



Town of Wilmington

Finance Committee

121 Glen Road Wilmington, 01887

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TOWN OF WILMINGTON, MA

Finance Committee Meeting

Thursday, February 8, 2024

Finance Committee Chairman, John F. Doherty III called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Members present were Theresa Manganelli, Vice-Chairman, Chris DiOrio, Brad Jackson, Andrew Levigne, Joseph Lavino, Scott Neville, and David Tamang.

Present in interest: Louis Cimaglia IV, Temporary Town Manager, Michael Frotten and Patti Meehan of Veterans Services, Terri Marciello, Director of Elderly Services, John O'Neil, Director of Information Technology, and Elizabeth Lawrenson, Town Clerk.

Absent: Maryanne Gallezzo

Mr. Doherty informed the audience that public comments would be limited to three minutes.

VETERANS SERVICES

Mr. Frotten introduced himself and Ms. Meehan to the Finance Committee, as he is filling in for Louis Cimaglia IV while he serves as Temporary Town Manager. Mr. Frotten informed the committee that there had been adjustments to personnel services, as Ms. Meehan had joined the Veterans Services Department full-time. Mr. Frotten briefed the committee on how duties and responsibilities have shifted in Mr. Cimaglia's absence.

Ms. Meehan, who oversees the department's work with the state; explained that Chapter 115 is a temporary program for indigent veterans and their dependents, and the goal is to get veterans off Chapter 115 assistance. To meet this goal, Ms. Meehan explained that she assists with MassHealth buy-ins, social security applications, and affordable housing programs. Ms. Meehan also noted that the department pays medical reimbursements for health insurance, and she monitors coverage to ensure proper coverage. Ms. Meehan noted that she is currently working with 22 clients, and in the past four years, has helped nearly 100 clients. Mr. Cimaglia noted that clients move on from Chapter 115 through the Veterans Department finding their clients' alternative methods of incomes for a higher quality of life.

Mr. Frotten informed the committee that the Veterans Department handles 1,233 veterans through the VA, producing annual compensation of \$7,860,794.76 for veterans in Wilmington. Mr. Frotten noted that the department is working with 58 VA active claims, which is low due to the new calendar year; in FY 24 the department had worked on 542 claims. Mr. Cimaglia informed the committee of the hard work and detailed processing involved for each claim.

Mr. Frotten informed the committee of line items, including Vetrospec, and annual conferences. Concerning the overall budget, it has decreased by \$15,000 even with adding Ms. Meehan as a full-time employee of the department. Mr. Doherty complimented the department on their hard work and dedication to the veterans in town.

Ms. Manganelli asked if the department had provided assistance to Tewksbury, as previously discussed. Mr. Cimaglia noted that Tewksbury did not need the assistance, as a new employee had been hired. Ms.

Manganelli asked if veterans from other towns could come to Wilmington for assistance. Mr. Frotten stated that veterans can go to different communities for VA assistance. Mr. Doherty acknowledged the Soldier On housing project in Tewksbury and asked the department if Wilmington would do a similar project. Mr. Cimaglia noted that he had met with Tewksbury's Town Manager and representatives of Soldier On, and it was determined that the biggest hurdle would be acquiring land for the project.

The finance committee thanked the Veterans Services Department for its budget presentation.

ELDERLY SERVICES

Terri Marciello, Director of Elderly Services stated that it was good to see the Finance Committee again. She noted that the department had an exciting year, with the new Senior Center Building Project being underway.

Ms. Maricello noted that there had been challenges throughout the year, related to staffing. Ms. Marciello noted that the department had two employees out for medical reasons, leaving herself and Laura Pickett, Case Manager to perform transportation to seniors. This did not allow for the department to provide transportation for individuals with a wheelchair. Ms. Marciello also noted that their part-time case worker had joined Veterans Services full time contributing to the staffing shortage. Ms. Maricello commended her staff for their ability to work through the unexpected challenges. Mr. Doherty asked why the department did not come to the Finance Committee when a staffing shortage resulted in the disruption of services. Ms. Marciello informed the committee that at the time, it was unclear when employees would be returning, however, they returned to work much later than initially expected. Ms. Doherty reminded Ms. Marciello that in situations such as this, she should come to the committee. Ms. Marciello added that she was unaware of the option, and in her 20-some-odd years, she had not been in a similar predicament.

Ms. Marciello informed the Finance Committee that the department has been fortunate, as they received the Formula Grant from the state, for which they had received \$12 for each senior. This year, the amount had increased to \$14 for each senior, totaling roughly \$72,000. Ms. Marciello stated that this funding is used for the part-time clerk's salary, 13 exercise classes, printing supplies, postage, annual dues for the Massachusetts Council on Aging, motion picture licensing, and annual updates for the check-in tool My Senior Center.

Ms. Marciello reminded the committee that the Senior Center is not only a place for elders to socialize and participate in programs, but it is also a human services agency. Ms. Marciello added that the department assists elders with various situations, ranging from hoarding to support groups. Ms. Marciello stated that the department is responsible for anyone who is 60 and over who walks in off the street and that the department will assist with anything they need.

