

The Claremont City Council held a meeting on Wednesday, November 14, 2012, in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Neilsen at 6:30 p.m.

Members of the Council present were:

At-Large Councilor Keith Raymond
Ward I Councilor Victor Bergeron
Ward III Councilor Nicholas Koloski
Assistant Mayor Andrew Austin
Mayor James Neilsen, IV
At-Large Councilor Christopher Irish
Ward II Councilor Roger Formidoni
At-Large Councilor Kyle Messier (late)
At-Large Councilor Thomas Burnham

Also present were:

Guy Santagate, City Manager
Jane Taylor, City Solicitor
Mary Walter, Finance Director

MAYOR'S NOTES

Stevens High School Student Council Update

None

Mr. Bergeron thanked the community for filling the truck that the Kiwanis Club took to Brick and Keyport, New Jersey, to help the victims of Hurricane Sandy.

Mr. Burnham asked for a moment of silence to honor the veterans.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

A motion was made by Mr. Austin and seconded by Mr. Burnham to accept the minutes of the October 3, 10, 23, 24 and 30, 2012, City Council meetings.

Messrs. Koloski, Irish and Formidoni abstained as they were not at the 30th meeting.

Voice Vote: Motion carried 5-0 with 3 abstains (Messrs. Koloski, Irish and Formidoni).

APPOINTMENT TO BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Conservation Commission

There was an application for Conservation Commission in the packet, but Mr. Koloski said that it should be appointed by the Mayor. Ms. Taylor agreed and said she would follow up.

Mr. Koloski reminded everyone that there are a lot of board seats open for volunteers.

Mr. Irish asked the Mayor to hold on this appointment as he may relinquish his seat. Mayor Neilsen said he would make the appointment later.

Claremont 250th Anniversary Committee

Mr. Irish asked where the number of seats (10) came from. Mr. Santagate said we tried to comply with Council's request. We advertised that seats were available. Mr. Bergeron said Council had requested the City Manager advertise and set this up using the City Center Committee (CCC) as a model; applicants were accepted from those that applied without consideration of ward; two members of the Council were appointed to that committee. Mayor Neilsen said that if all 10 seats are filled, then two members of the Council could be appointed and that would be equal or close to the 12-15 members that were appointed to the CCC. Mr. Bergeron said the purpose was to get this started. Mr. Irish asked about the people that had started this committee previously. Mayor Neilsen stated that the City ran an ad looking for volunteers to sit on the Claremont 250th Anniversary Committee; there are 10 seats; 4 people have applied; 6 seats remain; 2 Councilors will make it a committee of 12. He asked the 4 to hold off appointment of a chair until there is full complement. Mr. Raymond said every month it is on the Council agenda and no report has been received in two years. Mr. Irish said he has done it twice. He asked to be allowed to help to committee. Mayor Neilsen said Mr. Irish can fill out an application as a Councilor representative. Mr. Irish questioned why the City wants to take this over. Mr. Raymond said the City does not want to take over, it just wants to get the committee going so we can hear from them.

Mr. Koloski said he was the Councilor appointed to this committee and there have been no official meetings. He requested this and asked to have some control over it. Mayor Neilsen said he spoke to Wayne McElreavy and Colin Sanborn and both asked the City to take the lead.

A motion was made by Mr. Raymond and seconded by Mr. Burnham to appoint Denise Liveston to seat #3; Phyllis Muzeroll to seat #2; Cindy Landry to seat #1; David F. Lucier to seat #4 of the Claremont 250th Anniversary Committee.

Mr. Raymond asked for anyone else interested to come forward.

Mr. Koloski noted this will be a huge ordeal and people can help out even if they don't want to be on the committee.

Mr. Bergeron said Council does not control the CCC nor this committee. It will be formed using the same concept.

Bernie Folta, Ward 3, said in 2009 to 2011 there was a committee and there is abundant documentation available. He agreed with Mr. Bergeron that the City supported the citizen committee. This should be overpacked in the beginning as the numbers will dwindle down. The prime leaders need to be facilitators.

Roll call vote: motion carried 8-0.

OLD BUSINESS

New Community Center Update

Tim Herson, Superintendent of Facilities and Maintenance, showed a PowerPoint presentation of the New Community Center.

- Project Update
 - Exterior finishes near completion
 - Interior continues
 - Mechanical and electrical contractors still on site
 - Exterior landscaping completed. Some work in the spring will be required.
 - Interior painting and ceiling tile grids being installed
 - SSG swimming pool mechanical room
- Pictures of the main entrance, heated front entrance/handicap ramp, interior, fitness area, painted ceiling, pools, landscaping around the building

Mayor Neilsen was concerned the heated walkway would cause pooling of the water and then it would ice over. He asked about the new landscaping pines being too close to the building. Mr. Herson said all sidewalks are sloped away from the building toward the drain. They have slab sensors for snow melting. He will check on the variety of pine. They worked closely with PSNH on the landscaping plan.

