



Town of Wilmington

Finance Committee
121 Glen Road Wilmington, 01887

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Meeting Minutes
Tuesday July 13, 2021 TOWN OF WILMINGTON, MA

Finance Committee Chairman, John F. Doherty III called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Members present were, Marianne Gallezzo, and Theresa M. Manganelli. Andrew Lavigne, Leigh Martinson and Jonathan Dugas were absent.

Also Present: Jeffrey Hull, Town Manager; Kerry Colburn-Dion, Assistant Town Manager/Director of Human Resources, Bryan Perry, Finance Director, William F. Cavanaugh, Fire Chief, Joseph Desmond, Police Chief; Brian Pupa, Deputy Police Chief

POLICE DEPARTMENT STAFFING UPDATE

Person in interest; Joseph Desmond, Police Chief; Brian Pupa, Deputy Police Chief

Chief Desmond begins by giving a brief overview of Police Staffing. Budgeted for 55 personnel and currently have 47. There have been 3 more retirees. The hiring process gave us a total of 9, 3 declined employment, they took jobs elsewhere. The plan was to put 4 of the 6 in Lowell academy by June. 3 of them did not pass the physical standards to get into the academy. 1 currently enrolled at the Lowell Academy.

Mr. Doherty asks how strict are the standards for the Academy? There are 2 standards for the academy. The Civil Service Standard (PAT), and the Academy standard (Cooper standard)-which is stricter. The failure rate is 30%. We will try to put 5 or 6 in the academy this fall. Our 1 cadet enrolled currently will be ready by this winter.

Mr. Doherty asks was the issue salary with any of the 3 candidates who declined? 1 took a position with the State Police. 1 went to a Federal Agency. I cannot say if they rejected us because of salary.

Mr. Doherty asks what do you anticipate for Overtime? Do you think it will go up? Due to Covid, I do not believe we overspent. Mr. Doherty asks the overtime; how does that affect the details of the officers with all of the hours they are working? The WPD prioritizes department work first before anyone can do detail.

Chair asks if there are any more questions.

Ms. Manganelli asks how many officers are deployed right now? We currently have 1 deployed officer. We are hoping to get him back early March. We have one out on sick leave now. Ms. Manganelli asks if those two included in the count of 47? Yes, there are only really 45.

Mr. Doherty asks when can we expect the civil service results? The results come out in September. We are down 8 and we only have 6 available to hire maybe one or two off the list. That is the best-case scenario. Mr. Doherty asks; And there are possibly 2 retirees? Yes, I talked to the Town Manager about it and we would like to have a full intermittent list. A standby because it does take so long to turn over. If we have people available who have already been interviewed and already had background checks and so on it really speeds up the process.

Ms. Manganelli asks Chief; When is the next Academy? They are not scheduled yet for late summer, early fall. With Covid they had to shut down the academy and now are opening to some degree. All these other towns are meeting the same demands and trying to get candidates into the academy. It has been challenging.

Mr. Doherty asks; would it be possible to have a spreadsheet with information for upcoming retirees? Could that be done easily? We could possibly do it based upon age and number of years. We wouldn't want to identify individuals but at least to identify the number people looking to retire. Having an intermittent list; someone on deck is helpful. We will have already done a lot of the work that customarily would have to be done. The span of time from getting them off an intermittent list versus getting them off the civil service list is less.

Mr. Doherty asks; The three that didn't pass the physical, did you have a conversation with them? Absolutely, we had a sit down with them. We have a sergeant that has taken a class about how to implement the test. So, he is actually working with them. We have invested a lot of time and they are good candidates.

Chair asks if there are any further questions. Everyone responds; No.

Chief also adds that the National Night out for Wilmington PD is scheduled for Tuesday August 3rd. We skipped it last year so we are expecting a big crowd this year.

FIRE & CENTRAL DISPATCH DEPARTMENT STAFFING UPDATE

Person in interest; William F. Cavanaugh, Fire Chief

Chief Cavanaugh gives a brief overview for the Fire Department. We are slated for 48 and we are currently at 45 on paper. We have 1 deployed, who will be back in December. I have 1 out long-term injury, who is going through the retirement process. We have 3 that we are hiring. Mr. Doherty asks when is the academy and Chief responds; it is in December. We have them on a ready list and the academy will message me saying they have an opening. We have a permanent intermittent list with 5 on it and 1 going through the process. We have 3 moving into Full Time and the other 3 will be on deck. It is a 2-3-week process to hire one as opposed to what it used to be, 6-8-week process. I have 2 that are going into the academy in July and 1 waiting for surgery, we will see him in October.

