



## **Finance Committee** **Meeting Minutes** **January 19, 2022**

*The regular meeting was called to order at approximately 6:00PM by Acting Chair Stefanie Coxé. Roll call of Finance Committee members present: Stefanie Coxé-Y, George Perkins-Y, Nathan Ladley-Y and Robert Ciavarrá-Y. Absent were Brian Gardiner and Jack Moylan. Also attending: Town Administrator Robert Whritenour and Assistant Town Administrator William Scott.*

William Scott, Assistant Town Administrator, read the advisory as required by Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30, Section 18-25, and pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, an Act relative to extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the State of Emergency, consistent with Governor Baker's March 12, 2021 executive order and as amended and signed into law on June 16, 2021 extending Open Meeting Law provisions to April 1, 2022, and the public was welcome to attend the meeting either in person or via the alternative public access. The notice was posted and the Zoom link was provided as well. The Committee discussed the need to explore the cost savings associated with other options, including but not limited to a share mechanic across Town departments and other communities.

### **1. Police Department Budget Review**

Police Chief Frederickson appeared before the Committee. He reviewed the PowerPoint presentation on the FY2023 budget including the following highlights:

- Mission statement
- Past year highlights of service response to incidence calls

Discussion ensued on reviewing the data within the context of workload and trends, i.e. does the data reflect increases or decreases in crime areas. Deputy Chief Lennon stated that if ten calls for service are received on one accident, it is recorded in the data as one incident.

Chief Frederickson noted a dramatic decrease of 90% in burglaries since 2010. There would be multiple factors that may have contributed to the decrease, including the fact that during Covid more people were at home. Also an increase in video surveillance technology at the private home could have a deterring effect on burglars. Chair Coxé suggested the presentation of data within a historical context would be very helpful in assessing community risk and appropriation of resources.

- Budget overview
  - FY2021 actual
  - FY2022 on track
  - FY2023 proposed

Chief Frederickson noted that as the fiscal year comes to an end, the overtime line item is over budget. Chair Coxé suggested building in quarterly or mid-year check in points with the Committee on the how the department is doing on overtime. This information would enable the Committee to make projections on the impact of overtime to the budget.

Chief Frederickson continued with his presentation:

- Changes
  - Salary/expenses
- Challenges
- Recommendations for upcoming year

Chief Frederickson noted that the current payroll system does not dovetail with the Munis financial software. The department is dependent on one person to do payroll on a complicated system. He suggested sharing that position with the Finance Department. Chair Coxe agreed that the position as it is currently structured is not sustainable and consolidation of the positions should be considered.

Chief Frederickson reported that the twenty-five yard shooting trailer completion will enable the department to comply with the three-times-a-year qualification of officers. The cost of the trailer is \$650,000 and the Police Foundation has contributed \$300,000 to that fund, leaving approximately \$300,000 to be funded. Chair Coxe noted that since this was a multi-phase project, it would be helpful to outline the different phases (1, 2, 3 and 4) and how each phase was paid for. In this way the totality of the project could enable the Committee to assess anticipated future capital needs.

Mr. Scott stated that the shooting trailer project was recommended by the Capital Improvement Committee with matches of twenty-five percent tax levy, twenty-five percent Free Cash and fifty percent match.

Chair Coxe stated that in light of the fact that departments are facing staff challenges and maintain level of services, as are other towns on the Cape, regionalization in the next five to ten years may become a reality. Toward that end she is asking departments to consider the opportunity for the Town to position itself to offer services to neighboring towns to generate revenue.

Chief Frederickson stated that he would not recommend the shooting trailer as a source of that kind of revenue. Maintenance of the trailer is ongoing and can be sustained for the operating use of the Town, but would present problems in maintaining it for higher levels of use. The Towns share a mutually cooperative arrangement where a single officer from another town may utilize the trailer for certification at no cost. Also accident reconstruction would be a shared service. He did note an instance, however, that the Town did offer classes developed by qualified officers to other towns, and a revolving fund was set up for payments.

