



Town of Wilmington

Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 13, 2018

Finance Committee Chairman, Theresa M. Manganello, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm in Town Hall, Room 9. Members present were Neal Couture, John F. Doherty, Jonathan Eaton, Marianne Gallezzo, Michele Kincaid, Leigh Martinson, Bernard P. Nally, and Kevin Stokes. Excused: None.

PRESENT IN INTEREST: Jeffrey Hull, Town Manager and Denise Casey, Assistant Town Manager.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

PRESENT IN INTEREST: Michael Begonis, Chief of Police.

Chief Begonis stated that most personnel salary expenditures are contractually based. Overtime is being increased by \$50,000 to \$575,000 to cover trainings, staffing shortages due to injuries and military deployments, and to staff special events such as the Fun on the Fourth celebration. He noted that the department recently welcomed three new officers and anticipate adding a fourth new officer in April. It is time consuming to fill open positions in the department due to the vetting process with the state Department of Civil Service, physical and psychological testing, and sending candidates through the Academy. It can take as long as eighteen months to two years to fill an open patrolman position. There are no anticipated retirements this year.

Chief Begonis stated that the department needs more clerical support. The number of document requests received by the department increased to 2,531 in 2017. Currently the department has 2 full-time clerks and 1 part-time clerk. Due to an increase in the type and nature of public records requests, firearm license applications, and court appeals to firearm license denials, the part-time clerk is being eliminated to allow for a third full time clerk to support the department.

Chief Begonis provided the department's mission statement and focused on the values, respect, compassion, and commitment to the community. He noted that the department has seen a significant increase in service calls related to substance abuse and mental health issues. Because so many people struggle with addiction and mental illness, the department emphasizes compassion as the number of calls increase. Officers are trained in Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) to help deescalate mental health situations.

Chief Begonis reviewed the TASER program. The total figure negotiated for the 10-year program was \$107,361.14. Currently there are four instructors and nineteen officers trained. All officers will be trained within the next week. As part of the contract, after five years, the department will receive all new equipment. The contract includes training rounds, protective suits, and other supplies. Officers are required to receive a minimum of six hours of taser training per year, but the department integrates taser training into other trainings as well.

Chief Begonis reviewed capital items purchased in FY 2018. In this fiscal year, high density evidence storage racks increased the storage capacity by two-thirds. Security cameras were added to provide surveillance of the perimeter of the Public Safety Building. The Animal Control Officer vehicle has been purchased, however, it is still awaiting installation of some necessary components.

Chief Begonis stated that Samantha Reif was hired as the new Substance Abuse Coordinator. Since she was hired in August, she has responded to 177 mental health calls (25 substance abuse related), and has had 300 follow-up interactions. Chief Begonis expressed appreciation for Ms. Reif and what she has contributed to the department and the community.

Chief Begonis reviewed the increase in calls for service in recent years. In 2011, there were 19,956 calls for service; 20,389 calls in 2012; 21,209 calls in 2013; 20,276 calls in 2014; 21,284 calls in 2015; 23,370 calls in 2016; and 26,006 calls in 2017. He noted current patrolmen staffing levels are seven officers who respond to calls, plus a supervisor per shift, three shifts per day, and officers work a 4-day-on and 2-day-off shift. Other daily staff include school resource officers and investigative officers.

Chief Begonis reviewed the miscellaneous contractual services budget, and capital requests for FY 2019 including: \$10,600 for repairs to and updated communications equipment; \$5,000 for prisoner and cell block costs such as blankets, mattresses, meals, and hygienic supplies; \$1,900 for maintenance and repair of office equipment like time stamps and swipe cards; and \$10,500 to cover investigative services, court documents, tolls and parking. Furniture and equipment budget of \$28,000 is for radio upgrades and to replace obsolete consoles which are no longer supported by the manufacturer.

ANIMAL CONTROL

PRESENT IN INTEREST: Michael Begonis, Chief of Police.

Chief Begonis noted that the Animal Control budget decreased slightly, due the purchase of the new animal control vehicle in FY 2018. There are no such capital expenditures this fiscal year. There is currently no increase in salary. Chief Begonis praised Animal Control Officer, Chris Sullivan, for his efforts with the Dog Park and enforcing dog licensing.

Mr. Doherty noted that throughout the budget book, many department heads do not receive a salary increase and asked if there would be salary adjustments later. Mr. Hull noted that three collective bargaining agreements open at the beginning of the fiscal year. There is no salary adjustment for non-union employees at this point, but he anticipates an increase in the early part of the fiscal year.

PUBLIC SAFETY DISPATCH

PRESENT IN INTEREST: Michael Begonis, Chief of Police.

Chief Begonis praised the Dispatch staff for their calm demeanor, while handling difficult calls for service. For personnel salaries, a night shift differential line item of \$18,720 was added to be consistent with Police and Fire reporting. It was previously included as part of the full-time personnel salary line item. He noted \$20,000 for part time on-call employees, which has been utilized more lately as the

department was short a few people. Mr. Hull noted the benefits of having part time on-call employees decreases lag time of filling a full time position if it becomes available.

