

Board of Commissioners
Minutes
January 17, 2024

The Commission meeting convened at 10:00 a.m. in the meeting room at the North Conway Water Precinct 104 Sawmill Lane North Conway, NH. The following were present:

Suzanne Nelson	Chad McCarthy
James Umberger	Jason Gagnon
Deborah Fauver joined via telephone	

Call the Meeting to Order

Meeting called to order at 10:00 AM by Commissioner Nelson.

Minutes

Motion of Commissioner Umberger and seconded by Commissioner Fauver to approve the Public Meeting Minutes from 1/3/2024 and the 1/3/2024 Non-Public Meeting Minutes.

Motion carried by a 3-0 -0 voice vote.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Membership:

37

Personnel:

One member on leave of absence.

The Lieutenant's position was filled. The Officers came up with a nominee, brought it to the Chiefs and the new Lieutenant is Gary Chandler.

Training:

Department Training: Apparatus orientation.

Engine 3 Training: Water Supply.

Rescue Training: Elevator rescue.

Department Activities:

Place of assembly inspections, rental and life safety inspection on going.

2024 Fire Budget Draft #1

Emergency Calls:

Five year call average is 1,276 calls a year.

Five year monthly call average is 106 calls a month.

Five year daily call average is 3.49 calls a day.

The department has responded to 1,586 calls year to date for 2023

Monthly call average was 132.16 calls a month for 2023.

Daily call average was 4.34 calls a day for 2023.

The department responded to 70 Calls for the month of January Year to date.

Apparatus / Trucks:

No change on work to be done to Engine 3. Work will start ASAP.

Equipment Issues:

No change

Purchase for New Equipment:

No change, equipment is on order.

2023 Budget

There was a discussion about the 2023 Budget. The Department finished the year with about 89.95% of the budget used. The Department went over budget on a couple of line items but after the straggler bills have come in, Chief anticipates the budget used still hovering around 90%.

Budget Draft 2024

There was a discussion about the 2024 Budget Draft. Insurance has increased about 15% (Health and Liability) and there is a new full-time position allocated for 6 months, pending voter approval, the new hire would be coming on board in June.

Commissions Report/Superintendent's Report

Annual Meeting Timeline and Key Dates

Candidate Filing

Two Commissioners (3-yr term, 1-yr term)

Clerk, Treasurer, Moderator (1-yr terms)

February 7 – February 16, 2024

Petitioned Article

No later than 4:00 PM February 27, 2024

Bond & Budget Hearing

February 28, 2024

Bond Hearing: 6 PM

Budget Hearing: Immediately Following Bond Hearing

Annual Meeting

March 27, 2024 @ 7:00 PM

Voting begins @ 4 PM

Project Status

Asset Management – Energy Efficiency Grant (Solar at Well #2)

No change. Currently waiting for additional survey work to reassess solar array placement after the last flooding event reached heights not previously recorded in this area.

Asset Management – Traditional Asset Management

We have our wastewater assets uploaded into LLumin, as well as the baseline of our water and wastewater daily rounds. I want to give credit to Alexis who has been working really hard on this project and note that because of her efforts, the LLumin team has been very impressed with the quality and quantity of work the Precinct has done so far during implementation.

We will also be meeting with Raftelis, our consultant for the water/sewer rate evaluations, on Wednesday. As you will see from the proposed budgets, we are very tight headed into 2024.

Cell Tower

No change. As discussed at the last meeting, the Precinct will put together an RFP for cell tower companies to build/lease a tower. I hope to have this together soon. In the meantime, the Precinct has been connected with the group looking to install a temporary tower for Verizon and the Seavey Street property is being considered.

2024 Proposed Budgets

General Trends

Property/Liability:	+17.8%
HealthTrust:	+15.6%
CBA (wages):	+3.5%

All budgets presented today use the same approach the Precinct has used for decades: present the true cost of operating and maintaining our systems to the standard our customers expect. Over the past 7+ years, NCWP has been fortunate that growth within the service area has outpaced rising costs and rates have therefore been able to hold steady. With recent inflationary pressures and the workload in the office requiring additional staff to keep up with it all, we're no longer at a point where Precinct growth can keep up with the rising costs. You'll note that the water and sewer draft budgets each show a deficit which reflects this. At our next Commission meeting, I hope to have recommendations from Raftelis for potential increases to our water and sewer rates.

Sewer

As of today, the 2023 sewer budget is at 99.3%. Costs continue to rise for just about everything. For 2024, the draft sewer operating budget increase is 5.7%. The biggest drivers are personnel costs – specifically, the hiring of a wastewater operator 5 months before the retirement of the Chief Operator for training purposes and the inclusion of ½ of our new full-time administrative position.

Water

As of today, the 2023 water budget is at 98.9%. For 2024, the draft water operating budget increase is 6.3%. The largest drivers of cost increase in 2024 are again personnel costs – although the increase looks higher than it should be because the 2023 budget only included 4.5 water operators (due to the hiring timeline to replace an operator who left) and in 2024 we're back at full-strength of 5 operators for the full year. 2024 also adds in ½ of the new full-time administrative position. In this budget, I have tried to scale back a bit more than I would like on the repairs/maintenance lines – I don't feel great about that, however, and would love to bump them back to 2023 levels (an additional \$25K or so) depending on where our water rate discussion goes. 2024 again does not include any contribution to Water Capital Reserve, other than the buy-in fees.

Commissioners (General Fund)

As of today, the 2023 General Fund is at 89.5% of the budget. For 2024, this is one area where we don't anticipate any large increases – the draft 2024 budget is down 0.4% for operating expenses and down 1.1% for total expenses (including long term debt payments). One thing to note is that the tax levy shown is most likely wrong due to the recent revaluation in Conway. The numbers shown are based on 2023 valuation and 2022 equalization ratios (the latest data published by DRA). The new data doesn't get officially released until September so we're hoping to get updated "unofficial" numbers so that we can project tax levy and tax rates with some semblance of accuracy in time for budget hearing.

Are we able to gear our rate increase towards commercial as opposed to Residential?

I'll mention that to Raftelis and see what we can do. The way that our By Laws are written, only full-time residents can vote. If we have a session on the rates and the Commercial representation doesn't show up, then ok!

Signing of Checks

Motion of Commissioner Umberger and seconded by Commissioner Fauver to ratify checks signed out of session:

- a. Accounts Payable checks dated 01/18/2024
- b. Payroll checks dated 01/18/2024

Motion carried by a 3-0-0 voice vote.

Non-Public Session

At 10:46AM, Motion of Commissioner Umberger and seconded by Commissioner Nelson to enter into RSA 91-A:3, II(a) The dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a meeting and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted.

Commission returned to Public Session at 11:59 AM.

Motion of Commissioner Umberger and seconded by Commissioner Fauver to seal the Non-Public Minutes as it was determined that divulgence would render a proposed action ineffective.

Jim Yes

Sue Yes

Deb Yes

Adjourn

Having nothing further to come before this public meeting, motioned by Commissioner Umberger seconded by Commissioner Fauver to adjourn this public meeting at 12:00PM.

Motion carried by a 3-0-0 voice vote.

Respectfully,

Hannah Andersen
Recording Secretary