

TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES
BUDGET/MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Town Hall Council Chambers
May 22, 2023

Present: Michael Molisse, Chairman
Christopher Heffernan, Vice Chairman
Pascale Burga, Councilor
Maureen Kiely, Councilor
Greg Shanahan, Councilor

Also Present: Ted Langill, Chief of Staff
Brian Connolly, Town Auditor
Richard Fuller, Chief, WPD
Keith Stark, Chief, WFD

Recording Secretary: Mary Barker

Chair Molisse called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Vote the following measures:

23 093-Appointment to the Board of Assessors-Denice Alexander

Ms. Alexander was invited to the table to present her request for appointment. She reported she currently is working as an assessor in another town, and active on the board.

Councilor Kiely motioned to forward the measure to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action, and it was seconded by Councilor Burga. Unanimously voted.

23 094-Appointment to the Board of Assessors as Alternate-Stephen Whalen

Mr. Whalen was invited to the table to present his request for appointment. He has worked as an appraiser for more than 30 years.

Councilor Kiely motioned to forward the measure to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action, and it was seconded by Councilor Burga. Unanimously voted.

23 095-Appointment to the Planning Board-Anthony DiFeo, Jr.

Mr. DiFeo was invited to the table to present his request for appointment. He has been an architect practicing 24 years and had the opportunity to present before other boards in MA.

Councilor Kiely motioned to forward the measure to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action, and it was seconded by Councilor Burga. Unanimously voted.

23 096-Appointment to the Weymouth Housing Authority-Janet Fogarty

Ms. Fogarty was invited to the table to present her request for appointment. She has been in mortgage banking for 25 years.

Councilor Kiely motioned to forward the measure to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action, and it was seconded by Councilor Burga. Unanimously voted.

23 097-Appointment to the Zoning Board of Appeals as Alternate-David Kabasin

Mr. Kabasin was invited to the table to present his request for appointment. He has been in the construction industry for 18 years.

Councilor Kiely motioned to forward the measure to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action, and it was seconded by Councilor Burga. Unanimously voted.

23 098-Appointment to the Zoning Board of Appeals as Alternate-Charles Young

Mr. Young was invited to the table to present his request for appointment. He has worked as a civil engineer, estimator and contractor for many years in MA.

Councilor Kiely motioned to forward the measure to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action, and it was seconded by Councilor Burga. Unanimously voted.

23 099-Appointment to the Commission on Disabilities-Gregory LaBella

Mr. LaBella was invited to the table to present his request for appointment. He is currently employed by the town and worked on the Chapman and Tufts Library projects.

Councilor Kiely motioned to forward the measure to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action, and it was seconded by Councilor Burga. Unanimously voted.

23 100-Appointment to the Historical Commission-Steven McCloskey

Mr. McCloskey was not available, but serves on other committees and was before the committee previously. Councilor Burga reported she is familiar with his public service.

Councilor Kiely motioned to forward the measure to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action, and it was seconded by Councilor Burga. Unanimously voted.

23 101-Appointment to the Commission on Disabilities-Charlotte Nichols

Ms. Nichols was invited to the table to present her request for appointment. She has been actively volunteering for many years.

Councilor Kiely motioned to forward the measure to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action, and it was seconded by Councilor Burga. Unanimously voted.

Review / Discussion of Public Safety Budgets- Police and Fire Departments:

The budgets of both Police and Fire Departments were reviewed using the Questions posed by the Town Auditor and responses from the Administration.

23 045 L- Police

23 067- Free Cash for WPD Records Management System

Chief Fuller presented the request; that the Town of Weymouth transfer the sum of \$750,000 from Free Cash into an 02 fund account for the purpose of funding costs associated with replacing the records management system at Weymouth Police Department. This is item #25 on the Capital Improvement Plan.

He pointed out the current system is over 15 years old and needs to be upgraded. WPD and IT researched 7 vendors available for computer-aided software over the last year. The vendor chosen is not the lowest bidder, but does meet all applicable criteria. A part of the cost is data migration.

A discussion followed the presentation:

Councilor Burga thanked him for a very transparent report. She asked when the ARPA funding for the clinician runs out. The chief responded that the funding continues for 5 years, and the position will be continued. Councilor Burga also asked about the Animal Control Officer position. The chief responded that this position, like the Harbormaster is different. Neither carries a firearm. The officer could wear a different color uniform, but it wouldn't be safe. He may consider that the future ACO could be a trained police officer that is on call as needed. Councilor Burga also asked about lateral transfers. The chief responded that Weymouth is one of the best police forces in the state, and it's no surprise that officers want to come here, and when they do, they don't tend to leave. Councilor Burga also asked about the crosswalk enforcement in the squares and what happens as a result. The chief responded that it's tricky and really needs a decoy. 80% of the infractions receive warnings; 20% are ticketed.

