



Town of Ridgefield
Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting Minutes
UNAPPROVED

January 30, 2023 at 7:00pm

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

Present: Rudy Marconi, Maureen Kozlark, Bob Hebert, Barbara Manners, Sean Connelly (via zoom)

1. General Budget Overview

Due to a family emergency, Kevin Redmond could not attend tonight's meeting so the General Budget Overview will be postponed until tomorrow, Tuesday, January 31st.

2. Police Department Budget

Chief Jeff Kreitz, Major Shawn Platt, and Police Commission Chair John Frey presented the Police Department Budget.

Chief Kreitz began with the reasons for the request for additional personnel. He talked about staffing level trends and changes within the department over the last 20 years, which included increases in population, visitors, vehicular & pedestrian traffic, large scale weather events, on site school presence, training for officers, call times, identity theft cases and community policing events.

The Operating Budget increases are due to new hires and related training costs, small equipment increases, rises in gas and electric costs, and additional cruisers.

There was a discussion about License Plate Readers (LPRs) which can be mounted to telephone poles and send alerts directly to officer cell phones. LPRs would be used strictly for investigative purposes. For example, they can be used for finding missing people. They also alert the Police Department when a stolen car drives through town, which helps in prevent car thefts. The Police Department currently has two car-mounted LPRs which they find very useful. Chief Kreitz talked about electric cars and the limited battery power making them unavailable for fleet use.

The Capital Budget items included Red Dots for officer pistols, repairs to the K-9

shelter, a pick-up truck for K-9 transportation, and a regional shooting range. Due to reduced shooting time allotted to the Police Department at the route 7 range, the PD is in collaboration with surrounding departments to build a regional shooting range. A significant portion of the funds will come from grants, but they will need to find money for the remaining balance. One option discussed is to have the COG front the money.

3. Fire Department Budget

Chief Jerry Myers and Assistant Chief Mickey Grasso presented the Fire Department Budget.

Increases in the operating budget this year are due to overtime, vehicle maintenance, increased cost to uniforms, plumbing issues and a new heating system. There was a discussion about turn over and if it's possible to predict when a new hire will be needed. Chief Myers pointed out that the department cannot hire someone new until the previous person has officially left so there is nothing that can be done differently even with advanced notice.

A significant amount of money has been spent on maintenance for engine 1, which has been mostly outsourced. The Town is still trying to negotiate with Danbury on a shared mechanic. The new Pearce Fire Trucks will arrive in 14 months in which time a plan with Danbury will hopefully be formalized.

Capital Budget costs included new fire packs, new vehicles, sprinkler installation in the fire house and a privacy fence.

Chief Myers recommends hiring a professional grant writer to apply for a grant for the new fire packs. This will give the department the best chance at receiving the grant.

The Board asked about cost predictions, repurposing vehicles and the need for a privacy fence. Because the original owners of the home that requested the privacy fence no longer lives there, it is not needed and will be removed from the budget.

Rudy Marconi gave an overview of the total town budget which he will send to all the Board members.

4. Possible Capital/Operating Budget Vote - No votes were taken.

Bob Hebert moved to adjourn the January 30, 2023 Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting at 9:24pm. Maureen Kozlark second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.