

***Town Council Budget/Management Committee
May 22, 2013
Town Council Chambers***

Present: Chairman Kenneth DiFazio
Councilor Arthur Mathews
Councilor Michael Molisse
Councilor Michael Smart

Absent: Councilor Patrick O'Connor

Also Present: Richard Swanson, Town Auditor
William McKinney, Chief Financial Officer
Chief Joseph Davis, Chief WFD

Chairman DiFazio called the Budget/Management Committee Meeting to order at 6:45 PM.

Review/discussion of Fire Department Budget with Chief Financial Officer and Fire Chief

13 068 M-Fire Department

Management & Administration:

The following questions were provided by the Town Auditor:

Kindly provide updated Organization Charts and manpower list by station and review said charts with the Committee and Auditor.

Chief Davis stated that the chart is similar to the one provided last year. He said it is broken down by station with four groups. There is Station 1 (North Weymouth), Station 2 (fire alarm), Station 3 (Weymouth Landing), and Station 5 in South Weymouth-there are three working fire stations. Station 2 is closed and is used only for training and administration.

Chief Davis stated that there is no funding for reopening Station 2 but that the cost would entail costs for 20 personnel at between \$1.2 and \$1.6 million dollars. To replace an engine would be \$560,000.

A new engine would create less wear and tear on the remaining engines. East Weymouth has to be covered by North Weymouth and Weymouth Landing engines. It is critical to open this station for fire and medical purposes.

To open Station 2 the town would need both manpower and an engine. Chief Davis clarified that the funding for the engine that is expected in seven months is not for Station 2, that the town therefore needs a second engine (for Station 2). This new engine will replace Engine 3 in Weymouth Landing (Station 3), as that old engine is worn out. We will still use it as a reserve engine.

Mr. McKinney noted that the total number of uniformed members is 88, representing the number in the budget--88 are in the budget and five funded from the SAFER grant, for a total of 93, including Chief Davis.

Committee members congratulated the retiring chief on his job.

Are all salary step increases and other types of salary changes included in the budget? What is the total manpower complement contained within this budget?

Chief Davis noted that all step increases and other salary changes are included in the budget, this is a level service budget with exception of firefighter raises.

Chief Davis stated that 88 plus SAFER grant (5) is the total number of the manpower complement. The total number is 93, with 88 of this number being in the budget.

Mr. McKinney noted that the funding for the five SAFER grant positions remain until December of this year. This way there is no layoff or bumping.

Chief Davis said that with respect to injuries, firefighters have to see him once a week and give an update.

What does the \$10,000 in telephone expense cover for communications? Does this money pay for landlines and cell phones at the firehouses as well as Broad Street?

Chief Davis stated that the money covers all four telephone lines, air cards for laptops, and fire alarm dispatch transmission lines. He said the deputy Chiefs have a cell phone , which is shared among the four of them.

Kindly list the dues/memberships paid with the \$8,000.

The dues are required- metro fire assessment – a shared resource with Norfolk that has many communities, where each member gives mutual aid to the other members.

Plymouth County Commission – relates to state bids and bid membership. The town doesn't have to go out - except for larger items - and get separate bids. It has already been bid by different vendors; therefore the town has to pay a fee to be included in the bids.

Councilor Mathews asked about safety for officers regarding electric cars and photovoltaics on roofs.

Chief Davis noted that there has been a course that pertained to these vehicles held in Braintree. Fire academy conducts road courses that oftentimes incur charges.

Chief Davis noted that Weymouth ends up calling upon other communities for help more than other communities call upon Weymouth. There isn't sufficient apparatus and manpower for second alarm fires. We have two engines, a rapid intervention team (3rd engine,) and one ladder truck. A second alarm incident requires two additional engines and another ladder truck. Unfortunately, Weymouth can't supply this.

He said that if an incident commander has a serious situation and has to strike a second alarm, we would receive mutual aid from other communities.

We ask other communities to cover our firehouses in case there is another incident. Some communities can help and some cannot. Smaller communities may only have two trucks and would be short themselves if they spare a truck.