Mr. Bergeron asked if this is on track to open at the first of the year. Mr. Herson said the timing is close.

At 6:57 Mr. Burnham left Council Chambers.

CITIZEN'S FORUM

None

NEW BUSINESS

Forestry Management Update

Bruce Temple, Public Works Director, said in 2007/2008 a forestry management plan was developed for the City. Implementation started about a 1 ½ years ago. They have completed 6 timber sales and cuts: Rice, Dole, and Whitewater reservoirs, pine lot by the outdoor pool, a second cutting of timber at Whitewater Reservoir. Once that is completed, they will move on to the Cat Hole area. Bidding for the lots at Moody Park has not been successful, so they will relook at it in the spring.

At 6:59 p.m. Mr. Burnham returned.

Each sale has been advertised publicly; they have coordinated with the Conservation Commission; and they have offered on-site visitation to the public. The revenues are \$83,000 and have gone to the Water Enterprise fund because the work has been done on Water Enterprise lands. When Cat Hole, Moody Park and other City lots are done, the money will go to other accounts. He hopes to start Cat Hole in 2-3 weeks. He can come back in the spring for another update.

Mr. Irish asked about the other accounts. Mr. Temple said the money goes back to the City. Mary Walter, Finance Director said a Non-Capital Reserve for the Management of the Forests was established for those funds. Water and Sewer Enterprise funds own some land and they get their money; the General Fund gets paid back for the forestry study; timber sales owes the General Fund \$14,000. After that is paid, the rest goes into the Non-Capital Reserve. Mr. Irish asked specifically about Moody Park. Ms. Walter said it would go into the Non-Capital Reserve for the Management of the Forests.

Mr. Burnham asked to have some dead trees at Arrowhead looked at. Mr. Temple said the forestry management plan was very specific. It may be possible to look at Arrowhead as well as some other locations; he asked that Arrowhead Recreation members contact Scott Hausler, Parks and Recreation Director, for this.

Motion to Approve Change in Depository

Lisa Richmond, Treasurer, said the City had gone out for bid for banking services to the City. It was recommended we move to the Bank of NH. This is for the operating account.

Mr. Formidoni asked where we are now. Ms. Richmond said Citizens Bank.

Mayor Neilsen asked about the qualifications: having the ability to allow overdrafts. He was concerned about that consideration. Ms. Richmond said we have never done that, but if there were an unforeseen reason, the bank would call us.

Mr. Formidoni asked where the nearest one is. Ms. Richmond said on Sullivan Street; it used to be Laconia Savings Bank.

A motion was made by Mr. Raymond and seconded by Mr. Koloski that the Claremont City Council, pursuant to Article III, Section 46 of the City Charter, hereby designates the Bank of New Hampshire (formerly Laconia Savings Bank) as the depository for City funds for a period of five (5) years and authorizes the City Manager or his designees to take such actions and execute all documents as may be necessary to implement this motion.

Roll call vote: motion carried 8-0.

Resolution 2012-19 Withdrawal-Claremont Parks and Recreation Community Center Building Fund Capital Reserve – Public Hearing

Ms. Walter said when we bonded last year, one source was a capital reserve from 2006. Advanced Recycling had a settlement agreement with the City to give almost \$7,000 to the New Community Center (NCC); there was a fundraiser in support of NCC for \$3,000; with interest there is \$10,880. We need to withdraw the money because part of that is incoming revenue for the \$7.5 million bond (\$5.3 million for the NCC). She asked for permission for the trustees to withdraw the funds for NCC.

Mr. Irish asked if the \$10,880 represents the total money raised by private entities for the NCC. Ms. Walter said no. N3C (New Community Center for Claremont, Inc.) held most of the money. These funds are from contributions given directly to the City, not N3C. Some money will be left in the account so as not to close the account and people can still continue to donate.

A motion was made by Mr. Raymond and seconded by Mr. Bergeron to adopt Resolution 2012-19 Withdrawal-Claremont Parks and Recreation Community Center Building Fund Capital Reserve.

Mr. Raymond read the resolution into the record.

Mayor Neilsen opened the public hearing. No one spoke. He closed it.

Roll call vote: motion carried 8-0.

Resolution 2012-21 Additional Funds for Airport Gasoline – Public Hearing

Fire Chief Rick Bergeron said sometimes at the end of the year the line item for aviation gas runs short. This is a request to replenish supplies.

