

Auburn Finance Committee
Minutes of the Meeting -March 4, 2020
Auburn Town Hall Selectmen's Meeting Room
104 Central Street, Auburn, Massachusetts

Members Present: Anne Cavanaugh, Kimberley Holstrom, Ed Coleman, Kevin Kennedy, Malory O'Brien, Trevor Sansoucy and Michael Marshall
Also Present: Chief Financial Officer Ed Kazanovicz, and Adm. Assistant to Town Manager Sharon Kwiatkowski

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by the Chairman Anne Cavanaugh. Ms. Cavanaugh gave an overview of the meeting agenda.

The Finance Committee reviewed the following budgets.

#01210 Police Department:

Lt. Eileen Harrigan was present and gave a summary of the Police Department Budget for FY2021.

Lt. Harrigan discussed staffing changes.

- Four (4) officers were expected to go to the academy, but one individual did not pass the pre-entrance exam and was disqualified.
- One (1) retirement in January - Sgt. John Kelleher.
- One (1) provisional appointment that was made permanent on Sgt. Kelleher's retirement.
- The result of the staff changes was two vacancies in Patrol.

Lt. Harrigan reviewed increases to some line items:

- Training Account - Increase to \$15,000.00 from \$4,167.00 in FY20. The Lieutenant advised that the increase would be for membership in an indoor firearms training facility in Worcester to augment the firing range in Auburn. The outdoor firing range cannot be utilized on weekends due to the agreement with the residents in the area. The Worcester facility membership will allow the use of the facility for 14 hours during non-duty hours in addition to the scheduled training times. The result will be additional training for the officers. There is a minimum of two qualifications per year.
- Miscellaneous Service Account - Increase to \$10,250.00 from \$2,250.00 in FY20. Lt. Harrigan discussed the need for Promotional Exams/Assessment Center due to potential promotions and retirements in FY21.
- Equipment Account - Increase to \$23,570.00 from \$17,970.00 in FY20 for offset to retrofit new hires with vests, radios and ammunition. A portion of the appropriation may also be used for ammunition for additional firearms training and to offset some costs of the Taser program. CFO Ed Kazanovicz advised that the recommended appropriation of \$23,570.00 was closer to the actual three-year average expenditure of \$22,556.00.

Mr. Sansoucy asked if the cost for outfitting new vehicles was part of the CIP as well as the purchase price of the vehicle.

Lt. Harrigan replied that most of that is incorporated into the Capital Budget. She explained that some consoles change every year and they swap out equipment to put in vehicles to bring them on-line.

Mr. Kennedy said that the public have asked about the number of vehicles in the station parking lot.

Lt. Harrigan said that some are the in-service patrol vehicles and the cars of administrative staff and some are old cruisers that are used at extra-duty details for the safety of the public and the officers working those details. She said that this is helpful for the front-line vehicles to save fuel costs and extend the life of the vehicles.

Mr. Kazanovicz stated that because we have in-house maintenance of the vehicles, the life of the patrol vehicles has been increased and we can use the older ones as extra for details. He said that a 10% administrative fee and \$50.00 vehicle fee has been added to cost for details to recoup some expenses for fuel and maintenance. He said that the in-house maintenance program has not only increased the life expectancy of the police vehicles, but all municipal vehicles, with the benefit of the routine maintenance programs.

Anne Cavanaugh asked where the detail work is appropriated in the budget. Ed Kazanovicz responded that the appropriation is under the Fleet Maintenance Unit in the Department of Public Works.

Mr. Marshall asked why there was a difference between the department's request for the Physical Fitness Bonus Account (\$40,000.00) and the Town Manager's recommendation of \$38,000.00. Mr. Kazanovicz responded that the reduction reflected the 3 year history of the account, which was \$31,667.00. He said that there is not 100% participation in the bonus program; some officers elect not to participate.

Kim Holstrom asked how many officers have the Quinn Bill. Lt. Harrigan replied that all the members of the command staff and 12 patrol officers still have Quinn. Sixteen officers including the new hires do not get Quinn Bill payments. Ms. Cavanaugh asked if the Quinn Bill payments increased each year by a fixed value. Mr. Kazanovicz said that the percentages are 15% of base pay for Associates Degree, 20% for Bachelor's Degree and 25% for Master's Degree. He advised that if the base pay increases, so do the Quinn Bill payments.

The Finance Committee then voted to recommend approval of a total operations budget appropriation of \$4,768,626.00 for the Police Department, as presented in the recommendation of the Town Manager (Motion made by Ms. Holstrom; motion seconded by Mr. Sansoucy) voted in favor 6-0-1. Malory O'Brien abstained.

The Finance Committee then reviewed the capital budget for the Police Department.

Chairman Cavanaugh asked about the Taser program.

Lt. Harrigan explained the Taser 7 Program listed in the CIP and recommended to be purchased on a 5-year lease program. She said that the appropriation would pay for the purchase of 20 new-design Tasers including supplemental items (batteries, battery docking stations, holsters) and training. The Lieutenant advised that right now the department has 12 Tasers that are shared, which is not an ideal situation.

