

**TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES  
BUDGET/MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
McCulloch Building Conference Room  
Wednesday, April 28, 2010**

Present: Kenneth DiFazio, Chairperson  
Patrick O'Connor  
Michael Molisse  
Michael Smart  
Robert Conlon

Also Present: James Wilson, Chief Finance Officer  
Scott Bois, Coordinator of Financial Services  
Michael Gallagher, Director of Administrative Services  
Richard Grimes, Chief of Police  
Joseph Comperchio, Police Captain  
Robert O'Connor, Director of Public Works  
David Tower, DPW Business Manager  
Michael Chaisson, Water/Sewer Superintendent  
Maureen Duffy, Town Auditor

Recording Secretary: Paula MacLeod

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

A MOTION was made by Councilor Molisse to take measure 10 029 - Police Department Overtime Re-appropriation out of order and seconded by Councilor Smart. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

**10 029 - POLICE DEPARMENT OVERTIME REAPPROPRIATON**

Mr. Wilson requested, on behalf of the Mayor, a reappropriation of \$150,000 from the police salary line item to the overtime line item. Police Chief Grimes was introduced and continued with the request. He spoke of coming into office in October with the Police Department down ten salaried positions (vacant) and also six rated positions (superior officers) generating a significant amount of overtime. Chief Grimes reported that his first order of business, back in October, was to restore the command staff which incurs quite a bit of overtime. He was able to do that in his first two weeks making six promotions. The Chief reported that the Police Department had ten funded vacancies in the ranks of which five were filled through lateral transfers. They still hold five vacancies, plus one with an officer's retirement, in anticipation of FY2011 budget cuts. Not wanting to hire only to layoff, he'd rather the positions gone through attrition to not generate associated unemployment costs. Chief Grimes said that the Department had predictably run higher on overtime but had salary monies held for this purpose.

Chairman DiFazio asked if the Chief believed that this would be it for overtime for the rest of the fiscal year. The Chief responded that he believed it would be and would operate within that number. Chairman DiFazio asked Mr. Wilson what was the total amount of overtime for FY2010 and if it was somewhat the same as FY2009. Mr. Wilson provided that the overtime was a slight

increase from 2009 with FY10 at \$667,500. An additional \$150,000 would make the total \$817,500. Chairman DiFazio asked if it was the Chief's representation that this was the best way and not better to hire people and have less overtime expense. He added that more money probably would have been spent in FY10 trying to hire only to layoff. Chief Grimes responded that he had split the difference with a number that would keep from going deep into overtime by doing five rather than the full ten for just that very reason.

A MOTION was made by Councilor Molisse to forward item 10 029 to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action and seconded by Councilor O'Connor. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

A MOTION was made by Councilor Molisse to take item 10 032 out of order and was seconded by Councilor O'Connor. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

### **10 032 – SEWER DEPARTMENT OVERTIME REAPPROPRIATION**

Representing the Sewer Department, David Tower submitted the department's request for a transfer of \$30,000 from the unexpended salary line item to the Sewer Department overtime account. He reported the necessity was related back to the storms in March, believing that the councilors were well aware of, and most likely had been the recipients of numerous calls. The all-rain events created significant sewer overflows in the Town with the first major storm around March 14. He shared with the committee that just when they believed to be under control of the situation, they had issues with surcharging sewer systems. In addition to the limited Sewer personnel, Water and DPW staff were brought in to assist the all after-hours events, as they had backups into residential homes which necessitated pumping and plugging of inlets. Later that week, a sewer collapse became apparent on Hinston Road. They incurred significant overtime right through the weekend. Outside forces were brought in to help dig and repair the sewer line. Sewer overflows continued in certain parts of the town and then another storm hit creating additional backup. Mr. Tower explained that, regardless of an employee's position within the department, if related to a sewer incident, all the overtime is charged to the Sewer Department as overtime related to a water main break is charged to the Water Enterprise fund and overtime for a storm event is charged to the DPW fund. The pool of employees is interchangeable and come together in any emergency to help the residents. He reported the overtime budget now at approximately 98% for the fiscal year and heading into, what is deemed, the rainy season. Mr. Tower stated that available funds were needed should there be any additional events and for the scheduled weekend overtime covering the pumping stations checks and for any resident who may have a problem in their home overnight.

