

Finance Committee Meeting  
Tuesday, February 24, 2015  
Minutes

Chairman John F. Doherty called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Members present were Theresa M. Manganello, Jonathan R. Eaton, Richard K. Hayden, Bernard P. Nally Jr., Robert P. Palmer, William Wallace

Also Present: Jeffery Hull, Town Manager, Kendra Amaral, Assistant Town Manager

Police Department:

PRESENT IN INTEREST: Police Chief Michael Begonis

Chief Begonis –Reviewed Police Department FY16 budget. Personal services, contractually obligated changes, lieutenants increase is due to add lieutenant which was approved last year. The Department is down four patrol man, as it has been difficult to keep staff up due to civil service process. Could have had two in February, however they failed the pre-employment process. Expects in the future there will be a constant turnover. Other police departments are offering more.

Mr. Doherty- Asked if the Department will have a problem with current budget due to lack of personal. He will have to deal with what we have. Has reduced services, for example there is less focus on traffic, as personnel are assigned instead patrol.

Mr. Wallace – Asked how the Police budget is due to snow. Shifts have been adjusted, reduced specialized services that have been offered. He recognizes the need and reassigns as needed.

Mr. Hull – Addressed John Doherty's previous question that the Police budget is on the radar. The Chief is able to work within the budget and he is monitoring overtime.

Mr. Doherty – Inquired if there are any retirements this year. There is one.

Mr. Wallace – Asked how many academies does the Chief have to choose from. There is a private academy in Lowell which usually starts in June, however they may be moving it up to mid-May. New one opened up at Northern Essex Community College. Reading has an academy twice a year in March and September, Boylston runs January and July, and Randolph just started.

Chief Begonis – In the Commonwealth there has been a reduction in overall budgets and firearms training We have a great relationship with Lowell, and can usually get cadets in. Brief discussion on hiring women and how hard it is to get them. Veterans get preference. Brief discussion on hiring process. After taking civil service test, they indicate preference. People usually pick where they pay more, unfortunately Wilmington does not pay as much. For example Lowell is 50% higher than Wilmington to start.

Mr. Hull – Part of challenge is getting them through training.

Chief Begonis –It costs approximately \$80,000 per year per individual to train someone.

Mr. Doherty – Asked if other than salary there any other benefits communities are offering that we are lacking. When put everything together the base salary is what they are looking at. Discussion on lateral transfers. Incentive pay was dropped by Wilmington so we don't have the incentives.

Chief Begonis - Contractual Services has minor increases. Last year the department hired an IT administrator. There is a large reduction in costs as these moved to a centralized budget for better management.

Mr. Hull –Kendra Rozett will still work out of Police department but will be under IT budget. Concerned we were not where we should be in terms of IT operations, software, town's software is outdated, and lack recovery systems. A representative from the Collins Center at UMass Boston conducted an assessment of IT operations. Recommendations included that we should have a Director of IT and have a centralized approach. Brief discussion on viruses the Police were hit with and that they have improved back ups.

Mr. Doherty – Asked how much paper has the department digitized. The work is still paper driven for most reports. Lot saved in CAD system server, but they have to have printed reports to go to court, 5 or 6 copies. Looked into going paperless, would be labor intensive and expensive.

Mr. Doherty – Asked if physically the Police are in need of more space. Each office is full. They got the high density file system installed to collapse files. Lots of files that need to be moved but there is no time to move them.

Mr. Doherty – Asked if the Police needed five or six new employees, where would they go. They will work out of lockers.

Mr. Wallace – Asked where we stand on having Town employees fingerprinted. School employees are mandated to have employees fingerprinted, which is outsourced. Explained hawkers and peddlers needs to get fingerprinted which has to go through the department. Brief discussion on which employees are required to get fingerprinted and Cori checked.

Mr. Eaton – Going back to digitization, asked if other communities have this. There are in the same situations, however he has not had the manpower to do this task.

