

FINANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES

February 12, 2015

Regular meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Thursday, February 12, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in Room #112, Town Hall with the following members present: C. Lane, M. Iwanowicz, A. Ragosta, M. Trudell, J. Burke, J. Denneen, D. Bruce, S. Lawson, T. Williams, D. Crowley, A. Healy, J. McDermott: 8:40 p.m. A. Walsh. Members absent were J. Lowre and P. Hinton. Also in attendance was Animal Control Officer J. Spillane, Fire Chief T. Bailey, Police Chief R. Stillman, Deputy Police Chief J. Carmichael and Building Commissioner M. Yanovitch, Town Administrator J. Johnson

7:00 p.m. – Quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by the Chairman D. Bruce.

May 4, 2015 Spring Annual Town Meeting/Budgets

Police – Chief Stillman provided to the Committee an update on what the Police Department was working on and the FY2015 Budget. They have been trying to provide the Community with different programs. Last year they did a citizens survey on what the community wanted. They expected to receive only 500 responses, received 3,000 Survey is available on web site and Police Department is happy with how it worked out but there is room for improvement. They will be providing training at the high school tomorrow with staff and teachers on safety issues. Senior Citizens Police Academy has been a great success. There is a steady increase across the board on the number of crimes.

Tasers purchase – Purchased last year, every officer has been given one. Our program on the training has been used as a template for other communities. All staff have been trained. Purchase included any upgrades and tasers have to be replaced within 5 years. Old ones will have to be turned in and new ones issued, this will be no extra cost. Everything is recorded on the tasers and they have to be activated every day. **Records management system** – money was appropriated to obtain a new system. This includes the fire department, every officer has been through training and it is working well, provides more information than previously and saves time on attendance issues. **Facilities proposal** – Chief Stillman is optimistic with the proposal of the Selectmen for a new facility. Further discussion will be discussed at a later date. **Dispatch issues** – Department has new software, they are looking to the future to increase the dispatchers from two on the desk, seven days a week. This is needed especially during the day.

Longview Farm – A breakdown of the type of calls for 2014 was provided. There has been increase in number of calls - 56 for 2011 to 148 for 2014. Committee questioned whether or not Longview Farm could be charged for any services. Town does not receive

any money as they are considered residents of the town. Police Department is trying to open communications with the facility, there are many ongoing issues.

Radio issues - all communications are located on the water tank. **Personnel**– Personnel do their job well. One officer has been made officer of the year, and recognized in women in law enforcement. One officer is in the Transit Academy and one in Boston Police Academy. Community efforts – Adopt a school program is going well, officers go to the school every day, and they have an officer providing training at the middle school. **Drug take back program** - receiving more and more every month. **Mental health issues** – working on response time, receiving a lot of calls on mental health issues and trying to improve on training and resources. They work with Mental Health Riverside and receive assistance on resolving issues. **Social media** – Department has a facebook page. New bicycle unit – starting up, Officer Thayer is raising funds/donations to purchase new equipment for and outfit the bicycle unit. **Accreditation** – continuing to move forward. **Alcohol Coalition** – working in conjunction with Board of Health, doing well coming up with new programs, it is a community effort.

Budget

Machinery & equipment – reduced. Last year three cruisers purchased out of budget. This year they are requesting two cruisers from budget and three out of capital. There is not always the money available in capital to do it. Average cruiser turned in is 3 years old and has 120,000 miles. **Training** – Increased \$20,000, Walpole does more training than surrounding communities, expensive but necessary. They do some in house and do pay for some outside training. **Gas and oil** – has been decreased but it is unknown what it will be. **Salaries** -\$146,000 increase, of which \$85,000 overtime. He does not have flexibility, he needs the overtime, due to officers out on injuries, minimum manning of officers is scary, town is a huge area to cover. They have three patrolmen and one sergeant on duty. This allows him to hold the budget. Vacancies in salary line item help with the overtime. Department is very conservative and is way understaffed. They do receive help from surrounding communities and this happens frequently. He does not have the flexibility to tighten the budget, needs the overtime due to officers out on injuries .

Salary line item will be changed due to contract negotiations. It was suggested to wait for a final figure prior to voting this budget.

Facilities tour by the Finance Committee Members of the Police and Fire stations was scheduled for Saturday, February 28, 2015 at 9:00 a.m.

Emergency Management Budget

Chief Stillman spoke to this budget in absence of the Director R. Turner. There are no changes, budget is basically level funded.

