

*BOARD OF SELECTMEN Tuesday, February 20, 2024, 6:00 P.M.
Special Meeting MINUTES*

In attendance: E. Couture, E. Nunes, J. D'Angelo

Visitors: R. Regolo, R. Darin, P. Jacobs, T. Hajek, M. Reimers, E. Blewitt, R. Pleines, N. Gorski, D. Offner

- 1) The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.
- 2) The fire company, led by R. Darin, spoke to the operating budget for the KVFC.

R. Darin spoke to apparatus repairs, maintenance, and inspections lines and what those items consisted of. This is a line where there are concerns about future costs due to increasing costs of equipment, and questions around whether the lines should be combined in budget preparation.

It was noted that informal conversations have occurred around unanticipated costs related to equipment repair and maintenance with the chair of BoF and BoS. It was noted that tires have a lifespan of 10 years and that costs were a concern in the current fiscal year.

The repairs & maintenance line was noted as handling the physical structures of the KVFC. Maintenance costs are increasing because of the age of the physical plants and the consequences of physical conditions on the property.

Dues & Subscriptions was described as relating to management software and systems in place. The largest subcategory was noted to be \$13,000 in this line.

Electricity costs were noted to have held steady over the past fiscal cycle.

Equipment repairs and maintenance was noted as being debated within the fire company as to what is necessary and proper.

Propane costs have also held steady.

The IT budget is increasing as information technology as a component of firefighting continues to expand. The company has utilized an individual to handle IT upgrades in the department and believes that the requested amount represents a sustainable value.

Administrative Service & Support sees a large increase in request this year. This relates to a recognized need in the department for expansion of a clerking position from 5 hrs. to 12.5 hrs. per week and a bump in hourly rate. It was noted that Chester currently has an administrative support position at 20 hrs. per week and they are a peer Fire Company.

It was also noted that getting volunteers to do clerical work has been an issue as a volunteer fire company, largely due to time constraints.

Training & education was elaborated on for the edification of the board's new members. The fire company largely handles training in-house, however there is an ongoing shift to a hybrid model that includes bringing in outside instruction to supplement in-house instruction.

Waterhole maintenance was also elaborated on for the board. Given the lack of water main infrastructure around town, the KVFC relies upon in-ground water supplies and surface

water. These need to be inspected and maintained to ensure access to water in the event of an emergency.

Following exposition on the operating budget, the capital requests were covered.

Turnout gear is an ongoing rotating capital expenditure in the MYCIP. This item covers replacement of equipment fire fighters wear to calls.

The security system request was subsequently noted.

The request for multi-band radios was explained and had context around it provided. Recent upgrades to the radio system had occurred in the last 5 years, this request would fund radio system implementation to allow for interaction with the state radio system. This would function as a hybrid model as the current equipment is functional, but some neighboring communities are utilizing only the states radio system and others are similarly hybridized. Given the need for mutual assistance in the region, this would assist fire fighting efforts with our neighbors.

A vertical rack storage system is also being requested in the upcoming fiscal year. Given space constraints with regards to the size of trucks and the need to store equipment this is seen as a method of handling space constraints.

On the inflatable rescue boat request, it was noted that Killingworth does have several larger bodies of water that can represent response challenges. It was noted that other communities have such equipment and this was a matter of response time and was debated within the KVFC.

Pumper Truck 851 was also discussed as a capital request. It was noted that there is a 3-4 year lead time on purchasing trucks of this type and that the current truck is 24 years old. It was also noted that expected truck life is 10 years and that given fiscal considerations the KVFC does its best to maintain equipment.

With regards to items that had been planned for on the MYCIP, it was noted that priorities had shifted.

In closing, R. Darin noted that there are difficulties in getting volunteers to volunteer and that the department is running a lean operation.

E. Couture spoke to the need to ensure that the reasoning behind capital items moving in the MYCIP is elaborated on.

J. D'Angelo asked about OSHA NFPA testing: what it covers, how often, and how it's handled. It was noted that hose testing is handled by an outside firm, but this testing covers equipment that is used in an emergency situation. Examples were given regarding mask fitting and fitting turnout gear to the individual firefighter.

It was asked how many active firefighters there are. The answer is approximately 50, non-inclusive of junior firefighters.

The tanker truck (851) was noted to have a target flow rate of 1000 gallons per minute and to be handled by one individual. It was noted that refurbishing the truck was not an option given its age.

P. Jacobs noted that a large part of the operating budget revolves around testing.

Questions were raised about the radio system request related to the age of the current system and clarity about its use. The current system is approximately 5 years old. Phasing in or moving to a hybrid system would allow two radios in a truck to enable better communication with neighboring towns who use the state radio system (Durham was used as an example).

The question was asked as to what the priorities were for the Capital request or whether they were listed in priority order. It was noted that the list was not delivered in priority order, nor was there a clear prioritization prior to the meeting. In conversation the items of the truck and turnout gear replacement were highlighted. It was also asked that some collaboration with the KVFC in prioritization be done if cuts were made.

E. Nunes asked a question related to the security system in use currently and what the history of need has been. It was noted that the current system has been in place over a decade and that there had been a break-in at Station 2 several years ago and equipment had been taken.

The question was raised by J. D'Angelo as to how fuel costs are handled. The town purchases diesel for DPW and the Fire Company.

The question was raised as to the reasoning for an inflatable boat in the capital expenditures. There are several large bodies of water in Killingworth where access to watercraft would reduce response times. Other towns do have such equipment, but having equipment in town would reduce response time in the event of an emergency.

The question was raised by E. Couture as to how much volume of space would be gained from implementing the requested vertical rack system in Firehouse 1. An answer was not immediately available, but it was noted that the calculation had been done by a member with an engineering background and could be obtained.

D. Offner spoke to the work that the fire company does and also to his concerns that the salt water situation on town campus be handled so that damage to equipment be minimized.

- 3) The board conducted a brief discussion of the capital budget and the items in the prospective year.

J. D'Angelo asked how capital funding was raised and other sources of funding. E. Couture and R. Regolo spoke to how capital funding is transferred from the operating budget, additional funding comes through the town general fund, and finally that bonding is a potential source. E. Couture also noted that for larger projects there are opportunities for federal funding through Congressionally Directed Spending.

A general process question was raised to when certain deadlines would need to be met. A walkthrough of the process was provided by R. Regolo.

The board discussed scheduling, achieving consensus that HKYFS and the Committee on Aging would be asked to speak at the subsequent regular Board Meeting.

- 4) The Board adjourned at 7:23 pm.