Mr. Kennedy raised the point about the cost to purchase all the Tasers and related equipment all at once versus the proposed multi-year approach. Lt. Harrigan stated that it would cost over \$200,000.00 to purchase everything outright and she believed that the phased-in method was the most fiscally responsible approach.

Anne Cavanaugh asked about the life span of the equipment. Lt. Harrigan replied that the equipment would be under insurance and warranty. She also said that there was not a large number of market options to purchase them.

Ms. Holstrom asked how many vehicles are purchased each year. Lt. Harrigan replied that at the most 3 are purchased or in an off-year, which is every years, 4. She said that FY21 was a year for 3 vehicles.

Ms. Holstrom asked for an explanation of the "Video System Upgrade" item. Lt. Harrigan replied that the item was to fund an upgrade to the cameras and multiplexors for the video technology inside the police station. The cameras would be in the interview room, evidence room, cell monitoring and armory. Most of the equipment is original to the building; they have only replaced the cameras when they were broken. Lt. Harrigan advised that some of the technology could be taken with the department to a new building.

Ms. O'Brien asked how the potential new facility project would impact the CIP. Mr. Kazanovicz said that the Police and Fire Departments are very mindful about the potential for a new public safety building and he added that the administration has identified some items that might be placed on hold depending the decision on the new facility.

At a question from Mr. Kennedy, Lt. Harrigan advised that some capital items might be purchased that could transition to the other facility. She addressed the item "Replace Dispatcher Console" in the CIP and she said that the current equipment was original to the building and needed to be replaced. They are configured in a way that would allow them to be transferred to a new station.

Fire Chief Stephen Coleman and Deputy Fire Chief Glenn Johnson were then present on behalf of the FY2021 Budget for the Fire/Rescue Department.

The appropriation recommended by the Town Manager was \$3,408,347.00, which is an increase of \$229,021.00. The increase is due mostly to the unions' contractual obligations and the cost of living increase for the Deputy Fire Chief. Chief Coleman advised that there is a large discrepancy in the Deputy Chief's salary and those in the officers unit of Local 4157. Consequently a salary survey for the Deputy Chief position is underway, with the potential for further adjustment after that is completed.

Chief Coleman discussed the following new line items:

- "Health and Wellness" with an appropriation of \$1,340.00 to address OSHA required hearing tests.
- "Firefighters Education" with an appropriation request of \$14,500.00 to fund the Educational Stipend as outlined in the new collective bargaining agreement.
- "Technology Support" that is similar to the account in the Police Department to take care of the department's specific IT support services.

Kim Holstrom asked how many officers were hired with the SAFER Grant. Chief Coleman replied that two Firefighter/Paramedics were appointed January 1st.

- In Year One the Federal Government pays 75% and the Town 25%
- In Year Two the Federal Government pays 75% and the Town 25%
- In Year Three the Federal Government pays 65% and the Town 35%

The FY21 budget reflects the Town's year one obligation of 25%. The government's grant payment comes to the town and is placed in a special revenue account.

The Fire Chief advised that \$1,527,624.00 in Ambulance Receipts was collected in FY19 and so far in FY20 over \$1 Million has been collected. He said that in FY21 the receipts have paid for 12 firefighters instead of the usual 10 and that all EMS costs are 100% funded by ambulance receipts.

Mr. Kennedy asked about collection rates. Chief Coleman said that typically there is a collection rate of 91-92%. He discussed some of the write-offs, mostly for Medicare and Medicaid cases and some that are from co-pays or deductibles that he decides not to pursue through collections.

Mr. Kennedy asked about staffing. He explained that right now this budget supports 9 career firefighters per day between the two stations. Chief Coleman discussed his staffing goals and that he would prefer that number to be 10.

Mr. Kennedy asked about cancer screening and if it was funded in the Health and Wellness Account. The Fire Chief replied that he had placed an outside article on the May 2019 Annual Town Meeting Warrant for \$23,000.00 to come from Ambulance Appropriations for the cancer screenings. He said that he would continue to submit a warrant article not every year, but every three years, for the cancer screenings from Ambulance Appropriations.

Kim Holstrom asked about the number of calls per year - medical versus fire and accidents (motor vehicle).

Chief Coleman answered that there were about 4,000 calls per year.

- 1,300 - 1,400 fire related calls (no medical)
- 2,100 - Emergency Medical Service (EMS) calls
- 300-350 Motor vehicle accidents

Ms. Holstrom asked if there has been any increase in medical calls because of the relocation of Reliant to the Auburn Mall.

The Deputy Fire Chief responded that Reliant has not caused a big increase; he said that the Redi-Med facility has been more of an impact. Chief Coleman advised that many people go to Redi-Med who are really sick (cardiac and/or respiratory issues) and should have actually gone to the emergency room. Redi-Med has a private ambulance service, but when people are that sick they end up calling 911 and Auburn ambulances respond. There are also some calls to the Life Care Center for serious emergencies for individuals to be transported to hospitals.