Chairman DiFazio inquired about the Hinston Road residents. Superintendent Chaisson replied that insurance companies had been calling but had not heard from the homeowners in a week or two. He was unsure of calls through the Mayor's office. Chairman DiFazio asked what the rest of the costs to actually do the job were as it ended up being a big job. Mr. Tower responded that they were now just trying to protect the overtime account to have funds available for paying employees as required by law should the sewer department incur more overtime. Mr. Tower continued that there are other significant costs related to Hinston Road. There will be a measure presented to Council within the next few weeks asking for more funding to be made available to do an engineering study of the Hinston Road area. It is believed that there are other problems there that will need to be addressed. Deterioration of the pipeline will require investigation and additional monies to sleeve or improve that sewer line to prevent a recurrence.

Councilor O'Connor asked what the total cost incurred was, throughout the entire Sewer Department, for the two storms. Mr. Tower estimated the out-of-pocket costs under \$100,000 but that total costs were not in as of yet. He added that there were hinging costs as they progress forward. He spoke of issues with some of the sewer pump stations and that new pumps and electric panels were ordered needing to be replaced. He reiterated that the Hinston Road situation requiring further investigation and while that will not be covered by any FEMA or MEMA monies, the Department will be requesting reimbursement for any expenses incurred by those storms. Hinston Road was the largest incident but there were costs incurred through all the departments from water issues, protecting the dam at the reservoir, the sewer overflows, and the backups into residential homes. He added that protection will be put into place to protect homes should one of these extreme events happen again. Councilor O'Connor asked for confirmation if Hinston Road would be covered by FEMA or MEMA money. Both Mr. Tower and Director O'Connor replied that they didn't know at this time. Director O'Connor stated that they were notified that there is an opportunity to apply for mitigation money. Councilor O'Connor asked if some pre-existing condition would be blamed. Director O'Connor responded that MEMA would be explaining what's reimbursable but they had not had that meeting as of yet.

Councilor Smart asked how old the sewer pipe was and if it was made of concrete and Superintendent Chaisson answered that the pipe was from 1954. He added that most of it lost about 1 inch from its original 2 inch thickness. As much as they could, they looked at it directly downstream and reported hydrogen sulfide eating away at the pipes. There are two pump stations which discharge with Wharf Street being the second biggest station. He explained that the flow, just sitting in the wet well, becomes septic and that gasses churn up. Those are some of the first pipes it hits right when it discharges. Councilor Smart asked if he thought it was the leaking from the wall getting so thin or the embedment of the foundation that the concrete pipe eroded. Mr. Chaisson tends to think it was all the pressure with a thin pipe finally pushing its way through. Councilor Smart asked when was the last time cameras were in that area, if ever. Director O'Connor replied that it has been done and added that, over the years, some I & I work was completed, except in that area.

A MOTION was made by Councilor Molisse to forward item **10 032** to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action and it was seconded by Councilor O'Connor.  
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

#### **10 020 O – DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

Director O'Connor presented an overview of the Public Works budget indicating that very few of the line items had changed since last year. The total FY11 budget was 8.7 million dollars. He made note that many larger pieces of the budget reflect town-wide expenses, not specific to the Department of Public Works.

At just over 5 million dollars, the solid waste program includes collection and disposal contracts and hazardous waste collection, including two very successful days with over 400 cars. He indicated that Weymouth was considered one of the most successful of towns around.

The DPW is the central fuel depot for all town vehicles providing both diesel and gasoline to all with the exception of the private school bus services. The facility dispenses over 200,000 gallons per year.

The snow budget of approximately \$320,000 includes the DPW overtime for employees, materials, sand, salt, chloride and payments to private plow vendors. The number is based on approximately four storms. Director O'Connor added that it is not possible to define exactly what an average storm costs because every storm is different, depending on when it comes, what type of snow it is, if there is school, and post-storm weather. Some storms require extensive plowing and some just running salt, but either way expensive.