Do you anticipate any Federal/State Grant or Award funding in Fy14 to update/replace equipment or to compensate Firefighters? Are there any Applications for Grant Funding currently in process?

Chief Davis confirms that the department applies for grants through federal emergency management – FEMA. But there are no grant applications in process at this time. September and October are grant periods for equipment and SAFER grant. The town applied last year for 20 men and an engine to get Southfield running. They were going to build a fire station. The grants were turned down.

How were the costs to service Southfield factored into the Fy14 budget?

Chief Davis said that costs were not factored into the FY 14 budget. He noted that the department has been going to the base before it was Southfield but said that the department is responding to calls more than before.

Mr. McKinney noted that all the funds come in as part of the limited revenue stream that the town receives.

Chief Davis confirmed that the Navy funded the fire department at the base. They had given the department an engine and we had an engine company equipped with 20 men. They paid for the manpower for a couple of years. The funding dried up and we were able to maintain a ladder. Finally, the town couldn't afford it and we were asked to leave.

Mr. McKinney said that the department, which bills Southfield quarterly, is once per week for an hour.

Chief Davis said the cost per run is \$1600. If it increases over a certain amount of time, then the rate increases.

Mr. McKinney stated that the cost per run factors in salary, benefits, and vehicle maintenance. These costs are divided by the number of runs per year and this results in the cost per run.

Chief Davis said the department responds to calls in Southfield no matter what town the fire is located.

Chief Davis said that in discussions with the Chiefs from Abington and Rockland, it was said that they would start an engine company for a building fire no matter where it is. There would be three engines immediately and sufficient water and manpower to bring the fire under control.

Fire Suppression & Rescue:

How many stations will be staffed for fire suppression and rescue? What is the Ladder/Engine configuration in the budget?

Chief Davis said there are three stations which are open – three engines and one ladder in service. Station 2 is for administration, training, and fire alarm only.

Overtime is budgeted at \$500,000 in Fy14. How is overtime tracking against the budget in Fy13? Talk about the cost drivers of overtime and how management will monitor and control the use of expensive overtime hours? Do you anticipate any possible reduction of overtime hours in Fy14 if the vacant positions are filled?

Chief Davis foresees that overtime will be reduced. We have not had to have a transfer into the overtime budget. In other years we have had to do this.

Mr. McKinney said the Chief has been doing a great job because overtime is less than it was at this time last year.

There is \$50,000 budgeted for “Fire Equipment”. What is the intended use of these funds?

These funds will be used to replace and upgrade fire fighting equipment. The fire department has Hearst power unit, almost \$32,000. Another is equipment and rigging for high angle rescue. The funding will pay for this equipment and for training.

Why is a vacant Deputy Fire Chief budgeted at \$100,000 when currently there are three deputies? What is the justification in expanding to four? How many stations have a Deputy Fire Chief on duty 24/7?

Chief Davis said there are four deputy chiefs on duty and there are no deputy chiefs assigned to any station except fire headquarters.

Each deputy chief is assigned to a group. On group number one there is an Acting Captain Hammond who will replace Chief Davis. Upon his retirement, there will be a new chief promoted. Captain Hammond will be promoted to Deputy Chief as he is next on the list. Resulting will be a fourth deputy chief. There is no opening there.

Chief Davis said per contract there must be four deputy chiefs, one per shift.

Explain the purpose and use of the \$20,000 in line item “Sick Leave Incentive.

Chief Davis said that this is a contractual item. If the department doesn’t use sick leave they receive a small stipend.

How was the \$70,000 derived for “Out-of-Grade” pay? Talk about how this need occurs.

Chief Davis said the out of grade is calculated in the past year and is to preserve paying overtime. If an officer is out – sick, vacation, etc. – and

sufficient manpower exists, a person out of grade is utilized, rather than incurring overtime. The person hired would receive a stipend for being out of grade but not receive time and one half overtime, so there would be a significant savings.

Kindly discuss the Retirement Allotment of \$90,000 and what causes the use of this line item? How was this number derived?

This is built into the salary line item to pay for retiring employees. The amount helps the department to fill positions more quickly. If a firefighter is due \$15,000 for unused sick time etc. the department would have to wait weeks to fill the position.

