

The Select Board met on Monday November 14, 2022 beginning at 6:30pm in the Stillman Meeting Room of the Walpole Police Station. Board member Benjamin Barret was absent. The following members were present:

James O'Neil, Chair
Glenn Maffei, Vice Chair
Allyson Hamilton, Clerk
Mark Gallivan

Finance Committee Members Present:

Dennis Crowley, Chair	Kathleen Foley Greulich
Douglas Shea, Vice Chair	Adrienne Rogers
Josette Burke, Clerk	Mark Trudell
Brian Bain	Lisa Van der Linden
Audrey Grace	Scott Wassel

Also participating
James Johnson, Town Administrator
Patrick Shield, Assistant Town Administrator

Appointments

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chair O'Neil called the meeting to order at 6:30pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Department of Public Works Operations and Budget Discussion

DPW Director Rick Mattson was present to discuss his department's operations and budget. The DPW is comprised of seven subdivisions: Administration, Engineering, Sewer & Water, Highway, Parks, Building Maintenance, and Vehicle Maintenance. It consists 63 full-time employees and 1 part-time clerical position. They do a lot behind the scenes that people don't realize, but they could use a couple more regular employees to keep up with the growing demands. Budget increases are mainly due to the increase in the price of materials and equipment. One big challenge has been recruiting and keeping snowplow contractors for road clearing during the winter months. Another challenge is the paving and maintenance of streets and sidewalks all throughout town.

Police Department Operations and Budget Discussion

Police Chief Richard Kelleher was present to discuss his department's operations and budget. The police department's mission statement is to preserve the quality of life for all Walpole residents by tailoring its efforts to the precise needs of the community. It currently employs 47 officers, which is slightly under the recommended figure of two officers per thousand residents (52 officers). In terms of vehicles, the department utilizes four motorcycles, three ATVs, six mountain bikes, eleven marked cruisers, and eleven unmarked cruisers. In 2021, they responded to nearly 21,000 calls with 136 resulting in arrests. The department's weapons need to be replaced every five to seven years, and two cruisers must be replaced per year. The police union's contract expires in June 2023 and the union leaders are currently undergoing negotiation for the next three-year contract. The police department is in the process of hiring a mental health officer, who will be able to deal with many scenarios that typical officers may not be equipped to handle. They are also in need of a part-time IT Director to maintain the department's computers and technological devices.

Fire Department Operations and Budget Discussion

Fire Chief Timothy Bailey was present to discuss his department's operations and budget. The department operates out of three fire stations: Station 1, which was built in 2018, Station 2, which was built in 1911, and Station 3, which is primarily used for storage and stadium events. Chief Bailey is requesting money to fund a feasibility study to look into relocating Station 2 to an area more centrally located. There are 12,488 structures in the Town of Walpole, including 6500 single-family homes and 291 commercial properties. The current population is about 26,000 residents, with about 4,300 calls per year. The fire department is currently understaffed and disproportionately in the older age group, so there is a real need to begin hiring new, younger personnel. They are also requesting budgeting to hire a full-time training officer and a part-time administrative assistant. Hiring is a challenging process because all new hires must go through training at the Academy, but enrollment in classes is very limited. Retention is also a challenge because young firefighters will often move to other towns or out of state.

On motion of Finance Committee Chair Dennis Crowley, seconded by Clerk Josette Burke, voted to for the Finance Committee to adjourn. Motion Passed (10-0-0).

Unfinished Business

Continued Discussion & Vote on Walpole Housing Authority Position

Town Administrator Jim Johnson stated that the Walpole Housing Authority had a chance to interview all the candidates for the tenant position, and they are recommending Brian Lebel to fill the role. On motion of Clerk Hamilton, seconded by Vice Chair Maffei, voted to appoint Brian Lebel to the Walpole Housing Authority to fill a vacancy until 6/7/2025. Motion Passed (4-0-0).

On motion of Clerk Hamilton, seconded by Vice Chair Maffei, voted to adjourn the meeting and the meeting was adjourned accordingly at 8:30pm. Motion Passed (4-0-0).