

**Milford Budget Advisory Committee**  
**Approved Minutes**  
**December 3, 2014**

**Present:** Matt Lydon, Karen Mitchell, Jim Roccio,  
Paul Bartolomucci, Peg Seward, Jolie  
Whitten, Steve Sareault

**Absent:** Burt Becker, Chris Pank

**Guests:** Kathy Bauer (Secretary, Board of Selectman),  
Eric Schelberg (Ambulance Director), Mike  
McInerney (Community Media)

**Business:** Meeting called to order at 6:30 by Matt Lydon

**Ambulance**

Eric Schelberg presented the proposed Ambulance budget for 2015, which was up 4.8%. The department consists of full time, part time and volunteer staff (36 volunteers with 6 in a field training program). We have two ambulances that run 24 hours a day with ALS (advanced life support) with 1 paramedic on full time and 2 paramedics on Saturdays. The ambulances get staggered use each year to keep the mileage from being too high on one particular vehicle. Milford also has a PRV (paramedic response vehicle) that can be used if the call does not require an ambulance. The ambulance Director uses a vehicle similar to the PRV to respond to calls as well.

The Town recently participated with Wilton in an exchange for a 2001 ambulance that had less mileage and was bigger (full size box) than our 2003 model. Wilton was trading theirs in and they were able to get the same value for our trade in and we were able to benefit from their 2001 model. The agreement states that they can borrow this ambulance for up to two weeks at a time if needed.

One major change this year was in how the Ambulance department handles its payroll. The volunteers used to be paid by stipend (\$1 for every hour), but will now be under wages and paid \$20 for every 6 hours worked. Another addition under wages will be the position of Clinical Educator. This is a current staff member and will be under wages FT and OT.

Milford Ambulance participates in a no cost lease with the State for two ventilators, which get loaned out to communities. There is no purchase cost up front, but we are responsible for the maintenance costs. We received them at the end of October and at the end of the lease they are to go back to the State. At this point the term is indefinite and we will not be responsible for replacing them if at the end of the lease they are outdated.

Some of the increased costs in the budget for 2015 resulted from the additional cost for hours of the Clinical Educator, the maintenance costs for the two ventilators, tuition reimbursement for 50% of the EMT classes (which comes with an agreement to work for the Town for a certain time frame after completion of the EMT certification) and an increase in gasoline expenditures resulting from having to transport to a hospital instead of St. Joe's facility (formerly Milford Medical Center) as it is now an urgent care facility only.

In addition, the projected revenue for 2015 is around 621k, which is down due to less than expected call volume for transports from the St. Joe's urgent care facility.

A question was raised regarding potential areas for reducing budget. Specifically around the need for the ventilators and the maintenance costs for the year. Eric stated that the ventilators are not just a "nice to have". Could we live without them, yes, but there have been multiple situations throughout the year where they would have given additional, needed care.

## **Community Media**

Mike McInerney presented the proposed Community Media budget for 2015, which was up 12.7%. The Town website averages approximately 6300 users/month (just under 25k page views/month). The top 5 page hits are consistently: Police, Transfer Station, Town Clerk, Recreation and Assessing. The site down time over the past year was only about 90 minutes, which was mainly due to a time switch error. The mobile device and tablet use is constantly increasing. Mike stated that this year they are looking to take the heavily trafficked sites and enhance them. This increase is shown under the line item "other professional services".

An important distinction to be aware of, is that the Community Media budget is just the website. The fees from the Comcast users covers everything outside the functionality of the website.

## **Other Business**

There was a question asked regarding the BOS thoughts about the proposed funding sheet for non-departmental entities asking for Town funds. Kathy Bauer stated that the BOS agrees with the concept of having a standard form, but feels the proposed format is too lengthy and complicated. Karen Mitchell requested that a member of the BOS work with her to simplify the form to a point where necessary data is received and the form is more easily utilized.

There was a question regarding the fireworks warrant article as to whether or not the Police detail is paid from a separate warrant article. Is there a separate detail fund?

There was again a request from the BAC to receive a spreadsheet soon with the total estimated tax impact inclusive of the warrant articles.

There was a question as to whether or not we are under any Union contract negotiations this year.

There was a discussion around the overall proposed vs. actual budget over the last 4-5 years regarding the underspent money. Specific attention was paid to the wage line items that for some departments were consistently and/or significantly underspent each year. The question was raised as to where this money goes. Kathy stated that it goes back into the General Fund. The discussion acknowledged that there may be some logical explanations as to why some money goes underspent each year, but that it is not apparent and there is need for more transparency and understanding.

A comment was made at that weeks BOS meeting that there were no other areas to cut the budget. If wage money is being consistently underspent, this may be one area to look at for reduction.

Kathy Bauer took these questions down to get answers to the BAC.

Next weeks guests are: SVTC (blue bus), Police and Community Development

The following meeting on Dec. 17<sup>th</sup> will have DPW, Conservation Commission and the IS departments.

The budget and Bond Hearing is set for Monday, Jan 12<sup>th</sup>

The Deliberative Session is set for Saturday, Jan 31<sup>st</sup>

The next meeting is 12/10/14.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:17pm.

Respectfully submitted by, Karen Mitchell, Secretary