Mr. Doherty asks How are you doing on overtime? Chief responds, currently we are doing good. Hoping this year to be close to what we forecasted. Last year we posted 11 per shift and we brought 1 down, and it was supposed to be a good offset but obviously we all know what happened there. Once these two are out of the academy we will have 9-10 across the board. We won't be filling spaces, which is good. We are seeing a little bit better numbers but I know that towards the end of June we had a couple of high week offs. 8-10,000 was my number. We are trying to stay in that range or lower for time off. Most of my department has 3 weeks or less vacation. At some point soon, they will be shifting to a 4-5 weeks of vacation.

Ms. Manganelli asks Chief; How much are we over right now on what we budgeted? We are ok with the transfer. I would have to look at the numbers again but I think we are at like \$29 remaining.

Mr. Doherty asks Chief; with people getting out more are you seeing less ambulance calls? Last week we had 21 calls in 24 hours and we had a couple of days over the weekend where we were not as busy and we had 8 calls in one day. So, it's back to normal. It's not very often where we get a day with any downtime. Even when there is downtime there is training evolutions, doing stuff around the station and trying to keep everyone up to speed. So, there is not a lot of downtime right now.

Ms. Manganelli asks Chief; Are you seeing any female applicants. Yes, we are. We have 3 on the job now. 1 lieutenant, and 2 others. One has been there for 11 years and one has been there for 18 months. She was with us in Dispatch prior to that. We did have one that we interviewed but we only had space for 6. Unfortunately to qualify with the Civil Services there is only so much you can do. If I had to reach down to get her I would have to find a reason to bypass somebody else.

Mr. Doherty asks Chief; How is Dispatch doing? Dispatch is doing pretty good. We just had an interview today and will offer them employment. That will put us at 11 dispatchers. We are still recruiting for communications. It's difficult because we get people in they can't handle the calls, handle the speed, it's not what they thought it was. We have had some good applicants come through. I thought they would be ok and about 3 months down the line they can't do it. Mr. Doherty asks if their salary is higher next door at Regional Dispatch? Yes, their salary is a little bit higher. I don't want to bring someone in foot the bill for their EMT, 911, all their certifications and then go over to the regional. We thought we were getting one from over there but he decided he wanted to stay. They just lost 3. We are aggressively recruiting. We have a great room; the renovation went flawlessly. It is a really nice center now. Mr. Doherty says, the Finance Committee hasn't had an opportunity to tour new room. Mr. Hull says, the Chief was responsible all of the logistics. As you know the dispatch center cannot just be turned off. They had a mobile unit on site during the renovation. Mr. Doherty asks if it came in under budget? Chief says yes it did.

Chair asks if there are any further questions. Everyone responds; No.

STATUS ON EFFORTS TO IMPLEMENT MUNIS

Person in interest; Bryan Perry, Finance Director

The last time we have addressed the Finance Committee, Munis has been in a holding pattern for quite a while. At this point we are at least making some progress. Our project manager has done a great job. We have all of the historicals and FY20 budget in there. Revenues, Expenses and etc. are in there, but they are not a set it and forget it. We will have to make some adjustments, it's a continually evolving piece. If it all looks good then we can get the FY21 stuff in. We will be working with the consultant in the next few days to set the permissions for the schools, who can do what and access what. We are making progress and are on schedule as planned. Mr. Doherty says, from the sound of it you don't expect any glitches. Mr. Perry responds, no we can get the work in, do steps a, b, c, d, e, f, g and go live in November. Mr. Doherty asks about the training piece that everyone will have to do. Mr. Perry says that they are hoping after this week's discussions they will be looking to pull more people in to start using the software and help us to figure out some of the kinks. Then we are hoping to develop a testing plan. They go on to discuss a demo and training modules running parallel with the live environment. With the help of the School Department they are making significant progress. Going live in November and in January 2022 adding payroll.

DISCUSS SEEKING A GRANT WRITER POSITION IN A FUTURE BUDGET

Person in interest; Jeffrey Hull, Town Manager

Finance Committee has talked about this in previous meetings. The Finance Director has given the Board of Selectmen a summary of grants given in the fiscal year. The Board of Selectman would have to vote to accept the grants. They discuss the grants Wilmington has accepted in 2021. Mr. Hull goes on to say we are actively obtaining grants but the biggest concern with a Grants Administrator is do we have the band width and capacity to administrate the grants. We can certainly pursue the grants but if we don't have the ability to execute and oversee them it will be problematic. For example, if we can talk about the American Rescue Plan Act, we may need to hire someone who is familiar with the requirements the government will have with reporting and the administrative process. They go on to discuss grants that we applied for and grants that are automatic, which is about 60/40. If there are a lot of grants coming in they should possibly hire a part time to administer the grants or prepare grants with department heads. Hiring a consultant vs, a full or part time employee. Some towns already have grant writers on staff but they are usually larger communities. The discussion goes on and they discuss the possibility of a consultant to hunt down grants specific to each department who could then possibly explore it more vs hiring someone for the role to find out that we have explored all the grants we could get. Ms. Colburn-Dion speaks during the ongoing discussion to say that she spoke with a Grant Writer from Beverly