A motion was made by Mr. Koloski and seconded by Mr. Austin to adopt Resolution 2012-21 Additional Funds for Airport Gasoline.

Mr. Koloski read the resolution into the record.

Mayor Neilsen opened the public hearing.

Bernie Folta, Ward 3, asked what caused the need for this.

Chief Bergeron said it is based on fuel storage at the airport; it is a 12,000 gallon tank. The best purchase price is for a full truck load of 8,500 gallons. If we purchase now, we enter next year with a full tank, so it comes off next year's budget. Mr. Santagate said the expense is offset by revenues. Ms. Walter said it is offset plus more. Chief Bergeron said it makes money for the City. Even though we are overspending this year, we will under spend next year. Ms. Walter said with the revenues, it is a wash.

Mr. Koloski asked how long overspending has gone on. Ms. Walter said it has happened in only 2 years since 2004. Chief Bergeron said right now aviation fuel prices are relatively low; it makes sense to do it while the price is low.

Mr. Formidoni asked for clarification. Ms. Walter said this won't over expend the City's bottom line.

Mr. Koloski asked who sets the price at the airport. Chief Bergeron said he does it based on a formula that has been in place for some time. We try to remain competitive with other airports in the area. Today it is \$5.50 a gallon.

Mr. Raymond noted Newport had to buy at a higher price and sold at a loss. We are fortunate to buy and sell at a profit.

Roll call vote: motion carried 8-0.

At 7:22 p.m. Ms. Messier arrived.

Resolution 2012-22 Wireless Fire Alarm System – Public Hearing

Chief Bergeron said he has been working on this for a little over a year.

Mr. Burnham asked if the Fire Department has to pay for line use. Chief Bergeron said not yet. Ms. Walter said we have been notified that we will soon be charged about \$40,000 per year for pole attachments. Chief Bergeron talked about redundancy and that with wireless you can get rid of a phone line and save money.

Mayor Neilsen asked for clarification of the monitoring fee. Chief Bergeron said the wireless box monitoring fee will be just under \$17 a month and you can get rid of a phone line. Because the wireless system has built in redundancy, this system will also monitor security systems which will be a benefit if we ever go to county-wide dispatch.

Mr. Koloski asked where the money comes from. Ms. Walter said there is almost \$157,000 in that capital reserve.

Mr. Bergeron asked about this not being in the CIP (Capital Improvements Plan). Ms. Walter said this was not built in, but we felt we had to move forward because of the letter. This will not affect the tax rate. Mr. Bergeron said this will benefit not only the City, but also anyone coming onto the system.

A motion was made by Mr. Irish and seconded by Ms. Messier to adopt Resolution 2012-22 Wireless Fire Alarm System.

Mr. Irish read the resolution into the record.

Mayor Neilsen opened the public hearing. No one spoke. He closed it.

Roll call vote: motion carried 9-0.

BUDGET

Overview

Mr. Santagate thanked the Staff for its effort to put together this 18-month budget. There is a 6-month budget and a 12-month budget to take us to June 30, 2014. He read from a letter he submitted to Council. The period covered is January 1, 2013, to June 30, 2014. Changing to a fiscal year will put us in line with the state. One of the major budget goals is to balance the tax burden with City services. Last year's budget recommended the elimination of one library position, but the final budget retained that person. This budget recommends increasing one dispatch position and eliminating one library position. The eliminated position will not go into effect until July 1, 2013. Collective bargaining continues. The state no longer contributes the agreed upon 35% to police and fire retirement. In 2014, health and retirement will be about 30% of City revenues raised by property taxes. That equates to approximately \$4.00 on the City's tax rate. The City's estimated tax rate for the 18-month period will be \$13.24 which is an increase of 39cents per thousand or 3%. The average homeowner will pay an additional \$58.50 per year. The CIP was not added to the recommended amount, but would add 26 cents per thousand on the tax rate.

Ms. Walter showed a PowerPoint presentation about the tax rate.