Councilor Kiely reiterated how fortunate the town is to have a mental health clinician on the force. This person could be a major de-escalator on calls. She also noted the importance of biohazard cleaning, not only for the officer's sake, but for the next ones in the cruiser or cell. She noticed the presence of Norfolk County Sheriff's department officers at various details and asked if they are paid the same rates as Weymouth officers.

The chief responded they are utilized when he can't fill a position from his roster, and paid the same rates.

Councilor Shanahan added that he would like to see more mental health clinicians, and also commended the chief's special training academy in Virginia. Weymouth has been ahead of the curve between training and in the use of body cameras. They are facing the realities, and making sure they have the correct tools to do it.

23 045 M- Fire

23 069- Free Cash for WFD C12 Vehicle

Chief Stark presented the request; that the Town of Weymouth transfer the sum of \$75,000 from Free Cash into an 02 fund account for the purpose of funding costs associated with replacing the WFD's C-12 (staff) Vehicle (Ford Explorer). This is item #14 on the Capital Improvement Plan.

A discussion followed the presentation:

Councilor Burga commended the department for their work this year, particularly in the mutual aid rendered to Braintree recently. In light of those circumstances, she asked Chief Stark about the process for business which store dangerous chemicals. What requirements does Weymouth have in place before a building permit can be issued? Chief Stark responded that owners are required to report them to the Fire Department and Civil Defense for Tier II products and they are tracked within the department through their CAD system. Weymouth Fire has all of the equipment to handle a HazMat situation, including the suppression foam Braintree didn't have, and the staff is properly trained in its use. It's on each truck and readily available.

Councilor Burga noted a lot of wires hang from poles in town that were related to the old red fireboxes. She asked what is the plan to get them all down? Chief Stark responded that the town electrician took many of them down, and others were taken down when poles were relocated. If she is aware of others that need to be removed, she can let him know.

Councilor Burga asked with the possible build out on the base, will the department need a fire station on site beforehand? Chief Stark responded it isn't necessary before then, and they will have to consider along with the funding at some future point. The Mayor is aware, as is the current developer. They do have a ladder that can be used. There is a small existing gap, and the Park Avenue station currently responds to calls. It is a long run. Chief of Staff Langill added that the administration's first priority was getting Station 2 online to fill that gap in town. South Weymouth, including the base, will be the next gap. They will look at the needs in the next round of the SAFER Grants. At present, they are negotiating with the union for other ways to get personnel on the truck since the base is potentially not that far away from further development.

Councilor Kiely asked how the department manages time out to prevent abuse of sick time. Chief Stark explained their current status – there are a few out on sick time, some on FMLA leave and some active (one long-term) military service, so managing it is a daily battle that they are trying to address in impact bargaining. If a member is out sick more than three consecutive shifts, a doctor’s note is required to return.

Councilor Kiely thanked the administration for opening Station 2 with the large elderly population in her district, and voiced her continued support.

Councilor Shanahan had a few questions on the SAFER Grants once the current round runs out. The town then funds the salaries previously paid under the grant. Subsequent rounds pay for additional staff, that then has to be sustainable. Chief Stark explained the funding schedule. He pointed out the administration is aware of their needs. Councilor Shanahan asked if mutual aid calls to Abington and Rockland will increase presuming additional buildup at the base. Chief Stark responded that mutual aid only applies for fires. Currently, Rockland has direct access to the base, but Abington has to access it through Weymouth. Mr. Langill added that there will likely need to be intermunicipal agreements with further development by Weymouth.

Councilor Heffernan pointed out that a public safety center is essential for fire and police on the base. Fire is not a 9-5 job; it’s a sacrifice and he appreciates the department’s work. There should be a regional training center discussion with the master developer.

Chair Molisse suggests they will need to do something for the future. Mr. Langill answered that the developer’s plan now should identify where the building should be sited, and show it. Chief Stark added that although it is a huge area for coverage, another matter to consider, with the heights of the buildings going in, there will need to be a tower ladder on the base. Mr. Langill responded that it will be the town’s responsibility to fund the public safety there, but new revenue can’t cover it at once; it will have to be segmented and sustainable. As part of the developer’s plan, they will have to identify land and help with funding for a public safety building.

Councilor Burga remarks that she is eager to hear more about interagency agreements, and agrees the conversations must take place.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:29 PM, there being no further business, a motion was made by Councilor Kiely to adjourn and was seconded by Councilor Burga. Unanimously voted.

Attachments: WPD Budget Q & A and WFD Budget Q & A

Respectfully Submitted by Mary Barker as Recording Secretary.

Approved by Michael Molisse as Budget/Management Committee Chairman
Voted unanimously on 5 June 2023