



## **Town of Wilmington**

Finance Committee

121 Glen Road Wilmington, 01887

### Meeting Minutes Tuesday, February 25, 2020

Finance Committee Chairman, John F. Doherty III, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm in the Conference Room of the Public Safety Building. Members present were Theresa Manganelli, Vice Chairman, Jonathan Dugas, Marianne Gallezzo and Bernard P. Nally. Michele Kincaid, Leigh Martinson, Hirak Shah and Kevin Stokes were absent.

#### FY 21 BUDGET OVERVIEW

PRESENT IN INTEREST: Jeffrey Hull, Town Manager; Kerry Colburn-Dion, Assistant Town Manager; Bryan Perry, Finance Director

#### POLICE DEPARTMENT

PRESENT IN INTEREST: Joseph Desmond, Police Chief; Brian Pupa, Deputy Police Chief

Chief Desmond reviewed a request from last year to add four (4) people to the department as a result of a staffing study that was done for the previous Police Chief. Chief Desmond suggested to the committee previously that he wanted to make an adjustment to keep the 4 but make 2 of them supervisory positions as supervision should be increased before the department grows. The result is that he is asking for a total of 2 patrolmen and 2 supervisors by 2022, one of each for the next two years. Expected upcoming retirements in the department could be between two and four people in the next two years as well.

Personnel Services is increased to reflect contractual obligations plus the additional two positions. Included in the addition is an increase under Contractual Services to allow for training of the new hires. There is one part time position added to personnel services to account for the Recovery Coach position. This position has been in place for a couple of years and was previously funded by a grant that is due to expire in August of this year, causing the Town to absorb the cost of funding this position for \$17,472. Furnishings and Equipment will increase \$3,000 to \$27,750. All the department's defibrillators are due to be replaced and will cost approximately \$13,000 from this total. Overtime increases are caused by lack of staffing. The department is down 7 people, from retirements, a deployment overseas and long-term injuries of two people. There are two people at the academy now. Mr. Hull stated that the expectation is that at Town Meeting they will be looking for transfers to cover the overtime associated with this fiscal year for the police. Mr. Doherty asked about the capacity of the Public Safety Building to house the additional personnel. Chief Desmond stated that locker space and storage is sufficient now and will likely need to be adjusted in the future to accommodate more staff.

Capital Outlay increases for FY2021 include vehicle replacements, portable radios and patrol rifle replacement. Chief Desmond is requesting the replacement of 4 vehicles, two marked cruiser and two unmarked. There was a discussion about which vehicles would be identified for replacement, which could possibly be repurposed and the future rate for vehicle replacement. There was also a discussion about shift coverage and car sharing among sectors. Chief Desmond described the difficulty getting parts and service for the radios the department uses currently, prompting him to ask for 35 new radios to replace the existing ones and add a spare which the department currently does not have and needs. The patrol rifles are also aging and need to be replaced. Chief Desmond is requesting new rifles with suppressives for noise control.

Ms. Manganelli asked about the increase in reported automobile accidents over the last couple of years. Chief Desmond noted that traffic has increased noticeably in Town.

### PUBLIC SAFETY CENTRAL DISPATCH

PRESENT IN INTEREST: Joseph Desmond, Police Chief; Brian Pupa, Deputy Police Chief; William F. Cavanaugh, Fire Chief; Corey Swift, Public Safety Dispatch Supervisor

Chief Desmond began the FY2021 Budget for dispatch by noting that Personnel Services has increased in overtime because of turnover in the department in addition to contractual obligations and the anticipated addition of one dispatch position. Chief Cavanaugh then noted that in the past, overtime has been budgeted at \$50,000 to match the amount that the state will grant back to the department. However, historically, the department exceeds this figure and as a result exceeds the budget. This year, they are requesting \$100,000 for overtime with the expectation that half of that will be reimbursed from the state and the remainder will give a cushion so as not to exceed the budget, with the intention that some of this balance could be saved. Currently the department is down 4 dispatchers as 2 joined the Fire Department, 1 is in the academy and 1 position remains open and unfilled. Chief Cavanaugh explained that call volume has increased and additional staff is needed to assist with coverage. There was a discussion about retention and pay rates, competitive shift schedules, double-shifts, the high-stress environment associated with this type of work and the typical career path of candidates looking to join the department. Dispatch Supervisor Corey Swift stated that the Town's turnover rate for this department is standard for the industry. Contractual Services is increasing to \$18,712 to cover 16 hours of continuing education for every dispatcher, which is paid for up front and then can be reimbursable through grants, EMT program costs and service contracts for radios. Materials and Supplies is increasing as a one-time cost for additional uniforms (to now include pants), as contractually bargained. This cost will not be repeated at this level after the initial push. Furnishings and Equipment expenditures is level funded to cover the cost of maintaining chairs and professionally cleaning consoles.

Capital Outlay expenses of \$450,000 for year 1 of a 3-year project to replace the infrastructure will update the system and add a backup system. There is also a request for \$194,000 for the second part of the dispatch center remodel that was approved last year, for a new Zetron system and receiving system for the fire alarm. The furniture and the floor will be replaced simultaneously.

At the end of the Dispatch budget presentation there was a brief discussion of Animal Control.

### FIRE DEPARTMENT

PRESENT IN INTEREST: William F. Cavanaugh, Fire Chief; Christopher Pozzi, Deputy Fire Chief

Chief Cavanaugh began by introducing newly appointed Deputy Pozzi. He then presented his FY2021 Budget. In Personnel Services there is a reduction of \$400,000 in overtime. Last year the Committee approved an increase in personnel so this year coverage is better and less overtime will be needed. Three new hires will be in the academy in March, April and May and they will be ready in June, July and August. There are still two cases of absence from prolonged injury and one person on military deployment. There is a small increase for the part time clerk to fill the position and retain the new hire.