- What's driving the municipal portion of the tax rate
 - There has been no tax rate increase for 4 of the last 6 years
 - We have had 3 major layoffs and we still struggle to keep within the targeted 3%
- Health insurance costs continue to rise despite the elimination of 11 positions since the 21 layoffs in 2002
- Retirement, like health insurance, will continue to show drastic increases as the NH Retirement System tries to raise its unfunded liability percentage (currently only 58%)

funded and they should be 80% funded) which will be all employer costs since the state no longer contributes

- All Departments Total – Wages & Benefits
 - Despite the layoffs, we are still paying out 22% more in wages & benefits
- All Departments Wages & Benefits Over the Years
 - In 2004 benefits were 39% of wages, now they are 66% of wages
- Group I (Non-Police & -Fire) – Wages & Benefits
 - Due to the recent layoffs, these areas are at 2005 and 2006 levels
- Group I (Non-Police & -Fire) – Salary & Benefits Over the Years
 - We have not had wage increases going into our 5th year, yet the gap is closing
 - 2004 benefits were 35% of wages
 - Now they are 59% of wages
- Grand Total Police & Fire – Wages & Benefits
 - Police and fire wages and benefits have either been maintained or grown every year since 2004
 - Even though there have been layoffs in other areas, these have not had any since the big one in 2002.
- Police & Fire Wages & Benefits Over the Years
 - In 2004 benefits were 52% of wages, now they are 79% of wages
 - We are going into our 5th year without a wage increase
 - With benefits and retirement contributions increasing at a rate of 22% every two years, it won't be long before benefits will equal or exceed wages for Police and Fire (Group II)
- Maintaining Services
 - The City Manager and Finance Director met with department heads to discuss the budget
 - The budget presented tonight seeks to maintain core City services while maintaining the infrastructure needs of the City with a goal of keeping the municipal tax rate increase to 3% of the current rate. The sustainability of each decision we make becomes critical as we move forward

Mr. Santagate said a Councilor (Ms. Messier) had requested a meeting with the new Legislative Delegation. His question to them would be if there is any consideration to restore Shared Revenues and restore the 35% to the Fire and Police retirement they guaranteed years ago. The state sets the rules, but makes zero contributions to the retirement system; it is not a fully funded system. The actuarial study is done every two years and when we get that bill, it will be a substantial increase to the City. Also, in their calculation of how the system was being funded, they used a 7% return, but they only had a 0.7% return. When we talk about the issues in Concord, we don't have a lot of clout. The first issue is to identify that there is a problem. We should meet with newly elected officials to see if these items will be addressed in Concord. There are no new revenue sources being discussed, so where the money goes will be a challenge. The average tax bill in Claremont is about \$5,500, compared to other communities in other states with sales, income and property taxes, it is a bargain. We will do best we can, although it won't be easy. We are poised for growth if the recession ever ends.

Mr. Bergeron suggested Councilors keep the budget as low as possible. He talked about an article in the newspaper that scared City residents about losing City services. No decision has been made on any budget.

Assessing

2013 Department Request \$96,479 Manager Proposed \$96,479
2014 Department Request \$254,970 Manager Proposed \$248,515

Ms. Walter said the 6-month budget is tight; there is not a lot of wiggle room. Health Insurance and Retirement are the driving forces in this budget. The CIP had the revaluation in it. There is \$60,000 in the 12-month budget and next year there will be \$60,000 in the budget for the five-year revaluation. Those are the increases to that budget.

Ms. Messier asked if the reassessment was included. Ms. Walter said it is included in this budget and in 2015 there will be another \$60,000.

Mr. Bergeron asked if that is something we have to do. Ms. Walter said by state law every five years you have to be assessed at 100%. Dan Langille, Assessor, said every five years you have to completely revalue every property.

Mayor Neilsen asked if the City would bring in an outside company to revalue the properties. Mr. Langille said yes. Mayor Neilsen said that if property owners ask for an abatement, they can be reevaluated individually. Mr. Langille agreed. Mr. Santagate said keeping up the integrity of the property list is an important function of the Assessing office. They try to look at 20% of the properties every year. When permits are issued, they use that information to go look at the properties. Once new values have been established, notices will go to the taxpayers and the Assessing office will work with property owners that have discrepancies. That process worked well the last time it was done.

Mr. Austin said the economy will affect the reval. He didn't like having to put in \$60,000 so he asked what it is needed for. Mr. Santagate said residential properties will have a lot of sales comparisons, so revaluation won't be a problem with them. Commercial, industrial and special properties will have to have a complicated formula to arrive at a value. To do a full revaluation would cost about \$400,000, so with us keeping it up to date, we can do it for less.

Mayor Neilsen said there are blocks of \$60,000 for this year and next year, he asked how many more there will be. Mr. Santagate said that is it and then it won't have to be done again for 5 years.

Mr. Bergeron said the total budget increase for the 18 months, except for the \$60,000, is about \$7,000. He asked if there are pay raises. Mr. Santagate said no.

A motion was made by Mr. Koloski and seconded by Mr. Burnham to tentatively approve the Assessing budget of \$344,994.

