



**LACONIA CITY COUNCIL  
BUDGET PRESENTATIONS  
APRIL 12, 2010  
CITY HALL – CONFERENCE ROOM 200A  
6:00 P.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Seymour called the meeting to order at the above date and time.

Councilors Knytych, Lahey, Lipman, Baer, Hamel and Bolduc were in attendance. Also present City Manager Eileen Cabanel and Finance Director Pam Reynolds.

**INTRODUCTION**

City Manager Cabanel advised the Council to keep the position of the State of New Hampshire budget in mind when listening to these presentations. The Governor's budget recommends a decrease in Rooms & Meals Tax for the City of approximately \$80,000, as well as an additional 5% of the employer's contributions to the retirement of Fire, Police and Teachers. The total will result in the City having to decrease an additional \$130,000 from the Budget. Councilor Lipman had asked the City Manager to prepare a list of additional cuts that may be made if required, and she has done so. The list will not be presented this evening.

City Manager Cabanel explained the process of preparing the Budget, as well as the scrutiny that goes into every line item in the Budget, before it is proposed to the Council.

**PARKS & RECREATION**

Kevin Dunleavy, Director, accompanied by Amy Lovisek, Assistant Director, addressed the Council.

Director Dunleavy began by explaining the smaller increases and decreases to various items. The largest change is reflected in the Maintenance-Grounds (01-479-235-0002) item with a drastic increase of \$45,000. This increase has been requested to accommodate the maintenance for the many updated fields throughout the City. The costs projected for fertilizing, over seeding, composting and turf maintenance are necessary to keep the fields condition with the increased use. It should also be kept in mind that the City is looking at the possible purchase of a deep tine aerator, which would decrease this item by approximately \$15,000.

In conjunction with the increase to Maintenance-Ground (01-479-235-0002), there has been a drastic decrease to O/S Contracts (01-479-304-0000), for outside services, of approximately \$18,000.

Councilor Lahey asked if there are funds in the current budget to start the fertilization of the fields now. Director Dunleavy confirmed there is, and the deep tine aeration for this budget year will be done by a contracted service. Councilor Lahey further inquired as to the schedule of the fertilizing and maintenance, with the fields looking good at this point and the City having the opportunity to be proactive with the maintenance. Director Dunleavy assured that the Maintenance Foreman has a schedule, and they are looking at the condition of each field currently before assessing a start point, which is intended to prevent over fertilizing or treating the specific locations. Councilor Lahey asked for Director Dunleavy's level of confidence with the deep tine aerator, because he has heard varying opinions on the use of the deep tine aerator, as opposed of the plug method. Assistant Director Lovisek explained that the City currently has a core aerator, and it will be used alternately with the deep tine aerator to avoid over compaction of the soils.

Councilor Baer asked Director Dunleavy if he is anticipating the Maintenance-Grounds account (01-479-235-0002) to remain as high in future years. Director Dunleavy stated that it is all dependent on how the fields respond to the treatments; as time goes on they may need less fertilizer and treatments because the fields may naturally rejuvenate themselves.

Councilor Lipman asked if the possible proceeds from the Laconia Muskrats baseball team have been factored into the Budget. City Manager Cabanel stated that it is too early to make that determination. The arrangement is to have the team be a self perpetuated fund, with any funds leftover going to a City purpose, and it is recommended to be the Parks.

Councilor Lipman inquired as to any efforts made by Parks & Recreation in regards to energy preservation and grants to do so. Finance Director Reynolds advised that Parks & Recreation are not involved because they do not use enough kilowatts in electrical energy area, and the fuel area of the Budget has been decreased to show realistic figures in comparison to actual use.

City Manager Cabanel referenced the areas of Capital Improvement at the Community Center and other facilities that we are now seeing a positive impact from, such as the replacement of old windows, which is now showing a decrease in fuel usage.

Councilor Hamel requested the number of gallons used for fuel at the Community Center, with the thought that the dollar amount would not be a useful figure because of the fluctuation in price from one year to the next. Finance Director Reynolds can get the usage of gallons, but did not have them readily available.

