

## **LONDONDERRY BUDGET COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes for April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

The Budget Committee meeting is at 7:00 PM on April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024, in the Sunnycrest Conference room, 268B Mammoth Road, Londonderry, NH 03053

Present: Joseph Gagnon -Vice Chair, Kate Burbidge – Secretary, Jason Goldman, Member at large, Sarah Meier, Member at large, R.Cronin, Member at large, D. Plaza, Member at large

#### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by J.Gagnon.

#### **2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / MOMENT OF SILENCE**

J.Gagnon led the Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence.

#### **3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ray Breslin, 3 Gary Drive: Mr. Breslin said he came to the meeting to tell us the committee is doing important work and its much appreciated; in regard to the Master Plan, the Town Manager, Planning Board Chair, and other groups need to look at it more closely. He feels the Master Plan needs a vision, priorities, and a greater understanding of what moved forward ASAP. There are lots of people working on it, but it does not need to be a new plan, as one was created in 2013. The groups should be looking at what needs movement, like water and sewer he believes are important. He will speak to the Planning Board about it and hopes that people in the community are concerned, as it is for the people and the taxpayers. He would like to see more young people involved in the decision-making process. He mentioned there was only one comment session during the last Planning Board meeting, there's one more left, and then that's it. The last meeting had lots of discussion, but that it does feel like it is being pushed through. Some of the plans don't make sense to him, things like traffic need to be taken into concern. Jim Butler had concerns at a Town Council Meeting that he said are valid. Everything is about money and we (the townspeople) need to have input into how it is spent. He hopes that his comments and concerns are valued by the Planning Board, the Town Council, Town Manager, and others. \* Mr. Breslin said that in 2014, the Planning Board took over the Master Plan after someone left and is concerned about where the town is at with planning.

J.Gagnon said it might be good for someone from the Budget Committee “unofficially” attend the Planning Board meetings, but asked if it made sense for this to occur, given that the Budget Committee sees the content when it is presented to the Town Council

\*J.Gagnon waived the time limit at this point in public comment.

during Town Council meetings. J.Gagnon reminded Mr. Breslin that the committee is advisory only, but that the committee has seen an impact over the past year when we have provided input. For the upcoming year, perhaps we could look at the decisions coming from the Planning Board more carefully, as anyone can watch the meetings.

J.Goldman said that it might be a good idea for us to engage with the Planning Board earlier than the presentation to the Town Council, thinking about things like road capacity, so we can get some input in earlier.

A decision was made to add a liaison position to the Planning Board; R.Cronin will be the primary liaison, with J.Goldman acting as backup if needed.

K.Burbidge then motioned to close public comment with R.Cronin seconding the motion. The motion passed (6-0) with all members in favor.

#### 4. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

##### a. Liaison Reports

- i. Schools: D.Plaza called Dan Black and is working on connecting with him. J.Goldman said he had attended the last meeting and said that IEP funding and resources were discussed. He said that the School Board is accepting feedback on the Moose Hill Project from the public. Finally, the School Board was informed that Moose Hill will now be required to provide snacks; the difficulty with this is that Moose Hill does not have a cafeteria, so a proposal was presented that they could do brown bags from other schools' cafeterias, or they could ask the state for a waiver.
- ii. Town Council: J.Goldman attended the previous meeting and said that there is currently a freeze on overtime funding. This came up due to a resource shortage/need with the LFD. The LFD currently has 11 people on shift, when they need 12 per shift. Chief Butler is on the case; he reached out to K.Burbidge a few months ago to get her input on some budgeting needs.
- iii. Town Hall: K.Burbidge reported that she met with the Town Manager and Finance Director the previous week and had a great discussion with them. She informed the team that the Town Hall team is working diligently on finding new options for health insurance. One of the considerations is increasing the buyout payment for those that opt out of health insurance; another discussion was creating a separate plan for legacy workers who would be under "old rules" and there could be a new plan for new hires, who could contribute more of their salary to the monthly premiums. The contract for waste management was also discussed and we may see a sizable increase for next year, but it's still to be determined at the moment.

Finally, the group discussed growth within the town and how we approach traffic, safety, and other town needs. The town manager said it might be a good idea to start a reserve trust for traffic-related asks, like signs, paint, and other traffic needs.

- iv. Department of Public Works (DPW): D.Plaza said he's waiting on a call back from the DPW Director; will report updates at next meeting.
- v. Police: J.Gagnon said we would hear about police during the tour this evening.
- vi. Fire: R.Cronin said the LFD is currently operating in "drop down" mode, using less of the budget than approved, as to not use any overtime money. They are currently in budget now, but the fire trucks have required maintenance coming up which could push them 200% over budget for maintenance.

b. Brainstorm/Documentation of Questions for Liaison Meetings

- i. The questions the committee came up with are as follows:
  - 1. What unplanned events recently occurred that are causing costs to increase/decrease this past month?
  - 2. Anything new over the past month that your team would like to bring forward to the Town Council or Budget Committee for next fiscal year?
  - 3. Were there any unforeseen revenues this past month?