Mr. Doherty asked how the department interacts with energy providers such as National Grid. Ms. Marciello informed the committee that the department has a good relationship with energy providers, and the department will work with the companies to devise payment plans, and possibly other assistance options. Ms. Marciello added that the department also assists elders with fuel assistance, credit card debt, and avoiding scams with the assistance of Detective Butch Alpers.

Ms. Marciello informed the committee that there were 75 or so individuals who rely on the department's home-delivered meals program. Ms. Marciello stated that in FY 23, 17,460 meals had been delivered to elders within the community. She explained to the committees that the meals drivers are true heroes, and interact

with the same individuals daily, checking in with them, and being able to report any concerns to the department. The drivers receive a \$ 26-a-day stipend and mileage reimbursement.

Ms. Marciello noted that she does not charge full price for events, and typically the elder would pay 50% and the other 50% would be supplemented through the department's Contractual Services budget. She added that this is important, as some individuals do not have the funds themselves, and a small outing could impact them in a greatly positive way when they need it the most. Ms. Marciello added that elders from other communities do pay full price for events.

Mr. Doherty asked if the department was excited to move into the new Senior Center Building. Ms. Marciello explained her excitement to have the ability to have classes and events at the same time. The department is also excited about the large function room and additional parking, making scheduling easier. Ms. Marciello also explained with the new larger space, there will be more going on, and the loss of a part-time employee is driving the need for a new full-time employee. Ms. Marciello stated that she would like to add a Program Coordinator/ Outreach Worker, to assist with tailoring the needs of a variety of ages, and to keep the 60-year-olds just as interested as the 90-year-olds.

Ms. Manganelli asked for clarification; considering that a part-time employee was budgeted for, the department would not be requesting the full cost of a full-time employee. Ms. Marciello confirmed that was correct. Ms. Manganelli noted that with the excitement and expansion of the department's services, Ms. Marciello would need an additional worker. Ms. Marciello added that the construction of the new Senior Center has piqued interest in the community and contributed to an influx of newcomers.

Ms. Manganelli asked if the \$14 per elder in the town was only for individuals registered with the Senior Center. Ms. Marciello explained that the Formula Grant funding is calculated off the census, and reminded the community to complete the census when it comes around.

Mr. Doherty thanked Ms. Marciello for her presentation and entertained the opportunity for public comments.

Mr. Kevin McDonald of 140 Andover Street asked Ms. Marciello how much it cost to remove boulders at the new Senior Center Building site. Ms. Marciello was unsure of this and referred Mr. McDonald to the Senior Center Building Committee.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

John O'Neil noted that he knew it was going to be difficult to level fund, as the IT Department would have quite a few expenses in FY 25.

Mr. O'Neil informed the committee that the Operating Budget would be increasing by \$152,450 caused of the void phone system and related subscription costs. Mr. O'Neil added that the Multifactor Authentication has contributed to the increase, which was implemented to meet insurance requirements. Mr. Doherty asked what the response to MFA was from employees. Mr. O'Neil noted that the transition was difficult regarding unions and informing employees of the new requirement. Mr. O'Neil informed the committee that the budget had also increased due to the inflation of software, Archive Social, Adobe, Barracuda, Cuzi Continental, Rico, Kyocera, Softrite, and Munis.

Mr. Doherty asked why the town hadn't entirely switched over to Munis, and why the town was still using Softrite. Mr. O'Neil noted that he was not sure who was in charge of the Munis implementation project, as it was originally former Assistant Town Manager, Dee Casey. Mr. Cimaglia added that the accounting department had been assisting the town with the transition. Mr. O'Neil expressed his concern that the scope of the project had been lost and that it should be revisited. Mr. O'Neil informed the committee that the functions of Munis are not being used to their full potential, or at all. Mr. Cimaglia added that Mr. O'Neil and himself have an existing appointment to discuss further Munis implementation.

Mr. Jackson asked for confirmation that the town was paying for Munis and Softrite. Mr. O'Neil confirmed this was correct, with the addition of Continental. Mr. O'Neil noted that a meeting was had right around when the Covid academic had started, and then the key players in the Munis Implementation left the town shortly after. Mr. O'Neil added that he hopes the town will drop the costs of Softrite and Continental software.

Mr. Doherty asked how he interacts with the School Department. Mr. O'Neil informed the committee that he meets with Kenneth Lord regularly, and they are working on implementing the state's new cybersecurity training. Mr. O'Neil emphasized the importance of these training opportunities as in FY 23, over six months, 40 or so employees had fallen for phishing simulations. Mr. Neville asked how the employees who had fallen for phishing simulations were dealt with. Mr. O'Neil added these employees were given additional training for such situations.