Mr. Eaton – Inquired about going forward. Now we have the reports that can be stored on servers; it is the older paperwork that needs to be scanned. There is always a paper copy that needs to go to the courts.

Brief discussion on radio communications as a means of recording documentation. There were funds for 911 systems, before Governor Patrick left office he eliminated the funds to pay for this program, Governor Baker's administration is expected to reinstate these funds but it will take some time.

Mr. Doherty – Asked if the cars have GPS so they can be located at anytime. There is not a need. Union would resist this even though it would be for their safety.

Mr. Wallace – Inquired if automating digitization for voice is possible. We do digital records. We have the capacity to go full digital but have to tweak a few things. The Town is having a professional organization come in, not a vendor, to recommend next steps. Court has to accept the voice recording.

Mr. Wallace – Asked where the Town is on union negotiations. Selectmen signed last night for 2 year contract that runs 7/1/14 thru 6/30/16 for sergeants and lieutenants. We are in the final stages for patrolmen. Negotiations will start again in September.

Mr. Hull - Front line vehicles will go to second level; second level will stay in police department. We are looking into how to handle outdated fleet, checking into if it would be cost effective to trade in. We are not looking to expand police vehicle fleet.

Mr. Wallace- Express appreciation and respect for our force on how they handled the train station situation. We have a great group.

Mr. Doherty – Asked how the police officers are doing. One is back to work, the other is still out and hopefully will be back soon.

#### Animal Control:

PRESENT IN INTEREST: Chief Michael Begonis

Chief Begonis – Reviewed budget, everything is pretty much the same. Contractual, kennel expenses, uniforms that need to be provided, process of animals pick up, cremations. Looking into options for animal control, dog tags and the services.

#### Public Safety Central Dispatch:

PRESENT IN INTEREST: Chief Michael Begonis

Chief Begonis –Dispatch is staffed at 12, as of now it is down five positions. In the process of training people. It is tough to bring people in due to the 6-month training process. Turnover is large, for various reasons, Reading Light dispatch is paying well.

Mr. Hull – The Town started to address compensation in the most recent collective bargaining agreement; however it is not one of those things that you can turnaround quickly. The core group we have now are amazing. They want to stay, but it is a lot of work.

Chief Begonis – Personnel services are primarily contractual. Past couple of years have seen a turnover. Part-time item we have not used, so we removed it. Now we need it to address turnover.

Mr. Wallace- Asked if the Town needed to add to building would you recommend that dispatch be somewhere else. It works where they are. Maximum people in space as of now is three unless we are training, then it could be four or five. Could not add another space if needed.

Mr. Doherty – Asked how the equipment in dispatch is. 911 console paid by 911 System. They have had issues with Ztron in the past. All equipment has a shelf life.

Chief Begonis – Training is the same. The Town did get 911 training money that comes from State. Software licenses decreased, office supplies and uniforms stay the same. Chairs need to be replaced.

Mr. Wallace – Asked if 911 receipts go to general funds or police. The 911 surcharge goes to dispatch, and the amount received varies from year to year.

Mr. Doherty – Commented that the Police are doing a great job.

Ms. Manganelli – Commented about Facebook postings. She found them humorous and a nice touch; feels that it gets to people and is powerful and useful message. This is appreciated.

#### Fire Department:

PRESENT IN INTEREST: Fire Chief, Richard McClellan

Chief McClellan – Reviewed FY16 budget.

Mr. Doherty – Asked how overtime is doing. Had some issues, but doing better than anticipated. The department is still in transition; hired six. There is now one more opening, due to a transfer in December. Interviewing tomorrow and Thursday. Have two graduating from Fire Academy on Friday, one graduating February 7<sup>th</sup>. The new firefighters hired in December are not going to academy until May 4<sup>th</sup>, then one more will go in July. There were few injuries, one when out in October should be back middle of March. One got hurt the other day, only out for a couple of days. Looking forward to March 1, everyone should be back. Overtime is looking OK. Storms added \$30,100 so far. Discussion on snow removal at hydrants. Difficult to get medical in houses when they don't clear front walk ways.

