

The Select Board and Finance Committee met on Thursday, November 16, 2023 beginning at 7:00pm in the Stillman Meeting Room of the Walpole Police Station. Select Board member Benjamin Barret was absent. The following members were present:

Allyson Hamilton, Chair  
Mark Gallivan, Vice Chair  
James O'Neil  
Glenn Maffei, left at 7:50pm

Finance Committee Members Present:

Douglas Shea, Vice Chair	Josette Burke, Clerk
Audrey Grace	Steven Hendricks
Jean Kenney	Alice Lawson
Lawrence Pitman, joined at 7:15pm	Mark Trudell
Lisa Van der Linden, joined at 7:25pm	

Also participating  
James Johnson, Town Administrator  
Patrick Shield, Assistant Town Administrator  
Aoife Kelly, Executive Assistant

Appointments

Call to Order

Chair Hamilton and Vice Chair Shea called the meeting to order at 7:05pm.

Walpole Department of Public Works

DPW Director Rick Mattson was present to discuss his department's budget. Director Mattson provided a brief overview of the DPW, the nine subdivisions that it is comprised of with 64 total employees, 47 of which are union. Director Mattson touched on the various increases proposed by the department heads in order to provide the level of service expected by the residents. Director Mattson highlighted the increase in the cost of materials; in particular parts for vehicles but how there has been some progress in regards to the supply chain issued of previous years. The topic of employee retention and possible retirements in the next few years was discussed. Director Mattson spoke about positions he would like to add to future budgets; GIS position to engineering, additional person to cemetery division and two positions in the highway division. Director Mattson called attention to the cost of health insurance as negative aspect when recruiting new employees. Other issues discussed were attracting snow plough operators, Chapter90 funding, long-range road improvements and reviewing the old goal of repairing every road every 7-8years and the continued support of the Select Board, Finance Committee and Town Meeting in adding the necessary equipment to address the needs of the departments. The Board and Committee members thanked Director Mattson for his report.

Walpole Fire Department

Fire Chief Paul Barry was present and introduced Assistant Fire Chief Brian Cherella. Chief Barry outlined the change in the command staff that occurred early this year with the addition of the Assistant Fire Chief and two Deputy Fire Chief positions. Chief Barry spoke about current staffing at 44, 3 moving through the academy, current

minimum staffing of 9 with requested minimum of 11 and long range request of 14. Chief Barry highlighted why this increase is needed with the increase in Walpole's population and the NFPA standard. The Chief provided an update on the apparatus, cost of repairs, significant increase in large equipment and long delivery times. The Chief updated the members on the ambulance revenue, with an increase in total calls. Finally the Chief provided an overview of the three stations in town and his capital request for a study for a potential new location for station 2 and his budget request for an increase of 14% with the addition of 4 fire fighters. A variety of topics were discussed including, Norwood hospital closure, new traffic lights in town, evaluation of station 2, the use of ambulance funds for capital items and potential retirements in the coming years. The Board and Committee thanked Chief Barry for his presentation.

#### Walpole Police Department

Police Chief Kelleher was present to discuss his department's budget. Chief Kelleher spoke on the department's mission, the WPD team which includes 48 sworn officers, emergency dispatchers, civilian staff and the specialized units, such as Metro LEC, Mobile Operations, All Terrain Vehicles (one which was replaced last year), Bicycle Patrol(six new bikes), Drone Units(recently had officer FAA Certified), Detective Division (6 detectives), crash reconstruction. Chief Kelleher also highlighted the school resource officer, school liaisons and recent addition of the mental health clinician Dylan Jones who has been a great asset to the team. Chief Kelleher spoke about his FY25 budget requests which included added a 9<sup>th</sup> sergeant and 2 police officers, one new cruiser and replacement of another and in the future the need to replace all firearms within the department. Several topics were discussed including the consensus among members to absorb the cost of the mental health clinician into the budget once the grant funding has expired, possibly adding a second clinician, the need to continue to advocate for additional staff, mental health training for all officers and the possible use of body cameras in the future.

On motion of Vice Chair Gallivan, seconded by Board member O'Neil, voted to adjourn and the meeting was adjourned accordingly at 8:50pm. Motion Passed (3-0-0).

On motion of Committee member Trudell, seconded by Committee member Lawson, voted to adjourn and the meeting was adjourned accordingly at 8:50pm. Motion Passed (9-0-0).