The Department of Public Works is responsible for the maintenance bills for all non-school Town buildings with the exception of the McCulloch building, Town Hall, and the Teen Center. Responsibilities include all Fire stations, the Police station, the Libraries, and DPW headquarters on Winter Street. DPW is also responsible for all vehicle maintenance for all Town, all Water, all Sewer and all Police vehicles, and all Fire apparatus including the Jaws of Life and chain saws. The only exception is the aerial piece which requires a certification.

Director O'Connor indicated that the Street Light Account was budgeted at \$426,000 maintaining the Town's street lights.

Maintenance expenses were budgeted at \$135,000 for highway, park/tree, engineering, and for other in-house work such as pothole patching, buying paint, etc. Director O'Connor pointed out that there were very few jobs the Department doesn't perform and only bid out for road paving and center line painting due to equipment needs. He added that just over \$7,000 is for police detail protection for the work done on the streets.

Director O'Connor reported the remaining 1.7 million dollars for salary costs. In the Executive Summary, a loss of three positions was indicated, that were funded but vacant. No layoff was needed in order to achieve meeting the Mayor's mandated reductions. The Director explained that they had the same mindset as the Police Chief regarding available positions as they don't rush to fill in anticipation of budget reductions. It was explained that one mechanic's salary was being transferred to Water and Sewer as being two of the five big divisions serviced, it was thought to be prudent and reasonable to place that salary into that fund as 40 hours per week were spent working on Water and Sewer vehicles. Included in the budget are any step raises for union and non-union personnel and a negotiated 2.5 percent increase for the union employees agreed to by the Mayor. Salary from last year to this year reflects a ten percent reduction. Director O'Connor explained that the effect of this on the DPW is similar to what it has been in previous years in that emergency response is not affected but that housekeeping duties will continue to suffer with decreased services. He described housekeeping duties as street sweeping, mowing, fence repairs, tree trimming, and signs (other than traffic control). Calls, if not of an emergency nature or matter of public safety, will be placed on a triage list.

Chairman DiFazio asked Director O'Connor about the elimination of a vacancy of a crew chief confirming that an open spot was just eliminated. Director O'Connor replied that no one was losing their job. A discussion was had regarding the mechanic's salary transfer in that another position was eliminated in the water enterprise fund to do so. Chairman DiFazio inquired about the elimination of "Maintenance Craftsman W4" noting workers' compensation and health insurance reductions. He briefly spoke about his view of the chart believing it to appear as a layoff. Mr. Wilson answered speaking to the process of preparing the budget and making sure that they were budgeting appropriately for both workers' compensation and unemployment costs, with most of the positions being union associated and more importantly making sure not to under-budget. Mr. Wilson

provided an example in his department, Municipal Finance, in that they had budgeted for two unemployment positions prior to knowing one person would be leaving but still not knowing where it would end up for July 1<sup>st</sup> as they may still have another. Mr. Wilson discussed a question about \$500,000 in free cash indicating that if money is left over, after all the calculations and bills are paid, that it is available for reappropriation. Chairman DiFazio commented that it was a very conservative approach.

Chairman DiFazio made an inquiry if a certain crew chief is listed as a position under the School Department budget. He noted that the salary was listed under the DPW budget, however, according to the school website, is identified as the Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds. Director O'Connor replied that the employee performs for the DPW and School Department-- being one of the Central Maintenance employees that splits their time.

Chairman DiFazio asked if the treatment plant would be going on-line sometime during this next budget cycle and whether hiring would be done for the DPW or the Water Department. Mr. O'Connor answered that existing personnel would be used.

Councilor Smart asked how many employees take town vehicles home and if there were any allowances for vehicles, fuel, or maintenance for other employees. Director O'Connor advised that approximately eight vehicles for emergency response personnel are taken home and that there are no allowances otherwise. Councilor Smart also referenced the Mayor's agreement to the 2.5 percent raise and Chairman DiFazio asked about the non-union staff. Director O'Connor reiterated that it was only for the DPW union contractually. It was at this time that Councilor Smart excused himself for departure.

The Town Auditor, Ms. Duffy, when asked if she had anything she wished to add, indicated that Mr. O'Connor had covered her questions in his summary with regards to step raises, the percentage of salary reductions, impact of the vacancies, and estimated snow/ice costs.

