we just save with the Police Department?  
339  
340 Chair Sullivan: \$244,000. Last year's total operating budget was \$17,975,000.  
341  
342 C. Soucie: This proposed budget should have an increase of only \$359,500.  
343  
344 C. Karolian: I am trying to get clarification. This is 2% of the total operating budget. We just cut the  
345 Police budget by 5%. It would be fair to the Police Department to go department by department.  
346  
347 R. Lapierre: Is this just the operating budget?  
348  
349 D. Boutin: That is my intent. My motion to reduce the overall budget by two percent includes leaving the  
350 5% Police reduction in.  
351  
352 T. Tsantoulis: I had planned to present the same motion for the Fire Department, to reduce its budget  
353 by five percent.  
354  
355 D. Boutin: I withdraw my motion.  
356  
357 A. Garron: We are prepared to give you the information requested at the last meeting, along with the  
358 role of the Fund Balance.  
359  
360 ***C. Jones motioned to hear the presentation on the Fund Balance, the hiring freeze and revenue***  
361 ***situation. R. Lapierre seconded the motion.***  
362  
363 D. Boutin: The request was not about the Fund Balance.  
364  
365 Chair Sullivan called for a roll call vote on the motion to hear the presentation.  
366  
367 **Roll Call Vote #7**  
368 ***C. Jones Aye***  
369 ***C. Karolian Aye***  
370 ***R. Lapierre Aye***  
371 ***R. Duhaime Aye***  
372 ***A. Walczyk Aye***  
373 ***J. Durand Aye***  
374 ***T. Tsantoulis Aye***  
375 ***D. Boutin Nay***  
376 ***J. Sullivan Aye***  
377 ***Voted in favor (8-1).***  
378  
379 ***Chair Sullivan motioned to remove from the table the motion from last week's meeting***  
380 ***regarding the hiring freeze. C. Karolian seconded the motion.***  
381  
382



383 **Roll Call Vote #8**

384 **R. Lapierre Aye**

385 **R. Duhaime Aye**

386 **T. Tsantoulis Aye**

387 **A. Walczyk Aye**

388 **J. Durand Aye**

389 **C. Jones Aye**

390 **D. Boutin Aye**

391 **C. Karolian Aye**

392 **J. Sullivan Aye**

393 **Voted unanimously in favor (9-0).**

394

395 D. Boutin: What information are we getting? The tabled motion was relative to a hiring freeze.

396

397 Chair Sullivan: Information about revenues, tax collection, and the Fund Balance is being presented as  
398 well.

399

400 C. Karolian: This was tabled only to determine the financial impact of a hiring freeze. It was only...

401

402 C. Jones: Let's move this along.

403

404 C. Karolian: This information was provided to us today via email. We did not ask about the impact on  
405 each department.

406

407 C. Jones: This is a critical decision. I want to hear it all.

408

409 C. Soucie: As of August 31, 2020, 97% of property taxes from the July billing were collected. This is in  
410 line with the past three years. Tax collections therefore have not been impacted by COVID. As of June  
411 30, 2020, our Fund Balance was \$4.4 million, which is about eight or nine percent of the budget. Last  
412 year it was at 4.4% of the budget. This is our safety net for offsetting lost revenue, if necessary. It is  
413 true that we haven't heard from the State regarding those revenues. The tax rate should be set in  
414 November, and we will know the State revenue impact by spring, if not sooner. We have had  
415 unanticipated revenues from GOEFRR totaling \$100,000; from an insurance refund in the amount of  
416 \$27,000; and from Health Trust premiums for \$70,000. Motor vehicle registrations and building permits  
417 show a slight increase. One decrease we expect is interest on investments, and we expect that impact  
418 to be a reduction of about \$50,000.

419

420 A. Garron: For the vacancy list, 14 positions would be affected by the hiring freeze initially. Two more  
421 are possible in the next few months. One question we have is whether or not we can fill vacant  
422 positions, but not create and fill new ones.

423

424 Chair Sullivan: Would you break down these positions by department?

425

426 A. Garron: In DPW, there are ten; one in Fire, two in Police and one part-time position in Administration.

427

428 Chair Sullivan: What is the current complement in Public Works?

429

430 A. Garron: Highway's full complement is 14 full-time employees and three part-time. Public  
431 Works/Parks & Recreation is seven full-time and three part-time. Recycling & Transfer has seven full

432 time and four part-time employees. The savings from not replacing 14 employees would be  
433 \$183,394.47.