Mr. Lavigne asked if getting all revenue functions going in Munis would be achievable within the year. Mr. O'Neil noted that he has not been involved enough in the Munis transition to make that determination. Mr. O'Neil explained the importance of an exit plan for legacy systems, in correlation with implementing Munis. Mr. Jackson explained that he was confused by the structure of the town and the IT Department function as IT was not leading the Munis implementation. Mr. Doherty clarified that the Finance Director was leading the transition. Mr. Cimaglia added that this transition has been going on for a long time, and it is important for the security of the town. Mr. Cimaglia was optimistic for future meetings and choosing a direction to move forward in. Mr. Lavigne stated that it didn't make sense for the Finance Director to be running this project and that IT should be responsible. Mr. O'Neil added that the Finance Director was chosen, as the beginning stages involved town accounts. Ms. Manganelli noted that from the beginning the Finance Director had been in charge of the project.

Mr. Neville asked that Softrite and Continental Software be subject to a year-long contract. Mr. O'Neil noted that he would review the contracts, as some require a 6-month notice or early termination fees.

Mr. O'Neil acknowledged that future budgets will increase due to the current building projects in town. Mr. O'Neil noted that up until now, anything after 4:30 pm, he would be responsible for after-hours responsibilities. Mr. O'Neil expressed his interest in providing a stipend to his employees to assist with after-hours work, as the department supports departments that are open 24/7. Mr. Doherty asked if Public Safety would need a singular person. Mr. O'Neil noted that in his conversations with other communities, many have an officer who will oversee technology for the department. Mr. Doherty informed the committee that he would support adding employees to the IT Department.

Mr. Cimaglia commended the IT Department and their ability to provide excellent service to employees regardless of the time of day, adding that they care a lot about the town. Mr. Cimaglia expressed his concern

about adding an employee during his time serving as Temporary Town Manager but acknowledged the additional employee is necessary.

TOWN CLERK

Elizabeth Lawrenson, Town Clerk, informed the committee that she was to present three budgets, the Town Clerks Budget, Registrars of Voters Budget, and Elections Budget.

Ms. Lawrenson started with the Town Clerk's Budget, noting that last year the dog registration system was upgraded. Tweaks had been worked out, and the department is currently 400 dogs ahead of where they were last year. Ms. Lawrenson informed the committee of the annual fee for this program, which had gone down, as last year's fee included the startup fee. Ms. Lawrenson informed the committee that she would be requesting a folding machine, to share with the Treasurer/ Collector's Office. Ms. Lawrenson also informed the committee that she had purchased a new time stamp, in preparation for heavy use due to the upcoming elections. Ms. Lawrenson stated that Training and Conferences had increased slightly, due to yearly conferences. Ms. Lawrenson informed the committee that Assistant Town Clerk, Meghan Jones had been working on a grant opportunity to restore historical death records which had begun to deteriorate, in addition to the department's goal of restoring at least one historical book each year. Ms. Lawrenson explained the process of restoring important historical documents to the committee.

Ms. Lawrenson reviewed the Registrars of Voters Budget, which had increased slightly due to the cost of paper. Ms. Lawrenson explained that she had received an estimated increase of 10% from her vendor, who supplies envelopes etc.

Ms. Lawrenson moved onto the Elections Budget, which had increased due to the increase of elections this year. Ms. Lawrenson noted that the department does receive reimbursement for postage and staffing for ballots mailed out for early voting. Ms. Lawrenson informed the committee that she received notice from the state that Wilmington had received a reimbursement of \$16,103 for the State Primary, State Election. Mr. Doherty asked how the ballot tabulators were working, and if they needed service. Ms. Lawrenson informed the committee that they had been working great and received yearly maintenance. Ms. Lawrenson added that in preparation, the department does have spare tabulators and on-call support during elections.

Ms. Lawrenson informed the committee that the department had begun using the General Code. The General Code recommends establishing a fund of \$4,900 in case there are inhabitant changes at a Town Meeting, and the General Code must apply changes. Ms. Lawrenson explained that she was not sure if this should be in her budget and would be happy to remove the item at the direction of the Finance Committee.

The committee thanked Ms. Lawrenson for her presentation. Mr. Cimaglia pointed out that the Town Clerk's Office is always busy and always pleasant to work with.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Anonymous, explained that he was disgraced that the committee is limiting time for public comments. The speaker explained that he had chosen to be at the meeting instead of celebrating his birthday due to his concern with the operation of the Town. The commenter stated he was not able to find a state law, allowing the Finance Committee to approve non-emergency purchases. The commenter expressed his concern with

current claims and accidents involving town vehicles. The speaker explained that he believed questions and public comments should be separated. The speaker explained that he was concerned with the town's budget increasing, as it has been deemed level-funded. The speaker made an inappropriate comment to the Finance Committee, referencing two handicapped historical figures.

The Finance Committee chair informed the anonymous resident that he had reached his time limit for public comment.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There were no minutes for approval.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

ADJOURN

At the conclusion of the discussion, being no further business, a motion was made by Ms. Manganelli for the Finance Committee to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Lavigne and unanimously:

VOTED: That the Finance Committee adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Thomas F. Donahue

Recording Secretary