Councilor O'Connor asked about summer help and Director O'Connor believed it was excluded from the budget three years ago. QCAP has a program for Weymouth youth, who qualify, and are able to get a few of them each summer with no cost to the Town. A brief discussion was had regarding community service work, when available, through Norfolk County. Councilor O'Connor asked how this affects the workload on the regular salaried employees and the Director indicated that it helps especially during vacations. A brief discussion was had regarding the Department's functions in support of the other departments in Town with the weakness being general cleaning due to a lack of manpower. It was, however, believed that the Town's overall appearance was of importance too.

Councilor O'Connor inquired if public works' jobs had been put forward to the Lieutenant Governor for inclusion in the stimulus plan which opened up a discussion on that subject with Mr. Wilson responding that public works, along with water, sewer, and planning were the areas submitted and awaiting. Councilor O'Connor noted that some problems could be alleviated if monies were received from the Federal government, to hire, or contract, for some of the projects.

Councilor Molisse extended his gratitude and stated that ninety-eight percent of the calls to the Town Councilors are concerning DPW issues.

### **10 026 – SEWER ENTERPRISE FUND ANNUAL APPROPRIATION**

Mr. Wilson presented to the Committee that both (Water and Sewer) have been level funded. Even if Council, or the Mayor, chose to raise the fees on water and sewer, they could not book them this year based upon a DOR mandate. He recalled what he had indicated the Town's revenues must be on Monday night. Mr. Wilson advised that Enterprise Funds have an even stricter requirement and read from the Department of Revenue's mandate:

“Cities and towns with enterprise funds are reminded that the Bureau will not allow FY11 estimated revenue over actual collected user charges based upon the government's intent to raise these charges in the future”.

Mr. Wilson explained that even if chosen to raise them today, they cannot use in calculation for FY11 until a whole year of collection history is completed, a DOR requirement on the revenue side. On the general government side, one cannot increase beyond the prior year's collection plus reasonableness. On the enterprise funds, it's an absolute bar. He pointed out that was why they went the route they did with regard to the water and sewer enterprise funds.

Chairman DiFazio asked if the numbers were exactly the same as last year with \$13,573,000 and \$8,764,000 for which Mr. Wilson replied that the Public Works Department performed a few miracles.

Mr. Tower presented an overview of the Sewer Department coming in with a level funded budget of 13.5 million. The Sewer Enterprise Fund, being connected to the MWRA, had 9.6 million budgeted. Last year, at this time, the MWRA estimate was 9.5 million dollars and came in a lot less, fortunately. Nonetheless, they have 9.6 million funded. The actual, this year, will be slightly over 9 million dollars. Any surplus diverts back to retained earnings and those monies are available for either rate relief or other projects. For the current operating budget, 9 million dollars will be expended and any additional funds will be forwarded to retained earnings. The MWRA's preliminary numbers are at 9.3 million dollars for next year and are hoping they hold but anticipate increases in the future. Keeping the budget level funded at 9.6 million dollars will allow the ability to cover that cost. The directs and in-directs, most of which are debt service, are at about 2.5 million dollars which leaves slightly over a million dollars to take care of the pump stations, the electric costs, all the repair costs, and then the personnel costs that go along with that. Mr. Tower recalled the earlier discussion on the need for \$30,000 in the overtime account being an indication of how the Department currently operates. Mr. Tower reported a reduction of about \$100,000 in debt service costs going into FY11. Additional monies made available were put into the reserve fund which will see an increase from \$93,000 to a net of \$167,000. He noted that the same revenues are anticipated heading into next year's budget, and hoping they hold. Should there be a need to draw from the reserve fund, Council approval would be required. He added that they were very hopeful to hit these numbers – if MWRA does their part, they will do theirs. Mr. Tower mentioned ongoing capital projects - I & I investigation, ongoing review of Montcalm, and upcoming Hinston Road investigation for potential improvements.

Councilor DiFazio began a discussion about Montcalm for which Superintendent Chaisson replied that they had met with residents yesterday and the plan is to choose an engineer for the design to move forward.

