

**JOINT MEETING OF
FARMINGTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN AND BUDGET COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, February 5, 2014

Chairman Ryan Morgan called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. with the following members present: Dennis Pike, Joshua Bell and Jessica Berry. Andrew Hufnagel was absent. Town Manager Richard Davis, Town Secretary Linda Grant, Fire Rescue Chief Terry Bell, Deputy Chief and Budget Committee Chairman Clyde Ross, Deputy Chief Timothy A. Hardy, Captains Mike Bell and Timothy D. Hardy, Lt. Mike Melville, Firefighters Scott Baxter and Ted Baxter, Assessor Mark Caldwell, Budget Committee members Beth Edwards, Stephan Bunker, Matt Smith, and Lloyd Smith, and members of the press and public were also in attendance.

ITEM 1: Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Chairman Ryan Morgan led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ITEM 2: To Review and Make Recommendations on the Proposed 2014 Fire Rescue Department Budget

Richard Davis stated that the Board of Selectmen has not yet made its final recommendation on this budget. The Budget Committee's final recommendation of \$411,828 on January 22nd was reviewed by the Selectmen at their last meeting on January 28th, and that Board decided that it wanted to see more options for staffing. Mr. Davis reviewed the adjustments that were made in the Postage and Books/Periodicals line items of this budget at that time. He explained that the purpose of this meeting is for both Committees to hear the proposals together, thereby allowing the Budget Committee to change its recommendation if it so desires. Chief Terry Bell reviewed the following three staffing proposals, with his recommendation being Proposal 3:

Proposal 1	Two (2) per diem firefighters, 7 days/week, 8 hours/day	\$356,987
Proposal 2	Three (3) per diem firefighters, 7 days/week, 8 hours/day	\$389,291
Proposal 3	Three (3) per diem firefighters, 5 days/week, 8 hours/day and Two (2) per diem firefighters, Saturday and Sunday, 8 hours/day	\$380,056

At Budget Committee member Stephan Bunker's request, Chief Bell reviewed the number of members, their ages, job status, and call response of current personnel, as well as utilization of mutual aid, current number of per diem employees and their work schedule, and strategies for increasing membership of the department. A full-time department, regionalization, and fire districts were also discussed. Ryan Morgan pointed

ITEM 2: To Review and Make Recommendations on the Proposed 2014 Fire Rescue Department Budget (Cont.)

out that lack of manpower is a problem County wide, and many fire departments and municipalities are discussing possible solutions. Richard Davis stated that television station WCSH6 did a very informative segment on this universal problem last Thursday night. He encouraged everyone to watch it on the WCSH6 or Farmington Fire Rescue websites. Mr. Davis also stated that Andrew Hufnagel asked him to pass along his concern that public perception is that the Fire Rescue Department is pushing for a full-time department. Chief Bell stated that it is just the opposite, as his research has shown that would be a very costly endeavor. Stephan Bunker reported that a Regionalization Study that he had recently reviewed, which Farmington-Jay-Livermore-Livermore Falls-Wilton had done with a consultant back in 2006, revealed the same problems - very few of which have yet to be resolved.

b. Budget Committee's Recommendation

Chairman Ryan Morgan turned the meeting over to Budget Committee Chairman Clyde Ross, who asked those members present if they wished to change their recommendation after hearing the three proposals. Committee member Lloyd Smith pointed out that of the five members present two will be abstaining, and five voters are needed for a nine member Committee to meet a quorum. Chairman Morgan stated that since they did not have a quorum their last recommendation will stand and go on the Town Warrant. Mr. Ross voiced his concern with Budget Committee members not coming to this meeting and how such a large difference between the Selectmen and Budget Committee recommendations will be perceived, even with a detailed explanation from the floor. Richard Davis stated that he can explain the differences, but prefers to see a united front on the Warrant recommendations. Therefore, he suggested that the Selectmen make their recommendation tonight, and the Budget Committee attempt to reconvene Thursday evening, with Chairman Ross in charge of urging all members to be present. Mr. Davis stated that the Warrant has to be approved at the Selectmen's meeting next Tuesday, February 11th.

a. Board of Selectmen's Recommendation

Joshua Bell moved to recommend Chief Bell's Proposal 3 in the amount of \$380,056 for the 2014 Fire Rescue budget, which is an increase of \$62,714 over the 2013 budget; Dennis Pike seconded.

The Selectmen and Budget Committee members further discussed the difference between the two recommendations, as well as the importance of urging a County-wide effort in finding a solution to the problem of lack of manpower.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 4 ABSENT 1 MOTION CARRIED
(Hufnagel)