Prevention:

Why is \$5,000 in overtime budgeted when Fy13 actual overtime expense is zero?

Chief Davis said this amount is included in the overtime line item. It was put in place years ago and comes out of the regular overtime budget.

Mr. McKinney confirmed that we need the total of \$550,000. Chief Davis said this amount is within the overtime budget.

Training:

Training expense is budgeted at \$20,000. What type of training and for how many personnel will this money pay for?

Chief Davis spoke of four sessions of thermal imaging training scheduled for the whole department- groups at a time – will go after the class and be put through the paces with the thermal imager and instructors. It was noted that the cost is \$5,200.

Apparatus driver safety will include four days of classroom and four days of practical sessions. A simulator, resembling the front end of a cockpit of an aircraft, will be used. This may result in a reduction in insurance rates.

Additional training from the Massachusetts Fire Academy is being considered. Some are for no fee and others have to be paid for.

Vehicle and Building Maintenance:

Provide the Committee and Auditor an analysis of the Fy14 costs by Firehouse.

Chief Davis said that FY14 costs are broken down by stations. Station 1 is \$39,430; Station 2 is \$83,041; Station 3 is \$41,630; and Station 5 is \$53,388.

Chief Davis notes that Station 2 costs are higher because it is a larger station and more electricity is used.

Funding reflects costs of utilities, building maintenance, HVAC, Plymovent exhaust system (removes diesel smoke), vehicle maintenance and repairs, required annual apparatus pump testing, and annual apparatus ladder testing. Maintenance on department boats and motors is also completed.

Discuss the maintenance program and efforts being made to control these costs.

Chief Davis said that as to vehicle maintenance it is performed by DPW. Replacing apparatus will have direct cost savings on vehicle repairs. As the fleet is aging, more and more repairs are needed.

He suggested that we employ an EVT mechanic – emergency vehicle mechanic- in house, who could have training but it requires funding. This would save money by not sending the work out.

The department used to have mechanics dedicated to the fire department but we don't any more. We would save money by having our own people because we wouldn't have to send the apparatus out.

Municipal Alarm System:

Salaries in Municipal Alarm Systems decrease by \$65,466 or 42% in Fy14. Why is this? How many personnel are needed to operate 24/7?

The same number of people will be working. The reason it looks like there are fewer people is that there is only one member, who is permanently assigned, as fire alarm superintendent. The other firefighters who work as dispatchers are temporarily assigned from fire suppression for a six-month rotation. Their salaries are listed under the suppression line item.

In previous budgets the department had permanent fire alarm operators assigned to fire alarm as dispatchers. We have temporary people. They go in for six months. We take junior people and rotate them, train them.

What is the basis in budgeting overtime at \$35,000 when Fy12 actual was \$11,369 and Fy13 is tracking lower than budget?

Chief Davis notes that the line item is assigned to fire alarm division but is included in the overtime line item.

Discuss the \$47,000 budgeted for Radio Repairs, Fire/AL/MA and Repairs.

There is an \$8,000 fee to maintain and changes dispatch and fire reporting software- same software that police use. There is an annual \$13,000 for radio maintenance support and \$10,000 for King Fisher repair and maintenance. \$6000 is for installation of street boxes in key locations each year in town for emergency purposes. Radio repairs are not covered in the contract which is estimated at \$6,000. Dispatch equipment and repair at the dispatch center(Station 2) is \$5,000.

13-087 Fire Department Vehicle

Mr. McKinney noted that the fire department is looking for two vehicles. If we get the vehicle paid and done with we don't have to burden future budgets with it.

Councilor DiFazio asked if there are any accounts other than the 02 accounts with unexpended balances in them.

Mr. McKinney will investigate.

Councilor Mathews moved for favorable action on measure number 13-087, motion seconded by Councilor Molisse and voted unanimously.

With no further business to attend to, Councilor Mathews moved to adjourn at 8:17 PM-motion seconded by Councilor Molisse and voted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted: Jody Lehrer

Approved by: Chairman Kenneth DiFazio