434  
435 Chair Sullivan: So, 30% of the positions are affected in DPW. How can the savings be only  
436 \$183,394.47? How is that possible?

437  
438 A. Garron: It is mostly because of overtime used to fill in. Also, many of these are part-time and a few  
439 are seasonal.

440  
441 C. Soucie: When a lieutenant is out, one-on-one replacement is needed. Therefore, it costs more to fill  
442 that position with overtime than is saved by not hiring a lieutenant.

443  
444 D. Boutin: What are the vacancies in Public Works?

445  
446 C. Soucie: Public Works has four full-time and six part-time vacancies.

447  
448 D. Boutin: Mr. Labonte, you have four vacant positions in Public Works. How do you fill those  
449 vacancies?

450  
451 E. Labonte: We fill them with overtime.

452  
453 D. Boutin: It is important that we know the dollar amount.

454  
455 C. Soucie: That information was emailed to all of you this afternoon. I can pass out copies if you would  
456 like me to. That number, Councilor Boutin, is \$123,853. That is wages for DPW. Overtime costs are  
457 \$37,000 for one position and \$9,000 for another. That is for six months.

458  
459 D. Boutin: What if you add in benefits?

460  
461 C. Soucie: I would have to do those calculations.

462  
463 C. Karolian: Didn't the Fire Department say there are six or nine vacancies in the Fire Department?

464  
465 Chief Burkush: It was two firefighters, and we have filled those positions. We also have a lieutenant  
466 leaving at the end of the month.

467  
468 C. Karolian: I need clarification. You filled them since we began the discussion of a hiring freeze?

469  
470 Chief Burkush: We already had signed offers and physicals had been scheduled. They started Monday,  
471 September 14, 2020.

472  
473 R. Lapierre. I have the result of the calculation requested. It is an positive cost of \$13,000, due to  
474 overtime costs.

475  
476 C. Karolian: Is the lieutenant position contractual? Is it part of the CBA?

477  
478 Chief Burkush responded yes to both questions.

479

480 J. Durand: If a fire lieutenant leaves, don't you promote a firefighter to lieutenant and then fill the  
481 firefighter position?  
482  
483 Chief Burkush: Yes.  
484  
485 C. Karolian: In that case, wouldn't the overtime pay be for a firefighter, not a lieutenant?  
486  
487 C. Soucie: That raises the question of whether departments can promote during the freeze. Council  
488 direction is needed. I costed a scenario without promotions.  
489  
490 C. Karolian: Is that promotions versus overtime?  
491  
492 ***D. Boutin motioned to amend the hiring freeze motion to say it would not prevent temporary or***  
493 ***permanent internal promotions. Chair Sullivan seconded the motion.***  
494  
495 T. Tsantoulis: Let's bear in mind that this is only for six months. Activity slows down in the winter.  
496  
497 A. Garron: Does this include filling positions.  
498  
499 D. Boutin: It is only for promotions.  
500  
501 C. Karolian: Don't we have to vote on the amendment first and then the motion?  
502  
503 Chair Sullivan: That is what we are doing.  
504  
505 R. Lapierre: Would you please repeat the amount of the Fund Balance?  
506  
507 C. Soucie: It is \$4.4 million.  
508  
509 A. Walczyk: The savings are a mere drop in the bucket. Lives of our residents will be more difficult  
510 because of reduced services. This is for a savings of one to two percent. The DPW has the most  
511 employees impacted by this, and they are already at 50%. Someone said that things slow down in the  
512 winter, but what about plowing? The impact is less to Police and Fire, but there is still an impact. DPW  
513 is set up to fail, just because of their business model. It is a small amount. We are asking for more...for  
514 less. The bean counter says it's too bad. You need to do better anyway. This is terribly myopic. We  
515 shouldn't be considering it this much. It will make the lives of a lot of people miserable. Why not cut  
516 back on gas, or tools, or salt? The savings from a hiring freeze are \$183,000 at best.  
517  
518 Chair Sullivan called for a roll call vote on the motion for a six-month hiring freeze, not to include  
519 promotions from within.  
520  
521 **Roll Call Vote #10**  
522 ***C. Karolian Aye***  
523 ***T. Tsantoulis Aye***  
524 ***R. Lapierre Nay***  
525 ***C. Jones Nay***  
526 ***D. Boutin Aye***  
527 ***J. Durand Aye***

528 **A. Walczyk** *Nay*  
529 **R. Duhaime** *Nay*  
530 **J. Sullivan** *Nay*  
531 **Motion failed (4-5).**

532  
533 Chair Sullivan called for a ten minutes recess, at 8:30 pm. He called the meeting back to order at 8:42  
534 pm.