Chair Coxe questioned whether, in light of the fact that both the Police Department and Fire Department had noted a need for dispatchers, whether there would be potential for combining the position under one roof. Chief Frederickson stated that many neighboring communities have combined dispatchers, and there are definitely options to put the infrastructure together. Chief Simonian was not opposed to combining the positions, but stated the need that the facility be hardened to protect the 911 system. Station 3 in West Yarmouth was a hardened facility and had available space on the second floor to accommodate an emergency and dispatch center. The cost of refinishing the space would be \$1-1.5 million. He mentioned that a study had been previously done, and Chair Coxe asked that the report be forwarded to the Committee.

Chair Coxe thanked Chief Frederickson in anticipation of his retirement in October.

### **Fire Department Budget Review**

Chief Simonian and Deputy Chief Sawyer reviewed the PowerPoint presentation on the FY2023 budget with the following highlights:

- Mission statement
- Past year highlights
- Budget overview
  - FY2021 actual
  - FY2022 actual
  - FY2023 proposed

- Changes in budget
- Challenges
- Requests for funding
- Projected balances

Discussion ensued on restoring the overtime budget reduced during Covid from \$922,000 to \$872,000. Chief Frederickson noted that four positions were funded from SAFER grants by increasing ambulance fees and reducing the overtime line item. Combining those offsets, four positions are fully funded. Chair Coxe asked what the plan was to restore positions within the operating budget that were no longer covered by SAFER grants. Deputy Chief Lennon stated that the department has a formula in anticipation of that eventuality and does not put a plan into place until there is enough money in the reserve fund.

Discussion also ensued on the Chief’s request for a full-time mechanic certified to work on fire apparatus. At the present time, this need is outsourced to dealerships in Walpole or Meservey Truck in Chatham and Cape Cod Truck in Orleans that services large vehicles. The current budget of \$75,000 is not sufficient to adequately service and maintain the vehicles. Other towns have a full-time mechanic on staff. Chief Frederickson stated that there would be a potential to share a mechanic with neighboring towns. Chair Coxe was in favor of pursuing that option and Mr. Perkins suggested sharing with the police department within Town as well.

Mr. Perkins asked if grant awards include the cost of administering the grant. Chief Frederickson responded that FEMA does not include administrative costs, but does support salaries and benefits. Also if a grant writer is hired, that fee is included.

Chair Coxe noted the amount of the buyouts. Chief Frederickson responded that this line item anticipates retirement of those officers who have “maxed out” in terms of service. No more than one hundred and fifty days of sick time can be carried over from year to year, and a maximum of ninety days can be bought back.

## 2. Preliminary Votes for Above Departmental Budgets

**MOTION: To approve the above departmental budgets as presented.**

**Motion by: George Perkins**

**Seconded by: Nathan Ladley**

**Roll Call Vote: Stefanie Coxe-Y, George Perkins-Y, Nathan Ladley-Y and Robert Ciavarra-Y.**

**4 ayes; 0 nays. The motion passed unanimously.**

## 3. New Business – Budget Transfers

Mr. Scott reviewed the budget transfers as outlined in the memo. Town Administrator Whritenour stated that the expenses for the position of Assistant Health Director are being carried through the fiscal year. The position is being actively recruited and will be returned back to the health department budget when filled.

**MOTION: To approve the budget transfers as presented.**

**Motion by: Nathan Ladley**

**Seconded by: George Perkins**

**Roll Call Vote: George Perkins-Y, Nathan Ladley-Y, Robert Ciavarra, and Stefanie Coxe-Y.**

**4 ayes; 0 nays. The motion passed unanimously.**

Chair Coxe thanked Chief Simonian for his years of service in the department since the age of sixteen, and wished him well on his impending retirement in March.

**4. Adjournment.**

**MOTION: To adjourn.**

**Motion by: Robert Ciavarra**

**Seconded by: George Perkins**

**Roll Call Vote: Stefanie Coxe-Y, Robert Ciavarra-Y, George Perkins-Y and Nathan Ladley-Y.**

**4 ayes; 0 nays. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Meeting adjourned at 7:58PM.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Martin Barraford

*Attachments:*

Police and Fire Departmental Budget Presentations  
Budget transfers