Chief Begonis stated that since the Public Safety Building was built in 2000, there have been four iterations of 9-1-1. When equipment and systems are replaced, Verizon does not necessarily remove wires associated with the system that is being replaced. He noted that next year, there may be a request to change out the consoles, clean up and redesign the wires, which have been left behind.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

PRESENT IN INTEREST: Gary Donovan, Deputy Fire Chief.

Mr. Hull reviewed the assessment center process that was utilized to select a new Fire Chief and noted he will appoint a new Fire Chief by the end of the week. He stated that Deputy Chief Gary Donovan has been filling the role of Acting Fire Chief, since Chief Rick McClellan's retirement in January.

Deputy Chief Donovan stated that \$3,891,107 of the personnel services is contractual. Training Overtime for hands-on training is budgeted at \$40,000. He noted that contractors in the community have been supportive and donated structures for the Fire Department to use for training and practicing with thermal imaging equipment.

Mr. Hull noted that Firefighter and Lieutenant personnel figures have not increased, as the IAFF contract expires June 30, 2018. The Town is in the process of bargaining with the IAFF and there are funds in salary adjustment accounts to cover the final agreement once it is reached. The decrease in Chief, Deputy Chief, and Full Time Clerk salaries are due to retirements and anticipated retirements.

Mr. Couture noted that the requested overtime figure seemed high and asked if that is typical of fire departments to provide that much overtime. Deputy Chief Donovan stated that some of the increase accounts for academy time for four new firefighters. It also provides for coverage if a firefighter is out sick or on vacation. Mr. Couture asked if it would be more reasonable to add another person at a regular wage. Mr. Hull stated that overtime is an issue that is continually considered. When calculating the cost of an employee, factors other than salary need to be considered such as: cost of retirement, OPEB, pensions, and health insurance.

Mr. Hull noted that the department is reaching a point where some employees are reaching retirement age, and due to the civil service process of hiring firefighters, overtime will be needed to fill vacancies in the interim. Mr. Doherty asked if there was financial incentive for firefighters notifying the Town well in advance of retirement. Mr. Hull stated that it may have been eliminated from the fire contract.

Mr. Martinson asked how overtime figures might be affected with a new fire substation. Deputy Chief Donovan opined that the entire department would need to restructure with the addition of a substation. A new rank of Captain would need to be added, one at each station, to supervise. Manpower may be reduced at the main station and coverage divided between the two stations.

Mr. Hull noted that if a captain's rank is established, it would affect the salary levels of Chief and Deputy Chief salaries. Currently, there is not a large gap in salary between a Lieutenant and the Deputy Chief.

Following discussion of fire overtime, and shift coverage, the Finance Committee requested further investigation into what effect an increase in personnel may have on overtime expenditures.

Deputy Chief Donovan reviewed the Fire Department's mission statement and organization structure. In 2017, the department received 4,062 calls for service, of which 2,521 were ambulance calls.

Miscellaneous contractual services are budgeted at \$45,000 for services such as: turnout gear repair; and medical control assessments, service and repairs. Other budget requests include: \$20,872 for radio repairs; \$15,800 for training and conferences; \$8,500 for fire alarm and dispatch equipment. Funding for materials and supplies include: \$104,876 for uniforms; \$53,250 for emergency and medical supplies; \$3,800 for office supplies; and \$2,500 for arson investigations. Furniture and equipment expenditures total \$46,900 for a thermal imaging camera, turnout gear dryer, rescue air bag system, active shooter equipment and training for nine people, a new rescue mannequin, and materials to build a simulated roof top training prop.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Finance Committee reviewed the Minutes from January 30, 2018. A motion was made by Ms. Gallezzo, seconded by Mr. Eaton, and by the affirmative vote of all, with Mr. Martinson and Mr. Stokes abstaining, it was:

VOTED: To approve the minutes from January 30, 2018.

The Finance Committee reviewed the Minutes from February 1, 2018. A motion was made by Ms. Gallezzo, seconded by Mr. Eaton, and by the affirmative vote of all, with Mr. Couture and Mr. Martinson abstaining, it was:

VOTED: To approve the minutes from February 1, 2018.

The Finance Committee reviewed the Minutes from February 6, 2018. A motion was made by Ms. Gallezzo, seconded by Mr. Eaton, and by the affirmative vote of all, with Mr. Doherty abstaining, it was:

VOTED: To approve the minutes from February 6, 2018.

The Finance Committee reviewed the Minutes from February 8, 2018. A motion was made by Ms. Doherty, seconded by Mr. Eaton, and by the affirmative vote of all, with Mr. Couture and Mr. Martinson abstaining, it was:

VOTED: To approve the minutes from February 8, 2018.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Hull stated that a follow up meeting between Analog Devices and the Town's Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Team is likely to happen the week of February 26th. Due the short timeline, the Board of Selectmen may elect to include an article as a placeholder on the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting.

At the conclusion of the discussion, and there being no further business to come before the Committee, a motion was made by Mr. Doherty, seconded by Ms. Kincaid, and by the affirmative vote of all, it was

VOTED: That the Finance Committee adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 9:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Recording Secretary