535  
536 **T. Tsantoulis motioned to return the Fire & Rescue budget and asked them to return with a**  
537 **budget with a five percent (5%) overall reduction. C. Karolian seconded the motion.**

538  
539 T. Tsantoulis: This is not a comfortable thing to present. Tough times require tough decisions. I don't  
540 like this, but it is necessary, given the times we are in. Reducing our two largest budgets by 5% will go  
541 a long way toward making the necessary reduction.

542  
543 R. Lapierre: Is this 5% of the department budget or of the Town Administrator's budget?

544  
545 Chair Sullivan: It is 5% of the Town Administrator's budget of \$4,692,835.

546  
547 D. Boutin: How much would that be?

548  
549 C. Soucie: That would be \$234,641.

550  
551 Chief Burkush: Hydrant rentals continue to go up whatever amount they want. The increases have  
552 been substantial, six percent (6%) each year for the past few years. This is a cost we cannot control.  
553 Could this be set aside for the 5% decrease calculation?

554  
555 C. Jones: Who controls the costs?

556  
557 A. Garron: It is the water companies. I would like to propose reducing this budgeted amount by \$34,396  
558 to \$300,000. This suggested reduction is based on historical trends and the reduced amount should be  
559 adequate. This is for rentals, leases, water, and maintenance costs. I talked with the Village Water  
560 Precinct and have a call into Manchester Water Works. There is some uncertainty built into the budget.

561  
562 Chair Sullivan: What portion of your budget is contractual?

563  
564 Chief Burkush: About 93% of our budget is for salary and benefits.

565  
566 R. Lapierre: That means that \$328,500 is not contractual.

567  
568 C. Karolian: Mr. Garron, if the hydrant costs cannot be controlled, how do you cut it?

569  
570 A. Garron: Village Water used a lower number of hydrants and a lower cost per hydrant than the  
571 Fire/Rescue Department. Village Water used \$700 times 152 hydrants; Fire used \$740 times 163  
572 hydrants.

573  
574 C. Karolian: I am looking at the Capital Area Mutual Aid Fire Compact Dispatcher in the amount of  
575 \$82,500. The amount for this is \$160,000.

576  
577 Assistant Chief Colburn: The ambulance line pays 50% of this. They met last week and set the total at  
578 \$167,000, so we will be short, having budgeted \$82,500.  
579  
580 C. Karolian: So, more than 50% will have to come out of the ambulance line.  
581  
582  
583  
584 Chair Sullivan: Where is the ambulance line?  
585  
586 Assistant Chief Colburn: It is just a revolving account.  
587  
588 C. Soucie: There is no budget for the ambulance operation that the Council reviews. There is a  
589 management budget. State law has no requirement for an ambulance budget. It's the same for Police  
590 and Fire details.  
591  
592 C. Karolian: If there is no budget, does it fund itself? How do you know if you are losing, breaking even  
593 or making money? Where does the money come from?  
594  
595 Chief Burkush: We have an internal management document for recording the ambulance expenses.  
596 This includes three firefighters, dispatch service, ambulance supplies, replacement and training. The  
597 ambulance billing is on the monthly financial statements you receive.  
598  
599 A. Garron: There is a Special Revenue on the last page of Tab 24. Two pages prior is a breakdown of  
600 the uses of the funds.  
601  
602 C. Karolian: Is the Fire Department funding the ambulance crew out of its budget?  
603  
604 Assistant Chief Colburn: Special Revenue funds three members of the crew on the ambulance. Up until  
605 a couple of years ago, it was two members.  
606  
607 C. Karolian: Do these three crew members only do ambulance work or do they do firefighter work too?  
608  
609 Chief Burkush: They all are totally cross-staffed. Everyone does everything.  
610  
611 Chair Sullivan: I recall that we moved money to the ambulance fund a few years ago.  
612  
613 Assistant Chief Colburn: That was for the third crew member. We had a surplus that year. Each year,  
614 \$80,000 goes into an ambulance account for when a new ambulance is needed. If we spend that  
615 money elsewhere, we will need a capital reserve fund for ambulance replacement.  
616  
617 Chair Sullivan: Is it possible that we could access those funds to help with the 5% reduction?  
618  
619 Chief Burkush: That is set up by law and tied to the ambulance service. If I try to buy a chain saw from  
620 the ambulance fund Finance will reject it.  
621  
622 Assistant Chief Colburn: It runs along balanced.  
623

624 J. Durand: I am confused. Why are we discussing their budgets? I don't think we can find the money for  
625 the departments.