Ms. Manganelli asked about the length of the SAFER grant. It is for three years. The Town will be reimbursed 75% for the first two years and 35% for the third year. The Committee congratulated Chief Cavanaugh in his efforts to attain the grant for the Town and remarked how appreciative they are to him for getting it.

Contractual Services and Materials and Supplies are primarily level funded as vendors do not anticipate any major increases. There is an additional \$3,500 for fire alarm/dispatch to maintain the aging system. Furniture and Equipment expenses of \$40,000 will provide lockers for the new staff, and the replacement of the refrigerator.

Mr. Doherty asked about the adequacy of the current accommodations. Chief Cavanaugh stated that it is “very tight” and there are not enough lockers or beds for everyone. There was a discussion about the department’s headcount and why the new personnel, who will be going to the academy, cannot yet be counted for safety reasons. Mr. Doherty asked about the status of the new fire truck. It will be ready by end of April or early May. Mr. Nally asked how many people have been added to the department since last year. Chief Cavanaugh answered that eight people have been added, while one member left to serve on FDNY so one of these eight is a fill-in, leaving 7 out of 8 in place. The eighth one is technically hired and is anticipated to return to duty in June.

Capital Outlay expenditures include \$32,250 for the upgrade of a 2008 diesel pickup utility truck to be used as a forestry vehicle and replace that with a new  $\frac{3}{4}$  ton gas pickup truck utility vehicle for \$52,700 for a total of \$84,950, versus spending between \$125,000 to \$150,000 for a brand new forestry vehicle. The Committee commended Chief Cavanaugh on his creativity in extended the life of the vehicle and finding ways to think outside the box. He is also asking for \$32,000 for a power loader for the back of the ambulance, allowing for safer loading of patients and prevention of injury to personnel. The power loader would have the ability to be moved from one ambulance to another as they age and are replaced. Chief Cavanaugh is also asking for \$39,000 for new radios for the new personnel and to have a backup as there are currently no extra radios.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Hull updated the Committee on the changes to Veterans’ benefits that had been discussed previously as a follow up item. After consulting with Town Council, regarding the exemption to property taxes for the parent or guardian of a servicemember who dies as a result of service, if the parent/guardian holds the record of legal interest or sufficient beneficial interest in a trust on that property then they would receive the exemption. In answer to a question about stacking benefits from separate sections, according to a booklet from the Department of Revenue, the answer is no except for two clauses, one for financial hardship and one for solar panels. Finally, regarding the question about whether these benefits strictly apply to single-family homeowners, if the property in question is an apartment building or included as in-law apartment, the exemption would apply to the one unit the family occupies.

Mr. Doherty asked if Mr. Hull received the information he sent over regarding the Community Development Block grants. Mr. Hull said they are based upon, in part, income eligibility. The Town, he said, had block grants before that were focused on the Silver Lake area as a target area that was identified as income eligible, and said it is not clear if the Town would still be eligible at this time for grants through CBG. Mr. Hull stated that we should remain mindful that it is one thing to apply for grants and obtain the grant but it would require full time staff to go out and do inspections on properties that are rehabbed and a part time assistant that would be responsible for documentation, as there are requirements of the grant that these functions have to be performed by a housing rehab specialist.

There was a discussion of the possibility of having a grant writer in the future. Mr. Hull questioned, as many of these grants are specialized, would one person have the necessary expertise to apply for myriad of grants. Mr. Doherty offered the city of Beverly’s grant writer as an example. Mr. Doherty also mentioned how the Elderly Services Director had previously stated she was not aware of any grants for feasibility studies for the senior center and he noted that there was recently \$300,000 awarded for a feasibility study for a senior center. Ms.

Gallezzo stated that she believes this was in Concord, MA. Mr. Doherty questioned why the department heads are not actively seeking grants more aggressively. Mr. Hull answered that we do obtain grants on many basis's, naming DPW and IT as examples, and agreed that there is room to do more. Ms. Gallezzo noted that the grant writer in Beverly earns a salary of \$65,000 a year and in one year brought in 13.5 million dollars in grants as a full-time writer. Mr. Hull questioned who is executing the grants and Ms. Gallezzo stated that she writes the grants and the department heads execute them. Ms. Manganelli opined that there is money available that could come to the Town. Mr. Doherty stated that he will send a link to Mr. Hull, Ms. Colburn-Dion and Mr. Perry with additional information regarding the city of Beverly for review and will add comments to the meeting on Thursday. Mr. Hull stated that he would be interested in the comparison of staffing from town to town. Mr. Perry noted that other factors are involved, including funding earmarked through legislation for feasibility studies, and that department heads can be networking to hear about opportunities. Mr. Hull noted that he would be interested in looking at additional information.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Finance Committee reviewed the Minutes from February 11, 2020. A motion was made by Ms. Gallezzo, seconded by Mr. Nally, and by the affirmative vote of all it was:

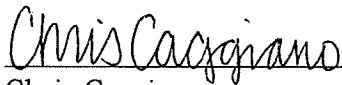
VOTED: To approve the minutes from February 11, 2020.

At the conclusion of the discussion, there being no further business to come before the Committee, a motion was made by Ms. Manganelli and seconded by Ms. Gallezzo, it was unanimously:

VOTED: That the Finance Committee adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Chris Caggiano", is written over a horizontal line.

Chris Caggiano  
Recording Secretary