Mr. Formidoni asked about the Department Request difference of about \$5,000. Ms. Walter said a department head had requested a 5% pay increase for all of his employees, so that same 5% increase was put on all the budgets, but then it was taken out for the Manager's Proposed budget.

Voice vote: motion carried 9-0.

Welfare

2013 Department Request \$213,204 Manager Proposed \$212,754
2014 Department Request \$484,710 Manager Proposed \$438,281

Ms. Walter said this is up slightly in Rents. Welfare will come to Council in December to overspend the Rents line item. The 2014 proposed budget is about \$40,000 less than requested. The budget is up 1.59% for 18 months.

Mayor Neilsen asked how someone qualifies for rent assistance. Suzanne Carr, Welfare Director, said by law certain expenses are allowed and if the available income and assets don't cover that, then the City helps them. If a recipient is able to work, we put them to work in the City. If they are not able to work and have applied for disability, she can go after SSI to get reimbursed; if there is a personal injury lawsuit, she can put a lien on the lawsuit. Welfare has been reimbursed over \$39,000 this year.

Mr. Austin asked about going back to other communities for reimbursement. Ms. Carr said if other communities send them, we can request reimbursement. There is a "gentleman's agreement" that if a community sends someone to another community, they are expected to pay for the first 30 days.

Mayor Neilsen asked about help with transport costs. Ms. Carr said yes, if they are going someplace that will better their circumstance.

Mr. Bergeron said it is a gentlemen's agreement, but there is no requirement that they have to pay; the state needs to change that. Ms. Walter talked about the shelter. Ms. Carr said if they came to the shelter, they are not our responsibility, but if they leave the shelter and move into the community, then we may have to help them.

Mr. Bergeron asked about more part-time hours. Ms. Carr said she cost shares one position with Finance. Last year she only paid \$10,000, but this year the cost is split equally. There are no additional hours.

Mr. Formidoni asked if this is approved for less, would there be a problem. Ms. Carr said it is unknown. Mayor Neilsen said he would rather re-appropriate at the end of the year, if needed.

Mr. Koloski said this is the one budget that, per state law, we have to pay.

A motion was made by Mr. Formidoni and seconded by Mr. Austin to tentatively approve the Welfare budget of \$651,035.

Voice vote: motion carried 8-1 with Mr. Bergeron voting no.

Library

2013 Department Request \$233,091 Manager Proposed \$231,478
2014 Department Request \$510,586 Manager Proposed \$403,603

Ms. Walter said the major change is the elimination of one position in the Library and the money is to be moved to the Communications 911 budget.

Mayor Neilsen asked if Communications 911 is separate from Police. Ms. Walter said yes. Mayor Neilsen said this adds one position to Communications 911; he asked about vacancies in police and if the unspent payroll and health costs can pay for communications. Ms. Walter said it is an ongoing expense. Mayor Neilsen noted to add to Communications, you have to cut someone from the Library. Ms. Walter said the cut will come in July. She said Police Chief Alex Scott can ask for encumbrance at the end of the year although he is using more money for overtime.

Mr. Irish asked about the increase in technology creating the need for this position. Ms. Walter said with the increase in the numbers of cell phones that are in use, when an accident occurs, more people call in.

Mr. Burnham asked if this happens 24 hours a day. He suggested moving people around and using part-time people.

Mr. Irish said he is concerned that the Library is being punished due to technology. He doesn't like cutting the Library for technology in Communications 911.

Mr. Raymond asked about cutting \$43,000 from the Library to add to Communications 911. Ms. Walter said it is about \$70,000 in salary and benefits which is 11cents per \$1,000.

Mayor Neilsen said he is not in favor of cutting a full-time position at the Library. If it means the tax rate goes up, that is okay with him.

Mr. Koloski agreed with Mayor Neilsen. He would like to recover the funds elsewhere. A lot of people are using the Library. He mentioned the request to cut the Library position last year. Ms. Walter noted that the Library is not the only place that funds were pulled from last year.

Michael Grace, Librarian, noted that last year the Council saved the full-time position, but they did have to cut 45 manhours per week from the part-time staff as well as make cuts in the book and periodicals budgets.

Mr. Bergeron noted this is for tentative approval and the final decision can be made at the end.

Ms. Walter said she received a packet from the Fiske Free Library Board of Trustees. She found a comparable and shared Somersworth's Library budget with the Council. Ours is \$428,000 with a request of \$510,000 and Somersworth's is \$242,000. She noted everyone has priorities, but this one was targeted last year. There are differences in how other communities fund their libraries and that is something we will have to look at.

Mr. Irish commended Ms. Walter, Mr. Santagate and the staff for the proposal. He said Council needs to set the priorities. He agreed with Mayor Neilsen that we need to find the funding for the Library position.

