

**Preston Board of Selectmen
Special Meeting
Budget Workshop
Thursday, February 25, 2021
Teleconference Call
6:00 pm**

BoS Present: Sandra Allyn-Gauthier, Jerry Grabarek, Ken Zachem

Call to Order

1st Selectwoman Sandra Allyn-Gauthier called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm

1st Selectwoman Sandra Allyn-Gauthier stated *Per Lamont's Executive Order 7b, Participants are reminded to state your name and title before speaking. Please help us make this conference call as useful as possible by keeping your phone on mute when not speaking. We are keeping the line open to all participants by default, but if background noise becomes a problem, we will mute all participants and ask participants to use "chat" to be selectively unmuted. Also note that we will be recording this meeting to comply with open meeting requirements.*

Fire Department

Fire Chief Tom Casey

- 1.5% increase in salaries

Chief Casey noted that staffing is a serious issue that needs to be addressed due to the decline in volunteer firefighters. During 2020 the fire Department responded to 679 calls and 545 of those calls had no volunteer response.

Chief Casey gave a PowerPoint presentation and discussed the Fire Department's line item requests in detail

Chief Casey noted and summarized the 3 budget requests he presented;

1. Without any staff increase
 - Includes 1.5% salary increase for current employees
 - \$1475 increase in insurance premiums
 - \$19,378 total increase
 - \$737,733 FY2022 budget request
2. Additional staff – firefighter
 - \$50,000 salary
 - \$22,250 health insurance
 - \$91,628 total increase
 - \$809,983 FY2022 budget increase

- 3. Additional staff (per diem only)
 - \$50,000 increase
 - \$69,378 total increase
 - \$787,733 FY2022 budget increase

1st Selectwoman Allyn-Gauthier asked if other towns are having success recruiting volunteers. Fire Chief Casey stated that he sees the opposite. In the last 3 months Lisbon, Canterbury and Stonington have added paid staff.

1st Selectwoman Allyn-Gauthier asked what volunteers need to do to get certification and training so they can do more than logistics.

Chief Casey stated the bare minimum to just drive the ambulance is an 80 hour class, with re-certification every 2 years.

To get in the back of the ambulance, you have to be an EMT. That requires 120 hours of training with re-certification every 2 years.

Firefighter 1, Entry level firefighting which requires no lead but following someone with experience requires a 16 week course, skills level test and written exam.

Firefighter 2 requires a 12 week course, skills level test and written exam.

1st Selectwoman Allyn-Gauthier asked what towns the current per diems are from

Chief Casey answered Groton, Mohegan Tribe, New London.

J. Grabarek noted that the BoF has not received a treasurer's report from Poquetanuck for some time.

Chief Casey stated that he will make sure the treasurer gets that information to the BoF.

Public Comment

None

Adjournment

a motion was made by JG and seconded by KZ to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 pm.

All in favor. Motion carries.

Respectfully submitted,



Roberta Charpentier
Preston Recording Secretary