Councilor DiFazio inquired about the line item “liens added” pointing out that the figure went from

\$582,000 to \$350,000. Mr. Tower explained that item represented liens added to tax. Once per year, a lien process occurs when demand notices are sent out in October to property owners with unpaid water and sewer bills from the prior fiscal year stating they have a certain number of days to pay the past due amounts. If it remains unpaid, the balance comes off the water/sewer account and is moved to the tax bill with a ten percent penalty. Historically, most mortgage companies, for those owners who pay their tax bills through an escrow account, pay the lien. If it is not collected through the regular process of sending out the bills, adding it to the tax bill ensures the collection effort with it being paid eventually either when the tax bill is paid, or subsequent tax lien/tax title, or even tax foreclosure. Chairman DiFazio asked if that is why there is a reduction as some will be shifted over to the real estate. Mr. Tower answered they will be shifted over, and individuals that are in that cycle are about a year behind once they go to lien and their escrows are increased. He added that they are still receivables on the books and reiterated that the Town will collect its money despite those paying it to their escrow instead of directly into the enterprise fund.

#### **10 027 – WATER ENTERPRISE FUND ANNUAL APPROPRIATION**

Mr. Tower presented an overview reporting that the operating budget of 8.7 million dollars was a level funded budget going into FY11. The directs and in-directs including debt service costs are a large part of the Water Enterprise Fund, along with water treatment plant future debt service making up for more than half the budget. The remainder is directed to the operational side of the budget. Over the past few years, the biggest hits have been chemical costs, utility costs, and sludge management. In this particular budget, employees have been lost, mostly through retirement or attrition and few of those positions have been removed from the budget - a principal clerk, a facilities manager at the treatment plant, a part-time clerical position, and the vacant W4 position--utilized to fund the mechanic from the DPW. Some of these savings were chosen to pass onto the chemical and electrical line item. They believe they can hit this target number even with the transition from the current facility into the next. The role of retained earnings was addressed with Mr. Tower reporting both Enterprise Funds coming into FY10 at approximately 2 million dollars which can be utilized for future projects to offset any potential emergencies.

Chairman DiFazio asked where retained earnings had been historically with Mr. Tower answering that earnings were up. He added that they used to bank earning then try to use them for capital projects as opposed to doing the job today and bonding the monies with costs going out over the future. It is important, at least to the Water Department, to have some retained earnings to fall back on when there is a need to do something of a capital project nature, therefore avoiding additional bonding.

Councilor DiFazio indicated that Ms. Duffy had some questions about positions being eliminated and funded and asked if they are laying anyone off. Mr. Tower replied that, like the other departments, they are trying to maintain and stay away from refilling positions immediately, which comes with overtime costs or other departments sharing in the workload. He reported that there are no layoffs in the budget for Water and Sewer and there are no projected layoffs in the upcoming fiscal year.

**10 033 - Reappointment to the Cemetery Commission – Donald Mathewson**

**10 034 - Reappointment to the Community Events Committee – Barbara Farrell**

**10 035 - Reappointment to the Community Events Committee – Ron Rizzo**

**10 036 - Reappointment to the Conservation Commission – George Loring**

10 037 - Reappointment to the Cultural Council – Debbie Courteau  
10 038 - Reappointment to the Historical Commission – Philip Smith  
10 039 - Reappointment to the Board of Library Trustees – Charles Hickey  
10 040 - Reappointment to the Memorial Committee – Joan Anderson  
10 041 - Reappointment to the Planning Board – Sandra Williams  
10 042 - Reappointment to the Planning Board – Paul Hurley  
10 043 - Reappointment to the Zoning Board of Appeals-Alternate Member – Martin Joyce  
10 044 - Reappointment to the Zoning Board of Appeals-Alternate Member – Kemal Denizkurt  
10 045 - Reappointment to the WETC – Glenn Heath

Councilor O'Connor suggested, if no objections, bundling items 10 033 to 10 045 as the individuals were not present as they are all reappointments.

A MOTION was made by Councilor O'Connor to bundle and forward items 10 033 to 10 045 to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action and motion was seconded by Councilor Molisse. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

At 7:45 PM, with no further business to conduct, Councilor Molisse made a MOTION to adjourn and it was seconded by Councilor O'Connor. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Respectfully submitted by:

Paula MacLeod as Recording Secretary

Approved by:

Chairman DiFazio