Mr. Koloski said Somersworth has no relevancy for him because of many unknowns. However it was a good point that we should look at our neighboring communities to see how they are funding some of these things.

A motion was made by Mr. Burnham to tentatively approve the Library budget of \$635,082. There was no second so the motion failed.

Mr. Irish asked how much would it cost to add the position back. Ms. Walter said almost \$72,000. Mr. Formidoni estimated it would be about \$12 on a \$150,000 house to maintain this position.

A motion was made by Mr. Irish and seconded by Mr. Formidoni to tentatively approve the Library budget of \$701,496.

Voice vote: motion carried 8-1 with Mr. Burnham voting no.

Police

2013 Department Request \$1,264,574 Manager Proposed \$1,241,491
2014 Department Request \$2,681,164 Manager Proposed \$2,516,844

Police Chief Alex Scott said on Saturday he will be at the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies Conference and will receive the International Accreditation through the Commission of Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies.

Chief Scott showed PowerPoint presentations for the Communications 911 and Police budgets. He said if the Communications center stays stagnant, it will go backward; growing the center will increase revenues.

- 2013-2014 Emergency Communications Budget
 - Our future starts today
- Played 911 call for a structure fire (not heard were the 911 and EMS calls) with only 1 dispatcher

- Played 911 robbery call (not heard were the 911 calls) with only 1 dispatcher
- Played 911 call – knife pulled on police officer
- History and Today
 - 1992 – 5 full time
 - 18,093 calls for service
 - 2012 – 5 full time
 - 24,418 calls for service in 2011 and more projected in 2012
 - Cell phones have increased the call volume
 - Enhanced state-wide 9-1-1
- Emergency Communications
 - Our direct link to safety
- 2013-2014 Police Budget
 - Our future security will be impacted by your decisions today and on November 28
- 2013-2014 police budget
 - Goose and the golden egg (employees and production) – there has to be balance between taking care of employees and services provided
- 2013-2014 Police Budget Full Time Police Officers
 - 1992 – 27 full time
 - Total calls for service (1992): 18,093
 - 2012 – 24 full time
 - Wal-Mart
 - K-Mart
 - Home Depot
 - Rite-Aid
 - CVS
 - Lowes
 - Mill Project
 - Common Man
 - Red River, etc.
 - Pedestrian bridge
 - North Street parking lots
 - Parking garage
 - Visitors Center
 - Tractor Supply
 - Industrial Park
 - Total calls for service (2011): 24,418
- 2013-2014 Police Budget Population Staffing Ratio
 - National average as of 2008 was 2.51 full-time officers per 1,000 population:
 - $13,355/1,000 * 2.51 = 33$ full-time officers
 - NH average as of 2008 was 2.98 per 1,000 population:
 - $13,355/1,000 * 2.93 = 39$ full time officers
 - Claremont has not exceeded 24 full-time officers in the last 11 years
- 2013-2014 Police Budget Assignment Availability Factor

- Recognized mathematical formula to determine minimum staffing:
 - In-depth 2005 study of Claremont Police Department calls for service and assignment availability factor concluded a minimum of 26 officers were required for minimum staffing
 - This does not include special assignments like S.R.O. or drug enforcement, etc.
- Low Staffing Impact
 - Significantly higher work load
 - Less flexibility
 - Higher stress
 - Greater risk
- Today's Reality
 - Lost 2 seasoned officers to Plainfield, NH, Police Department in spring
 - Lost 1 seasoned officer to Newport, NH, Police Department in late summer
 - Lost 1 seasoned officer to NH State Police this fall
 - Losing a 20-year veteran Command Staff Officer to retirement in January 2013
 - We will be down at least 5 officers to start the year
 - It takes over 6 months to hire, train & release an officer to solo duty
 - We've tried to hire currently certified officers, but, as an example, we recently had one turn us down for Gorham, NH, Police Department because they were offering him over \$2 more an hour than we could
 - It costs close to \$50,000 to replace an officer
- Hiring and Training Costs
 - 26 weeks of training prior to being released to solo duty = ½ a year
 - $\$16.52 * 1040 = \$17,180$
 - Benefits (insurance, retirement, etc.) = \$5,000+
 - Overtime coverage at lowest rate = \$25,500
 - \$4,000 in outfitting and ammunition costs
 - Total replacement cost \$51,680
- Sample Solution Costs
 - No changes
 - Year 1 total: \$1,882,937.85
 - Year 2 total: \$1,917,451.54
 - Year 3 total: \$1,951,965.23
 - Sample changes
 - Year 1, 6% wage increase with 6% insurance contribution on MTB20 total: \$1,872,538.38
 - Year 2, 4% wage increase with 8% insurance contribution on MTB20 total: \$1,947,935.10
 - Year 3, 2% wage increase with 10% insurance contribution on MTB20 total: \$1,966,697.23
 - Total extra dollars required over 3 years: \$34,816.09 or \$11,605.36 a year over 3 years
- Replacement v. Retention
 - Total money to replace one officer: \$51,680