c. May & June Meetings

- i. J.Gagnon asked the committee if we can start the next two meetings 30 minutes earlier to accommodate time for tours. J.Goldman motioned to accept the proposal to start the meetings earlier; K.Burbidge seconded the motion. The motion passed, 6-0.

d. Police Department Tour (started after meeting adjourned at 7:30pm)

- i. Chief Kim Bernard started off the tour by welcoming the committee to the lobby of the Police Station. The station was built in 2004 and they have recently painted the lobby blue. They also added a tinted film to the windows into the station for privacy, and to reduce distractions for people waiting in the lobby. Chief Bernard brought the committee into the records room, showing us where the LPD handles and prepares all court documents, subpoenas, and complete fingerprinting for background checks. The committee then entered the communications room, which is where dispatch was housed until very recently, as the LPD received \$75,000 in grant funding from the Department of Justice to renovate the

space. They currently need three workstations, but will be adding a fourth workstation to be an ally to neighboring communities, as well as being a new revenue stream for the town. There will be two 85" monitors to view security cameras across the community, with one 85" monitor specifically for LHS. An officer in the LPD, JR, has been instrumental in completing a lot of the maintenance, renovations, and updates across the LPD. He has saved the LPD and Londonderry taxpayers thousands of dollars and the current communications room renovation is under budget and is expected to be completed within the next two months. The committee next entered the kitchen area, which is original to the building, and will need to be fixed down the road as there are currently dozens of issues with it. The community room was also recently painted blue and blue LED lighting was installed to brighten it up, which looks great. It's currently used to host events, award ceremonies, and demonstrate handcuffing techniques. The committee also visited the Lieutenants' Office, which is the central command center for the LPD. The lieutenants work around the clock to make sure the town is running smoothly; Rioux also spends most of his time within the LPD in this space. Because the communications room is under renovation, dispatch is currently in the Services Office, temporarily. Chief Bernard said that the two dispatch officers are extremely competent and efficient and are able to pull plates before officers can get to the window of a vehicle. The committee and Chief Bernard discussed hiring, and how much of the hiring happens through word of mouth as it can be difficult to find the right fit. The committee viewed the gym, which is used to maintain the physical fitness standards set by the Police Academy. The committee also toured the maintenance room and saw the two boilers that heat the LPD. They are both very old and will likely be something that will come up soon for replacement. Chief Bernard took the committee to the munitions/firearms space to discuss the mandatory training and safety protocols the LPD adhere to. If officers do not qualify and pass their quarterly training, their gun is removed until they qualify. The LPD maintains incredibly detailed logs on ammunition used, maintenance, parts, and so on. Training can become awfully expensive as the cost of ammunition continues to rise. The committee also visited the holding area where the committee saw the need to replace a cell toilet for \$15,000. The committee also visited the Juvenile area, where Chief Bernard told us the LPD has their CALEA certification, which is the gold standard for police stations across the US; only 1,800 stations are certified, and we are one of them. Chief Bernard brought the committee to the Detective Room where the committee saw the great need to replace the desks. He also informed us that they applied for a COSAP grant which will add a detective to the LPD who will help with drug-related crimes. He also mentioned how time consuming it is to

do background checks, and the process can take months, and even if everything goes perfectly, it still takes 90 days to bring someone onboard. Finally, the Chief discussed with the committee the need to be more accurate with budgeting needs; for example, the default budget will give the LPD \$17k for vehicle maintenance, but the LPD will consistently be at least tens of thousands of dollars “over budget”; the budget needs to match the required needs of the LPD, as the default budget isn’t enough, and cutting back on things like training and maintenance are safety issues.

## 5. PUBLIC COMMENT

**Ray Bresen (spelling?)** 3 Gary Drive: Mr. Bresen said he thinks it is great that the Town Manager is looking into reducing the tax burden by looking into the rising costs of health insurance premiums. He said the town should consider looking into waste and how we manage it. He said that he believes most of the recycling goes into the landfill, that perhaps we should consider separating the recycling and do it the proper way. We can do better than we currently are, as communities like Salem and Rye have separate areas, a baling area, and then they sell their recyclables. We should investigate something like that for Londonderry, save some money. He also mentioned that if the fire trucks are on a lease, we should not be on the hook for maintenance expenses.

## 6. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by R.Cronin, second by D.Plaza, all in favor (6-0). Meeting was adjourned at 7:28 PM for the Police Department Tour.

Member	For	Against	Abstained	Absent
Patrick Cassidy				X
Joseph Gagnon	X			
Kate Burbidge	X			
Ryan Cronin	X			
Jason Goldman	X			
Sarah Meier	X			
David Plaza	X			

## 7. MEETING SCHEDULE

- a. **Thursday, May 16, 2024 at 6:30 P.M. in Sunnycrest Conference Room; Lions Hall Tour will start immediately after meeting adjourns.**
- b. **Thursday, June 20, 2024 at 6:30 P.M. in Sunnycrest Conference Room; The DPW Tour will start immediately after meeting adjourns.**