

The Wilbraham Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wilbraham Town Hall
February 6, 2019 - 7:00 p.m.

Present: Carolyn Brennan, Marc Ducey, Anna Levine, Todd Luzi, Mike Mazzuca, Dan Miles and Tim Murphy

Absent: Kevin Corridan

Also present: Nancy Johnson, Town Accountant; Tom Sullivan, Asst. Town Administrator for Budget and Finance; Bob Zollo, Police Chief; David Bourcier, Fire Chief; Pete Nothe, Deputy Fire Chief; Ed Lennon, Police Captain; Shirley Rae, Dispatch Supervisor

I. Call Meeting to Order

Meeting called to order at 7:05 p.m. Meeting was recorded by Wilbraham Public Access and the Finance Committee Secretary. No one else recorded the meeting.

II. Accept Minutes

There are no minutes.

III. Open Forum

No discussion.

IV. FY2020 Budget Review

a. Tom Sullivan reviewed the latest changes made to the budget:

- Real Estate abatement requests have been rising, so the overlay was increased by \$15,000 for a total of \$240,000.
- Nancy Johnson computed estimated vacation payouts based on a worst case scenario. We may need approximately \$89,000 to cover vacation payouts if we don't wait to fill open positions. Since it would be imprudent to leave certain position unfilled, \$25,000 was moved from the Technology Fund to the Salary Pool.
- The budget is now \$72,145 below the 2½ % levy limit.

b. Shirley Rae presented the proposed FY2020 budget for Central Dispatch.

- All Personal Services lines reflect the increases in the new U.P.S.E.U. contract.
- While some individual expense lines were adjusted, the overall expenses budget reflects a proposed 1% increase.

Shirley talked briefly about the two grants the Central Dispatch department receives from the state based on the number of calls they handle. We receive a 911 Training grant and a Support & Incentive grant. Because we now accept wireless 911 calls, the Support & Incentive grant was increased by \$5,890 this year. Shirley uses the funds from the Support & Incentive grant to offset overtime pay.

c. Chief Zollo presented the proposed FY2020 budget for the Police Department.

- It was not possible to keep the proposed expense budget within the 1% increase for a few reasons:

- Three police officers will be retiring. They will receive uniform allowances at the beginning of the fiscal year. Per the union contract, new officers receive the current year's uniform allowance along with a 1½% advance on their second year uniform allowance. This means we will be paying 30 uniform allowances instead of 27 and a portion of FY2021 allowances in FY2020. The uniform allowance is also used by officers to purchase their weapons. The Town supplies rifles & shotguns.
 - The Heating Fuel line was increased as we have been in the new Police Station long enough to have a more accurate sense of the cost to heat the building. Last year we budgeted \$3,812 and the actual costs was \$9,929.
 - The Weapons & Ammunition line has been increasing largely due to the cost of ammunition, and the increased state mandated practice and training.
 - The Chief confirmed we are on track with the police vehicle replacement schedule. Next year we will replace two vehicles. One SUV and another SUV that will be replaced by a truck for the K9.
 - In addition to the vehicles, the chief is requesting one other capital item in FY2020. A replacement server for the onboard cameras, costing \$12,775. Tom Sullivan reported the server can be funded from free cash.
- d. Chief Bourcier presented the proposed FY2020 budget for the Fire Department.
- The personal services budget reflects a substantial increase due to the retirement of three employees. There will be a large increase to the overtime line as all shifts must be covered. Each shift should have six people working. Even before the retirements, we have shifts with only five positions covered. Overtime has been budgeted at \$170,000. The sick leave buyback is another large retirement expense budgeted at \$86,000.
 - Most lines in the expense budget reflect a proposed 1% increase. There are two lines, however, that reflect larger increases:
 - The Uniforms line was increased to supply three new firefighters with uniforms and turn out gear. Turn out gear costs approximately \$5,500 per person.
 - Two captains are retiring in FY2020. Therefore, a non-recurring expense of \$12,500 was budgeted to cover the testing and assessments required for two promotions.
 - The chief would like to see the Town do a study on the staffing of the Fire Department. A study was done eleven years ago and the Fire Department has been asking for three additional positions since then. At this time, the Chief would like to see the two Firefighters/EMT positions filled, so all shifts will have the necessary six people working. Presently the Ambulance Fund offsets the costs of many things that are directly related to the Fire Department. One of these items is the assistance in funding the ladder truck. When that commitment is complete, the Ambulance Fund may be able to fund the Captain of EMS and Training position. The Chief reviewed statistical data regarding the increase in the call volume (i.e., which is up 37% since the study was done eleven years ago). He reiterated the safety concerns of being understaffed.
 - The Fire Department is requesting one Capital item in FY2020. SCBA self-contained Breathing Apparatus (31 bottles), costing \$50,000. We are applying for a grant that, if awarded, would bring the cost to the Town down to \$18,872, while replacing all breathing apparatus (i.e., not just the bottles).
 - They are getting ready to order a new ambulance, costing approximately \$275,000. We are increasing the depreciation amount of \$50,000 to \$65,000 due to the high cost of a

new ambulance, and our ambulances are running so much they need to be replaced every four years instead of five years.

V. Carolyn Brennan and Marc Ducey updated the committee on this week's school Budget Sub-Committee meeting:

- While the Budget Sub-Committee has eliminated items from the "needs" list, they continue to have significant requests in FY2020.
- They are planning to use \$300,000 of anticipated E & D toward the school's FY2020 operating budget.
- The proposed budget is currently reflecting an approximate \$1.9 million increase. The 3% the Town is proposing would amount to approximately \$700,000, leaving a \$1.2 million gap. It is impossible for the Town to fund their request without increasing taxes.
- Members of the School Committee and school administration will come to present their budget to the Finance Committee either February 20th or 27th. The Finance Committee would like them to wait as long as possible to insure their numbers are firmed up.

VI. The Finance Committee wants the Capital Planning Committee to review the list of capital items being funded with free cash. The committee would like to have a policy in place to determine what will be funded with free cash and what items should be referred to Capital Planning.

VII. The next meeting will be February 13th at the Police Station and the Town Administrator will present his budget.

Meeting adjourned 9:00 p.m.

Diane Hamakawa
Assistant Town Accountant/Secretary