- Total money for sample solution to help solve retention issue: \$34,816
 - Spread out over three years = \$11,605 a year
- Our Future Starts Today
 - We are in crisis mode
- Priority #1
 - Fix the two biggest issues facing the Police Department
 - Excessive work load created by low staffing; and
 - Lack of competitive pay caused by five years without a pay increase
- Help
 - I'm here tonight asking for your help to immediately start addressing those issues
 - Without that help, our ability to maintain peace and security in the city will continue to be compromised.

Chief Scott mentioned he had made an error in his department request for Regular Pay. Ms. Walter said the budget is "in motion." With the two new hires some numbers changed and it will save \$9,000 in the 6-month budget and \$13,000 in the full-year budget because of different health plan choices. Chief Scott said the PowerPoint included the impact of raises on retirement. He did an 8% increase in health insurance every year.

Council looked at the Police budget first.

Mr. Bergeron asked if the increase in full-time Regular Pay included extra positions. Chief Scott said that is the 5% increase across the board. He said it was put in to get the discussion moving. Mr. Bergeron asked about adding that in when negotiations are not over. He said that was close to an unfair labor practice. Chief Scott said he made it clear that was not an offer, but just to create a frame of reference.

Mr. Formidoni asked Chief Scott if the \$2.516 million does not give him what he wants. Chief Scott said the major difference between Department Request and Manager Proposed is the 5% increase and overtime of \$16,000. Mr. Formidoni asked about Private Police Work. Ms. Walter said it is offset by revenue. Chief Scott said the increase was based on needing additional people at the Drapers Corner project.

Mr. Irish commended Mr. Santagate and Ms. Walter for the budget, but now the Council needs to decide if this is the best for the City. He said the Chief of Police is saying the City is not as safe as it should be.

Mayor Neilsen said Council needs to look at the budget as presented. Union contracts are under negotiation at this time.

Mr. Irish noted Council can add to the department request.

Chief Scott said the 5% is a symbolic request. The presentation was to start looking forward and to figure out how to solve the problem with the challenges we have.

Mr. Burnham talked about revenues and that citizens need to talk to legislators to get the revenues back. He agreed with Mr. Bergeron.

Mr. Bergeron said he doesn't disagree with Chief Scott. This may come down to a choice between a librarian and a dispatcher.

Mr. Bergeron asked what 5% across the board would be. Ms. Walter said it would be \$15 per thousand instead of \$13.24.

A motion was made by Mr. Burnham and seconded by Mr. Bergeron to tentatively approve the Police budget of \$3,758,335.

Mr. Irish said (hypothetically) that if 5% was put in, it would say to the unions that we are willing to work, but if you take 5% away (as has been requested) we are saying we don't want to work. He asked where that would go in negotiations. Mr. Burnham said this hypothetical proposal shouldn't be discussed. He asked Ms. Taylor for her opinion. Ms. Taylor said it is getting close to the line. Mr. Irish said he wasn't talking about an offer, he just wants to grow the City to where it should be. Mr. Burnham said the increase could lead to an unfair labor practice. Mayor Neilsen said because of the discussion, that if we go with the 5% increase, we are getting into the position of making an offer without union representation. Mr. Irish disagreed with that. Mayor Neilsen said he appreciated that Chief Scott put the 5% into the budget so we can see what it looks like.

A motion was made by Mr. Austin and seconded by Mr. Burnham to move the question.

Roll call vote: motion carried 8-1 with Mr. Koloski voting no.

Roll call vote: motion carried 6-3 with Messrs. Raymond, Irish and Formidoni voting no.

Communications 911

2013 Department Request \$212,127 Manager Proposed \$193,201

2014 Department Request \$502,943 Manager Proposed \$490,491

Mr. Raymond asked if this reflects the new communications position. Ms. Walter said yes starting July 1st.

Chief Scott talked about a math error he made in 2013 Regular Pay and that instead of \$110,510 it should be around \$98,000, so the Department Request should be around \$200,000. The Manager's number does not change.

A motion was made by Mr. Austin and seconded by Mr. Raymond to tentatively approve the Communications 911 budget of \$683,692.