when this topic came up last year to do a little investigating on the process. She goes on to say that the GW talks to Departments yearly to define their needs, some departments can write their own grants and some need her assistance. She said that she couldn't possibly write all of the grants herself. She would need department expertise. Sometimes she is part of a team and sometimes she just helps with grant tracking. She said the hardest part of it is implementing them. The departments themselves would have to have staff to for the implementation within the 12-month grant cycle. They go on to discuss the WEDC and grants to get development or incentives for some retail/office vacancies in town. They go on to talk more about grants and grant writers with the possibility of hiring a firm to consult for various departmental grants/grant programs and then the town can decide which ones to pursue. Maybe the firm also helps departments with writing the grants if they are unfamiliar with the process. They decide as an actionable item to look and see if there is a firm out there who could provide that kind of service. What kind of arrangement we could contract with them possibly a monthly status on grants that are available in all various categories and arrangements. Also, what departments are looking at upcoming opportunities for grants.

STATUS OF AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021

Person in interest; Jeffrey Hull, Town Manager

In the American Rescue Plan Act there are two elements. Phase 1 element where the money comes in through the state in 2 distribution points. The first was to submit our information to them in June to receive 2.4 Million, 50% now and 50% in 1 year. There is another 4 Million available and the amount is based on Wilmington population. It is not clear how it is being distributed yet. We are waiting for word on that. There are 4 major categories of use for the money.

1. Water & Sewer Infrastructure & Broadband
2. Communities that lost revenue due to Covid (In Wilmington we were fortunate to only see decline in meal tax and ambulance revenue.)
3. Businesses Impacted (Trying to figure out how to determine what their impact was from Covid. Maybe through pre-covid revenue matrix to see who qualifies and who has already received assistance.)
4. Health Related Covid Issues (If there is a flare up in the fall that some money might be allocated from these funds to assist Shelly and her office.

We are mainly looking at using some funds for Infrastructure. After speaking with Mike Woods there is one project he has mentioned is changing out the existing water line that runs from Woburn Street at the 93 overpass and back to Lowell Street. A couple years ago the DPW ran a water line over 93, down Woburn Street towards the tavern and upgraded the size. A ball park for something like this could be 4-5 Million dollars. Another infrastructure project he mentioned is for the 650 catch basins scattered throughout town. Many of these are sinking. I would like to check in with Department heads to see if there are any other ideas that would qualify. We would then put together a draft for the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee. There is a 5-year time obligation for these funds. In this case, there is an allowance as I understand it to hire a grant writer to help keep the documentation up to speed.

STATUS OF OPEN SEATS ON FINANCE COMMITTEE

Person in interest; John F. Doherty, Chair Finance Committee/Appointing Committee for Finance Committee

There have been three people who have submitted applications. We are meeting on the 22nd of July at 6:30 in the town hall.

CONSIDER APPOINTING DESIGNEE TO SERVE ON MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL BUILDING AUTHORITY – SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE

Person in interest; Jeffrey Hull, Town Manager

We need to consider appointing a designee to serve on the MA School Building Committee and Marianne has indicated that she would like to service on that. Mr. Hull gives a little background on a previous meeting or discussion that the MSBA has laid out a program and we are now eligible. The Program started July 1 and runs through March. There is a series of efforts that we have to take care of. The Board of Selectman took care of one last night, the initial compliance certification. Things that the town has to do to be part of this program. The next action item will be to establish this School Building Committee.

REORGANIZATION OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Person in interest; John F. Doherty, Chair Finance Committee

Mr. Doherty states there are not enough committee members to discuss the reorganization of the Finance Committee will have to postpone to the next meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Doherty states there are not enough committee members to vote so the Finance Committee will have to postpone approval of any minutes to the next meeting.

At the conclusion of the discussion, there being no further business to come before the Committee, a motion was made by Mr. Doherty seconded by Ms. Manganelli.

VOTED: That the Finance Committee adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm

Respectfully Submitted,



Recording Secretary
Jennifer Swanson