City Manager Cabanel explained that a great deal of time has been spent applying for energy grants, and the City has been awarded three with an estimated value of \$100,000. Finance Director Reynolds explained that the grants received were for lighting upgrades at some of the schools, recycling bins for the parks and beaches, and lights at the parking garage to adjust the voltage.

Councilor Knytych asked if funds have been allocated to bring the other fields in the City up to the standards of Opechee and Leavitt Park. Director Dunleavy noted that seven playing fields have been identified to be in need of the deep tine aeration and extra fertilizing.

Councilor Hamel asked if a schedule for the fertilizing has been established and when the first treatment is going to be. Director Dunleavy advised May 1<sup>st</sup> is the anticipated date for the first aeration and fertilization, an over seeding during the middle of May, and another fertilization in June. Councilor Hamel also inquired as to the status of the bids for the purchase of the deep tine aerator. City Manager Cabanel advised that she does not have funding approval for the purchase, therefore bids have not been collected. Councilor Hamel advised Director Dunleavy to speak with the owner of the company that had given the original quote to get his opinion before making the decision to purchase the aerator.

Councilor Hamel noted that the fields are used heavily by youth teams as well as scholastic teams. When asked what percentage of the fields is used by each party, Assistant Director Lovisek advised it is very close to equal. Continuing, Councilor Hamel asked if the schools contribute any funds to the upkeep of the fields. Assistant Director Lovisek advised they do not.

Councilor Lahey asked City Manager Cabanel if the City has the funds to purchase the aerator in this fiscal year, with the concern that it needs to be done before the baseball seasons start. City Manager Cabanel advised that someone is being contracted to do the aeration this year, and the purchase of the aerator would be for use after the season.

Looking into other aspects of the Budget, Councilor Lipman addressed the difference in the actual compared to actual for 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 Water-Sewer (01-419-203-0000) for City Hall. It is his opinion that the difference is large enough to warrant an adjustment in this line item for 2010/2011. City Manager Cabanel will look at the current usage and make an adjustment if necessary.

Councilor Hamel inquired with Assistant Director Lovisek what she anticipates for programs this summer. Assistant Director Lovisek has made the offer to have only three beaches fully staffed this season, although the proposed budget does have all five beaches fully staffed. City Manager Cabanel explained that she has this on her list of additional cuts that may be necessary.

Councilor Lipman asked if there was a possibility of decreasing Police Station Maintenance Lights-Power (01-435-202-0000). Councilor Hamel echoed this suggestion, noting the amount of power used for a new building is higher than would be expected. City Manager Cabanel reminded Councilor Hamel that the building is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and even though not all of the building is used all of the time, it is still being used.

## **POLICE**

Chief Mike Moyer, accompanied by Captains Steve Clark and Bill Clary, addressed the Council.

Chief Moyer noted that the majority of the proposed budget is level funded. There are a few increases, but the statistics provided will show the justification of these increases. Chief Moyer provided the Council with a booklet containing the initiatives and objectives of the Police Department.

In an effort to help reduce maintenance and fuel costs, the mountain bike program has been expanded. Patrolling for these officers includes the WOW Trail, Downtown, the South End, Lakeport, and at times the Weirs Beach area. In addition, a grant was awarded to purchase a new motorcycle, which otherwise would have been leased.

Overtime (01-437-101-0050), Longevity (01-437-109-0000) and Salaries (01-437-101-0000) have been requested to increase.

When looking at Motorcycle Week, a decrease of \$8,000 was recommended from Salaries – Out of Town Police (87-448-101-0001), as well as a \$1,000 decrease from Salaries – Overtime (87-448-105-0000). Captain Clark has done a great job of scheduling the officers during the week to help cut down on the overtime, as well as sending personnel home early whenever possible, especially during inclement weather.

City Manager Cabanel confirmed that three cruisers will need to be replaced this year. Chief Moyer stated the request was originally for four, but after making adjustments, three would be sufficient. Captain Clary explained the process of rotation of vehicles to the Council, including the years of service for each vehicle.

Councilor Hamel asked for the mileage for each vehicle before it is rotated. Captain Clary responded that when a vehicle is at 100,000 miles, it is moved out of front line service. Chief Moyer added that the miles on these vehicles are “tough” miles, meaning they are high intensity. Although idling is being discouraged, in the winter months it cannot always be eliminated due to cold conditions.

