

Finance Committee Meeting Tuesday, February 23, 2016

Chairman Theresa M. Manganelli called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Members present were John F. Doherty, Marianne Gallezzo, Michele Kincaid, Robert P. Palmer, Bernard P. Nally, Jonathan R. Eaton, Leigh Martinson, Kevin Stokes.

PRESENT IN INTEREST: Jeff Hull, Town Manager, Kendra Amaral, Assistant Town Manager

Police Department:

Present in interest: Police Chief Michael Begonis, Deputy Police Chief Robert Richter

Chief Begonis – Reviewed the proposed budget. Only major change is in salaries which are increased due to contractual requirements.

Ms. Manganelli - Asked if the holiday pay is increased due to increase in pay. Chief Begonis - Noted that this is an estimate as the officers can choose to take the day off or be paid for it.

Mr. Stokes – Asked if IT Administrator was zeroed out because it was moved to IT budget. Chief Begonis - Yes.

Mr. Nally – Asked if there was more than one part-time employee in the department. Chief Begonis – There is only one part-time employee. It was Dawn Naimo who is on leave, Patricia Cardarelli is filling in.

Miscellaneous contractual services are up for items like replacing cell equipment such as mattresses and for other contractual cost increases such as cellular phone records. The Police Department has to pay \$100 per request.

Ms. Manganelli – Asked why phone companies are now charging for these records. Chief Begonis- Likely because the requests are numerous and they have to add staff to cover the need.

Equipment on the rifles has become obsolete. Current scope equipment was found to have an issue in their functioning. The equipment needed to be changed out and staff needs to be trained on the new equipment.

The Public Safety building is 15 years old. Despite its younger age and decent condition, they still do need to replace the equipment and furniture. The Police Department has outgrown its space.

Ms. Manganelli – Noted arrests are down in the statistical pages. Chief Begonis- Calls for service are up. These take more time than they used to, to do reports and process items.

Mr. Doherty – Asked if documents are kept in paper format. Chief Begonis - The records are scanned, but a hard copy is kept as well. The department has to maintain evidence for a case until completion of the sentence, which is a major space constraint.

Welcomed the Finance Committee to tour the Police Department to see some of the things he is discussing.

Ms. Manganelli – Noted the Police did a fabulous job while construction was going on for the intersection at Glen Road. They kept everyone moving and safe.

Mr. Eaton – Asked how the issues with opioids is going. Chief Begonis- It keeps growing. Through the Coalition formed by the Town Manager they are looking to do things differently. The other aspect is the impact on the family. That is part of what the substance abuse support in the budget is for, to help the family as a whole.

Ms. Kincaid – Asked if Schools, Fire, and Police all work together. Chief Begonis – Yes, we are working with the other departments.

Mr. Stokes – Asked if the Police Department uses social media. Chief Begonis - The police does use it, it takes a great deal of time to use them for information gathering. There are companies that will grab and synthesize the data, but they are costly and not the best use of the town's money.

Public Safety Dispatch:

Chief Begonis - Reviewed the proposed budget. Public Safety Dispatchers are absolutely amazing. Not much is changed in the budget. They are getting new chairs.

Animal Control:

Chief Begonis - Reviewed the proposed budget. The New Animal Control Officer (ACO) is Chris Sullivan, who was a dispatcher. Salary is major change in part due to the absorption of the stipend from the Board of Health into this budget, and the reclassification of the position based on current standards and rates.

The position is a 40-hour-a-week position. The prior ACO was not 40 hours. For many years Ellen was a contract employee and was not full-time until recently.

Ms. Kincaid - Have had dogs for years, never seen her or had to call her. Chief Begonis – The ACO is doing more to be visible. He can be followed on Twitter. The job description was revised to follow the new statute. ACO must be certified now. The program now will include proactive services and education.

The van is the one the town has had for years. It doesn't meet the needs and next year will likely need to be replaced.

Ms. Manganelli - There appears to be an increase in the last two years of wildlife. Chief Begonis - Deer, turkeys, and coyotes are on the rise. The more Wilmington develops and builds and takes away their habitat, the more we are going to see them. There will be more education coming from

the ACO. Will get horse training at the end of the week. Wilmington does have horses and they get loose.

Chief Begonis – Reviewed capital requests. The Taser budget will buy enough for half of the department. The department will require training.

Discussed the timeline and cost of hiring new employees. Takes 16 to 18 months to hire new employees. Several people have left and others are looking to go. The town just secured a lateral transfer from Somerville. Rather than give away someone we trained, this time we are getting someone trained by another community. It costs approximately \$80K to train a new officer.

Mr. Doherty – Asked why officers are leaving. Chief Begonis- They are leaving for retirement, for pay, and for other reasons.

Ms. Manganelli – Asked if it is hard to transition from a city to Wilmington. Chief Begonis- It can be hard. Some get it some have a hard time with it.

Ms. Manganelli – Asked if the Chief thinks there have been opportunities or if the need has developed substantially for Tasers. Chief Begonis - There is a cultural change. Tasers are an additional tool.

Ms. Manganelli – Asked if the officers feel an additional layer of stress and is there anything that can be done to help with that. Chief Begonis - If the officers are feeling stress it is not likely a good situation to go out. There is training in the academy. The job has changed. Yes, they are stressed. Discussion on mental health and crime statistics.

Ms. Manganelli – Asked if there is any particular age group more susceptible to substance abuse. Chief Begonis - The cases are for young people and middle aged, we deal with veterans. Discussion on substance abuse challenges.

Chief Begonis - Recommend hosting the public safety budget hearings at the Police department. Finance Committee agrees.

Other business:

Ms. Manganelli – The next meeting is Thursday. Minutes will be sent for review and a vote will take place at that meeting.

Reminder the Legislative Breakfast is March 4th (Friday) at the Town Hall Auditorium. The Manager's Office will send the link.

Discussion of how many warrant articles there are.

There being no further business, a motion was made by John Doherty, seconded by Jonathan Eaton and by the affirmative vote of all, and the Finance Committee meeting was adjourned.

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Meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m. The next meeting of the Finance Committee is scheduled for Thursday, February 25, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

Recording secretary