Preston Board of Selectmen
Special Meeting
Budget Workshop
Thursday, February 14, 2019
Preston Town Hall
5:30 pm

BOS Present: Robert Congdon, Lynwood Crary
BOS Excused: Michael Sinko

Call to Order
1st Selectman Congdon called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm

Fire Department

Fire Chief Tom Casey explained that the Fire Department has 2 budgets that consist of 1. Salary and Benefits and 2. Operational, and he will begin with salary and benefits budget.

- Call volumes have increased. During the 70/80s both Fire departments combine responded to less than 100 emergency calls a year with 40 to 50 active members.
- Respond now to 700 with 5 or 6 active members
- Certification and training in order to respond to emergencies has increased, with classes that require 100 to 200 hours of class time.
- 40 hours hazardous material technician certification is required to mitigate a hazardous material incident.
- 2 in 2 out mandated rule that there will always be two firefighters together who enter a hazard area that has immediate danger to life or health.
- EMT certification is required to render aid in the back of an ambulance. EMT class is 200 hours with re-certification required every 3 years.
- EMR certification required to drive an ambulance. Class is 80 hours.
- Average emergency call takes 2 hours, structure fire 3.5 hours and vehicle fire is 1.75, motor vehicle accident is anywhere between 2 and 10 hours.
- Due to societal changes Volunteer fire fighters has dropped.
- July 2016 to June 2017 there were 147 calls in which no certified trained personnel other than the Fire Chief responded. These are not just ambulance calls, they are also fire and rescue calls.
  - No fire apparatus other than the fire Chief vehicle responded.
  - 110 EMS call requiring transport with no adequate crew for transport.
- Of the 10 newest volunteers 7 have chosen not to take certification classes or have been unable to pass the exams, 8 of those members are not qualified to drive fire apparatus.
- Currently only have 3 EMT certified personnel and 2 EMR ambulance drivers who are responding on a regular basis.
• Current volunteers continue to age and either are not responding or gravitate to less physically demanding jobs like traffic control.

T. Casey stated due to the decline of volunteers, and adding just 1 person last budget year shows it does alleviate some of the lack of response respectfully requesting an increase in paid staffing of at least two qualified certified Fire Fighter EMT that are ready to respond 24/7.

• Change paid staffing shifts from 8 hour shifts to 12 hour shifts 7 days a week.
• 1 full time firefighter on 7 days a week. 3 12 hour days on/3 12 hour days off which will provide continuous day time coverage.
• Maintain the 2 part time per Diem firefighters on the week days and add 2 more on the week ends.
• Add 2 part time per Diem fire fighters 8:00 p to 8:00 am 7 days a week.

T. Casey explained that an additional full time fire fighter will cost $57,814.00, the additional part time coverage will cost $201,660.00. total increase of $260,796.00. Current full timer's salary is $61,913.00 current part time Per Diem113,700.00, which is $175,613.00 currently currently. The current budget and new request totals to $435,087.00 T. Casey noted that Poquetanuck donates$20,000.00 per year from their ambulance fund to the per Diem staff's salary and he has not subtracted that amount from his request.

• Requesting 2% increase for the Fire Chief, current full time firefighter/EMT, with the addition of full time fire fighter/EMT with a starting salary of $47,000.00.
• Requesting 2% increase for the part time staff.
• Requesting $201, 660.00 to provide for the hours discussed,

1st Selectman Congdon recessed the meeting at 6:40 pm in order to open and recess the BoS regularly scheduled meeting.
1st Selectman called the meeting back to order at 6:41 pm.

T. Casey passed out and discussed the Fire Department's Operational Budget.
Total budget
Salary and Benefits and Operational
~ $700,000

Building Department
Tabled

Police
Tabled

Public Comment
Andy Bilodeau, Preston resident commented that it was noted the BoS and Fire Chief do not have the Fire Department's current Incentive Plan, so that should be requested and provided my the members. A. Bilodeau wondered when the last time Poquetanuck Ambulance was audited. A. Bilodeau noted that the BoF has not been provided quarterly financials.

Adjournment
A motion was made by R. Congdon and seconded by L. Crary to adjourn the meeting at 6:49 pm.