Mr. Wallace – Asked where the department is on retirements. Don't see a lot as of now. Believes FY17 and FY18 will be the bigger years.

Mr. Nally – Asked if there are any transfers. Two. Fire is more competitive in compensation, where police is below 20-30 percentile for comparable communities.

Chief McClellan - \$40,000 training overtime has helped. Officers are able to go to classes and training and have a fill-in for time. Brief discussion on benefits of the classes and training.

Chief McClellan – Sick leave buyback has gone down, as the employee has to have so many hours banked to get sick leave. Contractual Services reduction due to IT; balance is for hose, pump, ladder testing. Fire extinguisher testing needs to be tested every year.

Mr. Doherty – Asked about out of town mutual aid. Not a lot.

Mr. Nally – Asked what Narcan costs. Was \$25.00, now \$49.00 a dose; it went up in October. The Fire Department used approximately 28 last year under Emergency Medical Supplies. Explained what happens when they administer Narcan. Every vehicle has at least one, ambulance has two. Police do not have any.

Ms. Manganelli – Asked if the Narcan expires. We rotate them.

Ms. Manganelli – Asked if Chief McClellan would be opposed to Police having Narcan. We would have to go through the union, suggestions that there would have to be compensated. Feels this would enhance the ability to do their job.

Mr. Hayden – Asked how many units the Town stocks. Generally 6-10 extra. Brief discussion on required use of Narcan.

Chief McClellan- Emergency Management same. Thanks to Ms. Amaral for applying for grant for emergency management, they received \$10,000 for training over the summer.

Furnishings includes \$12,000 to replace 14-year old incline trainer and stationary bike, Equipment in gym needs to be replaced. It is not repairable and does get used. F550 needs to be replaced, needs a cap and slide-out tray so equipment can be stable. Barcode scanner system for inventory control of helmets, track tank expiration. New last year, DPW don't have money in their budget for body repairs, Engine 2 (1999 D1) and Squad (2001 Pierce) has body corrosion, needs to be repaired \$40,000.

Mr. Doherty – Asked how this work will extend the life of the vehicles. Maybe 5 years; no structural repairs are being done.

Mr. Doherty – Asked how the small truck is doing. It has done well in storms.

Mr. Wallace – Asked if the Academy is teaching them how to drive. MIIA does simulator training. CDL is not required, they are exempt.

Ms. Manganelli – Asked if there is random drug testing. Drug testing in the contract, have not had to do this.

Chief McClellan – Explained documented runs and how it is recorded. Brief discussion on the data.

Mr. Doherty – Asked about an ambulance purchase. The ambulances are used a lot. There are approximately 50 runs per week. There is always one in service. Crossed manned.

Ms. Manganelli – Asked how many miles per year they put on the ambulances. A1 has less mileage 25,722, went into service in February. A2 has 88,129 miles, and is 3 years old.

Mr. Doherty – Asked if we will replace A2. Yes, we went through the exercise where we are and where we expect to be at the end of the fiscal year. We should have enough in the existing budget to address as a lease vehicle, not sure if we can purchase.

Other business: Brief discussion on Historical Committee report on Whitefield school. Board of Selectmen invited Kathleen for the status of Whitfield School. Board unanimously voted that the building should be demolished. Brief discussion on history of Whitfield School.

Brief discussion on Butters Farm house plan going forward. There is an article on the warrant for the property to be surplus. Expect a private party to purchase property, to be sold, and to preserve the historical value. Town could only pay for rehab of the exterior; the building still needs a lot of work. Brief discussion on getting someone who wants to preserve historical homes to purchase, renovate the inside and keep it up.

There being no further business, a motion was made by William Wallace, seconded by Jonathan Eaton. Approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

The next meeting of the Finance Committee is scheduled for Thursday, February 26, 2015.

Respectfully submitted,

Recording secretary