Mr. Koloski asked about anticipated offsetting revenue for dispatch from other communities. Chief Scott said they are in the process of evaluating that. Letters are going to other communities in reference to the service provided. It may take 5-10 years to correct the revenue and that it will be tied to actual cost. Ms. Walter said the Communications 911 area needs to be overhauled and that will be on the CIP. Chief Scott said he hopes to secure some grant funds. Some equipment is nearing the end of its life cycle.

Mr. Koloski asked about the wireless fire alarm being able to monitor security systems. Chief Scott said if we have the staffing, we may be able to do that. Dispatch covers police, fire, EMS and Public Works after hours.

Mr. Irish said it is sad we are adding staff to cover the incoming calls, but not adding staff to cover going out to the calls. Chief Scott said the focus will be retention.

Mayor Neilsen noted the budget covers vacant positions. Staffing levels are low and we have to fill them.

Mr. Koloski congratulated the Police Department for achieving the CALEA accreditation.

Voice vote: motion carried 9-0.

Chief Scott asked Council to not lose sight of his request after the 28th. He hopes this is kept on the agenda until it is resolved.

Mr. Austin said Mr. Koloski had talked a couple of months ago about revenue for the Police Department (i.e. impact fees for organizations requiring a lot of Police services); he asked about the feasibility. Chief Scott said impact fees come with new development. Ms. Taylor said the impact fee is a matter of land use and is probably not applicable to this situation; service fees are different.

Mr. Bergeron asked about charging fees to landlords that require a lot of Police services. Chief Scott said some states have nuisance response fees, but he doesn't think it can be done in NH. Mr. Bergeron asked if it can be looked at and a report brought to the Council.

Mayor Neilsen asked if police, fire and/or ambulance respond to an accident, if the service is billed to the insurance companies. Ms. Walter said yes, if there is a hazardous spill, damage to a hydrant, telephone pole or guard rail, then it is billed to the insurance company.

Mr. Koloski was bothered by an officer having to use a cell phone in Wal-Mart; he asked with the wireless fire alarm system if a repeater can be placed in there. Chief Scott wasn't sure of that capability, but said they have zero reception in Valley Regional Hospital so they are requesting a grant to take care of that.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Santagate said he has been serving on the search committee for the president of River Valley Community College (RVCC). His involvement will be to promote job training for Claremont; that will end in February or March. He is also serving on the Stevens High School (SHS) committee to better define the goals of SHS and that will end in about four weeks. The two boards he will continue to serve on are the Business Finance Authority and the RVCC Advisory Board. The budget is the financial plan that includes the CIP, grant administration, the audit, etc. We continue to execute the plan well. We continue to move ahead on projects (i.e. Drapers Corner, North and Main Streets and working on the City entrance signs). The paving program has concluded for this year. Funds are available to work on 7-8 streets next year.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS AND DIRECTIVES

Mayor Neilsen asked Council to have a meeting on Wednesday, December 5, 7 p.m., for a non-public session to meet with the City Manager to review his evaluation.

Mr. Irish asked about a councilor turning off the microphone and having a private meeting with Ms. Taylor. Mr. Bergeron said he asked her if Council could go into consultation after this meeting.

Mr. Irish asked about appointing a Councilor to the school board. He asked for a recurring agenda item for contract negotiations. Ms. Taylor said that would need to be a non-public session.

Ms. Messier asked about having a meeting with the new Representatives and Senator. Bills go through at the state level soon.

Mr. Burnham said Representative Cloutier was going to write a Bill to propose schools that are in danger of losing their accreditation be moved to the top of the list for funding from the state. He talked about addressing the legislators in Concord to make them responsible for payment of fees that they had agreed to. Ms. Taylor said the NH Municipal Association has filed suit; NH Supreme Court has reversed all prior decisions and said it was not an unfunded mandate because it was only financial and not a new program.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Claremont 250th Anniversary Committee

None

Claremont City Center Project – Steering Committee Report

Mr. Bergeron said the committee had a joint meeting with the Planning and Zoning Boards. A presentation will be made to the Council in a few weeks.

Bernie Folta, Ward 3, said in reference to Mr. Irish's comments during Future Agenda Items about contract negotiations and unfair labor practices, that there is an increasing feeling that the public employee unions are out of control and have disproportionate power.

CONSULTATION WITH LEGAL COUNSEL

When asked about consultation, Ms. Taylor said Council needs to adjourn so that she could consult with them and to have the City Manager present.

ADJOURNMENT

At 10:23 p.m., a motion was made by Mr. Raymond and seconded by Mr. Burnham to adjourn.

Voice vote: motion carried 9-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dorée M. Russell
Clerk to the Council