

**TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES
BUDGET/MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Town Hall Council Chambers
May 9, 2011 - Monday**

Present: Ken DiFazio, Chairperson
Patrick O'Connor, Vice Chairperson
Arthur Mathews, Council President
Michael Molisse, Councilor
Michael Smart, Councilor

Also Present: William McKinney, Chief Financial Officer
Richard Swanson, Town Auditor
Robert Leary, Chief, Fire Department
Michael Gallagher, Director of Administrative and
Community Services

Recording Secretary: Mary Barker

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

Review/Discuss General Government Budgets with Chief Financial Officer and Applicable Department Heads: Robert Leary, Chief, Weymouth Fire Department

Deliberate the following measures:

11 025M- Fire Department

Chief Leary went directly to the responses he provided in writing to the questions posed by Auditor Swanson.

The decrease in his budget from FY11 to FY12 in revenue is due to the reduction in new growth which resulted in less permits issued in the town.

CFO McKinney noted that the rebid for insurance for reimbursement for lost wages resulted in less cost to the department and is also reflected in the budget. The town rebid at a lower premium by removing the reimbursement component out of the contract.

The total expense budget is less than 2011 because the lease payments on the two engines have been paid off with Free Cash and are no longer in the budget. In return, one position was returned to the staffing complement, resulting in 88 budgeted uniform firefighter positions (including the chief). There are five positions being paid in full from the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant and therefore not included in the budget. The grant award is \$973,000 and covers salary, uniform, turnout gear and benefits. The total number of uniformed personnel is 93.

Auditor Swanson asked about the grant. It's federal, new as of FY11 and under the terms of the grant, personnel complement must be maintained for a two year period. Grant funding began in January 2011 so will carry through into FY13. There was a brief discussion of the grant.

Councilor Mathews asked how the positions under the grant were filled. Employees who were laid off were invited back first, but had taken other positions. Of the new employee hires, one is a lateral transfer from Falmouth and one is new to the department and will undergo training at the academy in July.

Total impact to maintain the grant employees once the grant is depleted will be less than the grant since gear is already included. Councilor Smart asked if the administration is considering this in future budgeting. Mr. McKinney noted the administration is looking at all options.

Chairman DiFazio reviewed the operation. The department's goal is to maintain three engines and one ladder every shift, every day. The minimum shift at that level is 18; to go to 2/1 will reduce the complement to 15. There are 3 members currently out on long term injury and 3 on long term sick. There is one member on active duty, deployed for one year in Afghanistan, who was hired to fill a vacancy that will exist as of July 1st. Once he returns, he will go through the academy. The grant did not require hiring vets, but the Civil Service list encourages it.

Auditor Swanson asked about the department equipment. There are 5 engines in 2 ladders in the department.

Chairman DiFazio asked if the increase complement will affect the opening of the East Weymouth station. Chief Leary responded that it has been discussed with the Mayor over the last few months. At the current time, there isn't adequate staffing to open it.

Chief Leary anticipates 2-3 retirements in the next year. Councilor Molisse asked about the number of runs to Southfield which have increased. The department is averaging 2 runs per week to the shelter on the site. Southfield is charged for the runs, which the Mayor bills to Southfield.

Councilor Mathews asked about the condition of the department fleet. Engine One and Engine Three are both 2004 vehicles. Engine Three does twice as many runs as One and covers two districts. Both are in excellent condition. Engine Five was down for a short time last month for warranty work. Engine Two (1994) is the primary spare when Engine One is in service, but needs to be refurbished or replaced. There's a 1986 Mack that is also a spare. Ladder Two is five years old and Ladder Five runs as a spare. Both have normal wear and tear for their ages. There are four forest trucks; two were military surplus. These had to be sent out for retrofit for the department; the one at MCI Concord is almost complete, and the one at MCI Norfolk has not been started yet. Cost of

refurbish is approximately \$750 through the department of corrections.

Salary expense is decreasing in the Salary Alarm budget; some staff are permanently assigned; others are assigned on a rotating basis. The budget reflects only those permanently assigned. The salary for those who rotate are carried in the Fire Suppression budget. There are two fire alarm operators per shift.

The \$20,000 in sick leave incentive is a contractual incentive; payouts are based on sick days used per year. \$50,000 for out of grade pay is based on prior year usage and is an estimate. Auditor Swanson asked for the actual amount for this year and last year. Chief Leary will get that information to the auditor.

Retirement allotment of \$50,000 is based on 2-3 estimated for the year. It's the payout of vacation and sick time and done this way to allow for replacement of retiring personnel, it also keeps the overtime costs down. Filling a position immediately means overtime does not have to be paid.

The two vacant positions will be filled on July 1st; both filled through lateral transfer. One of the positions is from the grant; the other is requested by the Mayor.

The \$8,000 in dues and memberships are used to pay annual assessments in Mutual Aid, Norfolk County Control, and various Fire Chief's, Fire Instructors and Fire Prevention Associations, in addition to entry fees to monthly meetings.

Overtime is based on past years' spending and existing salary levels. It's ranged widely in the time Chief Leary has been here. An average yearly amount is estimated, and contractual increase is factored in. This is with the intent to maintain the 3/1 complement of apparatus.

Chairman DiFazio asked if other towns based overtime similarly and where Weymouth ranges in overtime used. Chief Leary responded that Weymouth ranges on the lower side of overtime use.

\$50,000 budgeted for equipment compared to last year is far less. Chief Leary noted that the amount budgeted last year included lease payments for two vehicles. In prior years, when budget cuts were taken, the equipment budget was targeted for reduction. This year the Chief intends to begin restoring funding so equipment can be purchased more readily. The lease payments are gone, and he plans to build on the equipment budget to begin replacing equipment as it is necessary.