The Finance Committee then voted to recommend approval of a total operations budget appropriation of \$3,408,347.00 for the Fire/Rescue Department, as presented in the recommendation of the Town Manager (Motion made by Ms. Holstrom; motion seconded by Mr. Sansoucy) voted in favor 7 to 0.

The Finance Committee reviewed the capital budget for the Fire/Rescue Department.

Anne Cavanaugh asked about the number of ambulances. Chief Coleman replied that the Town owns three (3) ambulances, with two being staffed and one used as a spare. The fire administration has recently decided to hold onto one of older vehicles that was being replaced as another spare. He said that the ambulance is all paid for and it's not worth trading it in.

Mr. Kennedy asked about equipment for the new ambulance. The Fire Chief answered that the new vehicle comes fully outfitted and there are no heavy costs for the equipment needed like medical supplies.

The Finance Committee considered additional budget requests.

#01151 Law Department - The total requested FY21 appropriation was level-funded at \$145,000.00.

The Finance Committee voted to recommend approval of a total budget appropriation of \$145,000.00 as presented in the recommendation of the Town Manager (Motion made by Mr. Sansoucy; motion seconded by Ms. Holstrom) voted in favor 7 to 0.

#01152 Human Resources - The total requested appropriation was \$79,098.00.

The Finance Committee voted to recommend approval of a total budget appropriation of \$79,098.00 as presented in the recommendation of the Town Manager (Motion made by Ms. Holstrom; motion seconded by Mr. Sansoucy) voted in favor 7 to 0.

#01192 Town Hall - The total requested appropriation was level-funded at \$50,500.00.

The Finance Committee voted to recommend approval of a total budget appropriation of \$50,500.00 as presented in the recommendation of the Town Manager (Motion made by Ms. Holstrom; motion seconded by Mr. Sansoucy) voted in favor 7 to 0.

#01199 General Services - The total recommended appropriation was \$1,441,871.00, which is a reduction of \$39,107.00 or 2.71% from FY20.

CFO Ed Kazanovicz discussed the following accounts:

- Streetlights -LED streetlight project estimated savings at \$50,000.00-\$60,000.00 annually.
- Postage - \$35,000.00 transferred from the General Services budget to the Bill Printing Account in the Treasury/Collections Division of the Finance Department.
- Gas/Oil/Diesel - The recommended appropriation of \$190,000.00 was based on current payments.
- Insurance and Bonds - This line item includes all insurances for liability and workers' compensation.

The Finance Committee voted to recommend approval of a total budget appropriation of \$1,441,871.00 as presented in the recommendation of the Town Manager (Motion made by Ms. Holstrom; motion seconded by Mr. Marshall) voted in favor 7 to 0.

#01303 Norfolk - The total recommended appropriation was level-funded at \$63,000.00. Mr. Kazanovicz informed the Finance Committee that this assessment was for two students.

The Finance Committee voted to recommend approval of a total budget appropriation of \$63,000.00 as presented in the recommendation of the Town Manager (Motion made by Ms. Holstrom; motion seconded by Mr. Sansoucy) voted in favor 7 to 0.

The Finance Committee considered the following transfer requests.

#01199 General Services:

\$165.00 from Acct. #011992-5214 Water/Sewer/Heating to Selectmen Acct. #011222-5732 Membership Dues, for MMA Board of Selectmen annual dues. The Finance Committee voted to approve the transfer (Motion made by Ms. Holstrom; motion seconded by Mr. Sansoucy) voted in favor 7 to 0.

\$226.85 from Acct. #011992-5214 Water/Sewer/Heating to Town Manager Acct. #011292-5342 Printing, for additional cost for annual W2s. The Finance Committee voted to approve the transfer (Motion made by Ms. Holstrom; motion seconded by Mr. Sansoucy) voted in favor 7 to 0.

\$3,000.00 from Acct. #011992-5214 Water/Sewer/Heating to Acct. #011992-5421 Office Supplies, to meet requests for various departments for office supplies. The Finance Committee voted to approve the transfer (Motion made by Ms. Holstrom; motion seconded by Mr. Sansoucy) voted in favor 7 to 0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 P.M. (Motion made by Ms. Holstrom; motion seconded by Mr. Sansoucy) voted in favor 7 to 0.

Submitted: Sharon A. Kwiatkowski
Assistant to the Town Manager, Admin.

The following documents were part of the Finance Committee's Meeting of March 4, 2020 and are retained in the Executive Office of the Town Manager:

- March 4, 2020 Agenda
- Transfer Requests - General Services
- FY2021 Department Budget Requests - Police Department (CIP and operating), Fire/Rescue Department (CIP and operating), Law Department, Human Resources, Town Hall, General Services, Norfolk