626  
627 Chief Burkush: When do you want us to return with the 5% cut?

628  
629 Chair Sullivan: I assume these departments don't have to come back.

630  
631 C. Soucie: I would remind the Council that the Budget Committee starts meeting on September 24<sup>th</sup>.  
632 We will need to give them a heads up if our budget will not be ready to present to them on that date.  
633 The Council does meet on September 23<sup>rd</sup>.

634  
635 A. Garron: I would think the Council would want to see how the cuts are reflected and what lines they  
636 are in.

637  
638 Chair Sullivan: And the Councilor representing us on the Budget Committee would need to know.

639  
640 J. Durand: I don't think that the timeline should reflect how we vote.

641  
642 R. Lapierre: We are asking them to cut five percent. The impact on town safety would be important to  
643 know.

644  
645 C. Karolian: On the second page of the Fire Department budget, what does the amount of \$4,386,786  
646 represent?

647  
648 A. Garron: That's the budget in effect currently.

649  
650 C. Karolian: Where does the default calculation come from?

651  
652 C. Jones: That is the budget if the proposed budget fails.

653  
654 Chair Sullivan: The default amount becomes the budget if the proposed budget does not pass. It is  
655 based on DRA calculations and formulas. If the Fire Department budget is reduced by 5%, it will be less  
656 than the default amount. The Town Administrator's proposed budget for Fire/Rescue is \$4,692,835;  
657 with a 5% reduction, it would be \$4,458,193; the default amount is \$4,471,000.

658  
659 C. Karolian: Can the default amount be greater than the proposed budget?

660  
661 Chair Sullivan: Yes. It is a separate calculation that is not affected by the proposed budget.

662  
663 T. Tsantoulis: They have to return with a 5% reduction.

664  
665 A. Garron: The deadline is next week. If you try to tackle this on next week's agenda, which is already  
666 long, it will be difficult. Maybe we should have a special meeting on September 30<sup>th</sup>, just for these  
667 items, and a few other departments as well.

668  
669 Chair Sullivan called for a roll call vote on the motion requiring the Fire/Rescue Department to return  
670 with a 5% budget reduction.

671

672 **Roll Call #11**

673 **T. Tsantoulis Aye**

674 **R. Lapierre Nay**

675 **J. Durand Aye**

676 **C. Jones Nay**

677 **C. Karolian Aye**

678 **A. Walczyk Nay**

679 **R. Duhaime Aye**

680 **D. Boutin Aye**

681 **J. Sullivan Nay**

682 **Voted in favor (5-4).**

683 D. Boutin: Can we adjourn now?

684

685 Chair Sullivan: You can motion to adjourn, but there is just one item we can take care of quickly. It is C  
686 under Other on the agenda.

687

688 **2020 Employee Appreciation and Board/Committee Volunteer Appreciation Event Cancellation**

689

690 Chair Sullivan: We are proposing the cancellation of these events because of the pandemic.

691

692 ***D. Boutin motioned to cancel the 2020 Employee Appreciation and Board/Committee Volunteer***  
693 ***Appreciation Events due to COVID. T. Tsantoulis seconded the motion.***

694

695 **Roll Call Vote #12**

696 **D. Boutin Aye**

697 **A. Walczyk Aye**

698 **J. Durand Aye**

699 **C. Karolian Aye**

700 **R. Lapierre Aye**

701 **T. Tsantoulis Aye**

702 **R. Duhaime Aye**

703 **C. Jones Aye**

704 **J. Sullivan Aye**

705 **Voted unanimously in favor (9-0).**

706

707 Chair Sullivan: We are starting at 5:00 pm next week. Now we will be adding the CIP and approval of  
708 the Administration budget to that agenda.

709

710 ***D. Boutin motioned to adjourn at 9:28 pm. C. Karolian seconded the motion.***

711

712 **Roll Call Vote #13**

713 **C. Karolian Aye**

714 **D. Boutin Aye**

715 **T. Tsantoulis Aye**

716 **R. Lapierre Nay**

717 **A. Walczyk Nay**

718 **R. Duhaime Aye**

719 **J. Durand Aye**

720 **C. Jones** **Nay**  
721 **J. Sullivan** **Nay**  
722 **Voted in favor (5-4).**

723  
724

725 Respectfully submitted,  
726 *Kathleen Donnelly*  
727 Kathleen Donnelly  
728 Recording Clerk

729  
730

731 **Please see subsequent meeting minutes for any amendments to these minutes.**

732

733