Training expense is increasing by 424% because the department is hoping to deliver two critical training programs for all department personnel in FY12: Emergency Vehicle Operations, in which members are trained in the operation and limitations of apparatus, and Bail Out Training, where firefighters are taught safe rescue. The cost to deliver these programs using contracted instructors is roughly \$7,000 each. Councilor Smart noted that training is key to keeping firefighters safe and supports this expense. Chief Leary

responded that the department has a very aggressive Training Officer, Capt. Keith Stark who does a great job by implementing innovative programs and emphasizes training for life safety and accident prevention.

Chairman DiFazio asked what the last Collective Bargaining Agreement covered. It was settled on 6% for FY11. The net budget has decreased due to the payoff of the lease payments. Last year and this year the department has made approximately 7,000 runs. The lease payment has been assigned to the department's budget since the purchase in 2004. The department gained funding by paying one from its budget in FY11 and one from Free Cash.

Councilor O'Connor briefly discussed the shifting of funds over a few fiscal years from department to town sides. He commended the administration for paying off the lease and hoped they would be mindful of keeping funding available to the department.

The increase in the budget for vehicle maintenance is due to the refurbishment discussed earlier for the forestry trucks. Auditor Swanson noted he noticed the age of the existing vehicles during his recent vehicle inventory review. Councilor Smart asked if the maintenance of the vehicles is fully transferred to the DPW. Chief Leary noted when the town shifted to centralized maintenance, his maintenance budget was cut. There is funding to make minor repairs for items such as tire replacements that the DPW may not have in the central budget.

The 200% increase in the Fire Alarm Maintenance budget is due to the maintenance agreement on the IMC computer system, the new UHF radio system along with funds to begin removing the fire alarm wires throughout the town. The wired alarm system has been out of service for four years and they are a nuisance and contribute to the double pole issue in town. The department no longer has a bucket truck or line crew to remove the wires. The Chief intends to potentially hire an outside contractor to take the wires down throughout the town. There are fifteen boxes throughout the town; the Chief hopes to get it to sixty. There are no call boxes in the town now that are not connected. Building owners or representatives were brought in and given the option to go with Central Station or to maintain a wireless connection with the department. Councilor Smart asked the Chief to review this; he was under the impression there may be one that is not operational.

Councilor Molisse asked for a report generated by the department on the actual number of calls to Southfield over the last six months. Chairman DiFazio asked that the report also include the amount of revenue generated to the town by these runs.

Councilor Mathews asked where the town stands on Mutual Aid. The Chief responded that the town still provides mutual aid and receives it and with a complement of 3/1 the department will be able to maintain this. There have only been a few instances in the last year when the town was not in a position to contribute. There have been other towns who also were not able to provide or receive the mutual aid.

Councilor Smart asked what contributes to the increase in the utility lines in the fire department budget, if they included all four stations and if the increase is based on estimated increase by the utilities. The Chief responded in the affirmative.

Councilor Mathews asked the Chief to provide a brief overview of the condition of each of the buildings. The Chief responded that Station One should be replaced. It was built in 1936; added onto in 1974 and contains no quarters for female firefighters. From North Street there is room overhead, but halfway in you meet up with a lower ceiling from the addition. It needs to be totally redone; build a new station in the front and use the Athens Street side while it's being built; once built, tear down the existing station to pave for parking. The kitchen and recreation room of Station Two were renovated; no other work was done, so it still has old flooring. Councilor Mathews asked if that station could accommodate the apparatus. The Chief responded yes; that was the initial reason behind the renovations. Station Three and Five are both the same age; built in 2000. Station Three has issues with settling of the building; there are breaks in the concrete in the apparatus bay. Condition of the HVAC system and window in both are terrible; location of the hot water tank from the spigot are an issue. The design of both was not the best. There will be more issues as these two buildings age. There are no roof leaks, but there are many lacks of efficiency; utility costs in these buildings are the highest in the department.

Councilor Smart asked if there has been any discussion with the administration regarding fire-based EMS services and cost analysis. The Chief responded that there have been discussions but none in the last six months. Councilor Smart asked the Chief his opinion on the cost savings of a fire based EMS system or revenue generation. Michael Gallagher responded with the administration's position. The administration would like to see a revenue stream from an EMS service. The issue is being studied. There will be upfront costs and it will need to be justified that it will save the town money to expend the funds to originate. Councilor Mathews asked the Chief if he has heard of any municipality which gave its EMS service to private contract because of the lack of revenue and the Chief responded no, not because of lack of revenue, but because of layoffs. Councilor Mathews asked if this is a trend; the Chief responded no; by and large the majority of departments who had EMS services continue to have them today.

Councilor Smart asked if any adjustments are planned or have been discussed to changing the permit rate system. The current rates are not covering the costs. The Chief has had discussion with the Mayor and will submit a series of ordinance proposals in the next few weeks. The proposal would base permit fees on square footage. It would affect the projects at Southfield.

Councilor Smart asked Mr. McKinney if he can provide projected revenues from Southfield. Mr. McKinney will provide a report to the committee.

11 032-Free Cash- Turnout Gear

Chief Leary submitted a plan through Capital Budget to begin replacing the current turnout gear in a series of three year projects. \$80,000 from free cash is requested to

cover the costs associated with the replacement of a third of the most severely used turnout gear. \$80,000 will replace roughly 30 pieces, or one third of the department's complement. The last time gear was replaced was six years ago.

Auditor Swanson completed an analysis of the Free Cash and finds there is adequate funds to cover this cost.

Adjournment

At 8:10PM, there being no further business, Councilor O'Connor made a MOTION to ADJOURN the meeting and was seconded by Councilor Smart. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Barker as Recording Secretary

Approved by Kenneth DiFazio--Chairman