Councilor Hamel asked if vehicles taken out of service are being used by other departments within the City, or if they are going to auction. Captain Clary explained that if the vehicle can be used by other departments, it is. When a police cruiser goes to auction, in most instances it is not able to be driven. At the point it leaves the Police Department to go to another department, it has well over 100,000 miles on it.

Councilor Hamel inquired to the cost of a new cruiser. Captain Clary quoted approximately \$22,000 with an additional cost of \$3,000-\$5,000 to equip it for service. Councilor Hamel noted his concern is with retrofitting future vehicles with City equipment as this is the last year the Crown Victoria will be manufactured. Captain Clary has been told that several components will be transferable, but other components are unknown at this time.

Councilor Lipman asked if the Chief has a sense of the ending overtime figures for 2009/2010, with the previous year falling below projected and this year showing the same. Chief Moyer explained that some of the overtime is contractual due to court appearances, with other time being because of holidays that are required to be paid out per contracts. In November, Chief Moyer presented the Council with his planned efforts to reduce overtime, and the department has been working diligently to achieve. One of the most effective ways the department is saving on overtime is having a Sergeant make calls to defendants before court dates and getting a plea so the officer does not need to go to court, as well as having salaried officers cover supervisor shifts.

Councilor Hamel asked how many cruisers leave town at night to go home. Chief Moyer responded two cruisers leave town at night.

Councilor Hamel asked how many cellular phones the department has, as well as the cost. Captain Clary stated there are 10 cellular phones with a cost of approximately \$400 each month. They are assigned to the sergeants, prosecutor and captain, and are required to be taken home and left on after shift. The plan has recently changed from Sprint to Verizon for a better rate, which is government contracted with pooled minutes.

Councilor Lipman requested Finance Director Reynolds to look at the cost possibility of changing other telecommunications to internet lines from hard lines.

Councilor Hamel asked if the department is fully staffed. Chief Moyer stated they currently have one opening due to a resignation which they are actively pursuing from testing done in October. They do have one officer that has been out due to an injury since last June, with no anticipated date of return as of yet.

## **FIRE**

Chief Ken Erickson presented statistics and information to the Council from the attached power point presentation.

Chief Erickson explained that there are eight firefighters on duty for each shift. Monday through Saturday, one extra firefighter is on staff funded by Lakes Region General Healthcare. This allows the department to handle additional calls without concern of staffing.

This year's budget includes an increase in health insurance of 11%, retirement costs of 3%, and overall salary increasing 2%. The low increase in salary is due to a cut in overtime by 29%, which will result in less training time, a decrease in calls for extra help to clear hydrants, and less coverage at points that can be predicted. There will also be a decrease in the Call Force, which is down to 10 call firefighters, by 27% because the training costs will not exist. Protective clothing and pager radios have also been decreased by 30% and 21% respectively. The training budget has also been decreased by 33%, in addition to the training that has been cut from the overtime line. With all of the cuts being made, the total increase to the proposed budget is 2%.

Chief Erickson took some time to highlight the improvements made throughout the department this year, which include achieving multi-family home inspections as well as stabilizing response time for various services.

Last week, the Laconia Fire Department hit over \$1 million in grants. This is an amazing accomplishment, and it is credited to Deputy Chief Deb Pendergast for her efforts. She is constantly looking for available grant money and completing as many grant applications as possible.

Councilor Lahey applauded the presentation made by Chief Erickson.

Councilor Hamel commended Deputy Pendergast for her efforts with grants. Chief Erickson also noted that Deputy Roffo has been active in getting some smaller grants for other projects, such as laptops with GPS capabilities in all of the fire trucks.

Councilor Hamel thanked Chief Erickson for his efforts to control overtime spending, however, the coverage needed for sick or vacation time is growing and the cost is higher than it would be to hire someone on a "vacation relief" situation. One person could move from shift to shift and cover these times, and the cost would be considerably less than paying overtime. Chief Erickson stated that he doesn't think it would be easy to find someone to work on-call. Constant staffing versus overstaffing is cheaper in the long run due to the insurance and training costs associated with hiring a new employee.

This Budget Hearing was continued into the regular Council Meeting.

True Record Attest

Mary A. Cote  
City Clerk