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by D. Crowley to approve the Emergency Management Budget in the amount of \$32,252, Motion passed (12-0-0) (12 voting) Unanimous

Inspectional Services

Building Commissioner M. Yanovitch reviewed his budget. He spoke to being in this position for only three months and waiting to see how department is working before making any changes and see what can be improved on. Last year department took in \$800,000 in permit fees with 3,300 inspections, and 1,000 issued permits. They are doing site visits on violations. They are looking for additional help for the staff assistant. She does many functions. They are looking for a part time position to assist the department with advancing to the 21st century. Positions will provide assistance at the counter. This position will set the foundation for the technology. Position will be paid for through an increase in fees to offset the costs. He will be reviewing the permit fees, they have been underestimated for years. He would like to advance the department with computer technology and change the permit tracking program. Any increase in fees will have to go before the Board of Selectmen. Position of part time inspector has been decreased from 18 hours to 14 hours. He hopes to bring the Building Department forward with a work flow change. There is a need for improvement in customer service. This new part time position will be for 16 hours and will require technical expertise. Future Purchase of new software for permits would be a capital expense with anticipated cost of \$100,000, plus a monthly maintenance fees. He is looking at other communities to see what is out there for programs.

8:40 p.m. – Committee Member A. Walsh

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson to approve the Inspectional Services Budget in the amount of \$369,918, Motion Passed (11-1-1) (D. Crowley opposed, A. Walsh abstained) (13 voting)

Animal Control

Animal Control Officer J. Spillane updated this budget. He explained that the budget is pretty much level funded. On questions from the committee, kennel is doing great. Deputy Animal Control Officer from Norwood covers for J. Spillane when he is unavailable. He also provides reciprocal coverage for the Town of Norwood. Mr. Johnson spoke to J. Spillane providing a great service to the Town in coming back to this position. It is a one person department and he is pretty much available 24/7.

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson to approve the Animal Control Budget in the amount of \$66,604, Motion Passed (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous

Fire Department

Chief Bailey reported on a major structural fire two weeks ago . Building was a duplex and garage was not sprinklered. They responded with five men from station. Police helped established the water connection. Water surge caused problems in other homes and they called in mutual aid. State Fire Marshall has ruled the fire accidental, structure is not habitable. There was another fire the next morning at same structure. Eight communities assisted in putting out the fire, structure had to be torn down as it was in unsafe condition. It required an action from the Board of Selectmen to do this. P.J. Hayes was the contractor that torn it down, and is owed \$8,000 - \$12,000. There needs to be a reminder put out to residents that to shovel out hydrants.

Blizzard requires different staffing issues, they staff all three stations. Department is presently in bind with overtime. Some personnel are out on injured on duty claims, this costs approximately \$10,400 for overtime. Cost \$34,000 for the blizzard storm coverage. Total runs are up from last year. There have been a number of helicopter flights in the last year, all ambulance calls are billable, and 93% are recovered by billing company.

Chief will keep the committee informed on the budget issues. He anticipates a need for a Reserve Fund Transfer. Takes a year or two to receive any reimbursement money from the Federal Government. DPW has applied for \$297,000 in reimbursement, but won't see funding until next budget year. Stand-by costs are not covered, they are only eligible for actual time out of station. Stipends – increase with raises.

Staffing issues with fire and police departments need to be looked at, possibly a study by the town. Something needs to be done, this is a major issue. Someone is going to get hurt with lack of personnel. Town needs to have the commitment to go forward with staffing, this is a major issue. J. Denneen spoke to providing the Town Meeting with a breakdown of what happened at the recent fire and the problem with lack of staffing. Community has to understand that they are at risk. Public needs to be educated and comparisons to other towns.

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on the Fire Department Budget in the amount of \$3,509,594, Motion Passed, (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous

Committee Appointments

Capital Budget – At the February 5, 2015 meeting, J. Burke had been voted to fill the term of Carol Lane on this committee. After further research with the Town Clerk, C. Lane's term expires on June 30, 2015. Per the Charter, terms are for three year appointment. After June 30, 2015, another appointment will have to be voted on.

MOTION MADE by D. Crowley, Seconded by S. Lawson to appoint J. Burke to the Capital Budget Committee for a term to expire on June 30, 2015, Motion Passed (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous .

MPIC – D. Crowley is the Finance Committee representative to this Committee. He agreed to stay on through June 30, 2015.

MOTION MADE by D. Bruce, Seconded by J. Burke to continue the appointment of D. Crowley to the MPIC Committee through the period of June 30, 2015, Motion Passed (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous

Minutes

Any corrections to the February 5,2015 be e-mailed to the Clerk.

Adjourn

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by D. Crowley to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 p.m., Motion Passed (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Clare P. Abril
Clerk