



TOWN OF DARTMOUTH MASSACHUSETTS

Finance Committee
400 Slocum Road
Dartmouth, MA 02747
Phone (508) 910-1802
Fax (508) 910-1885
cabrantes@town.dartmouth.ma.us

Peter Friedman, Chairman
Greg Lynam, Vice-Chairman

Pursuant to a call to order and notice duly given in the manner required by law and the By-laws of the Town of Dartmouth, a meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Thursday, March 6, 2008 at 7:00 P.M. at the Old Town Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Greg Lynam, Peter Friedman, David Ferreira Melissa Haskell,
Stewart Washburn, George Jacobs, Shannon Jenkins, Larry Fox

MEMBERS ABSENT: Francis Pettengill

BEGINNING RESERVE FUND BALANCE: \$639,438.60

ENDING RESERVE FUND BALANCE: \$639,438.60

Finance Committee Agenda

March 6, 2008

Old Town Hall, 7 PM

7:00 PM Pledge of Allegiance

Approve Meeting Minutes (January 10, 2008 and February 21, 2008)

7:05 PM Police Department Budget Review

8:05 PM Library Budget Review

8:45 PM Adjourn

MOTION

David Ferreira moved that the minutes from January 10th be approved. Shannon Jenkins seconded the motion.

(Vote: 7-0-1)

MOTION

Shannon Jenkins moved that the minutes from February 24th be approved. Larry Fox seconded the motion.

(Vote 7-0-1)

TOP DOWN BUDGET PROCESS

Greg Lynam asked Ed Iacaponi if the Finance Committee could receive a budget with a column showing the passage of the various overrides and one showing the budget for 2009 without overrides passing. Ed Iacaponi said that he could provide that type of a budget, but was unsure if he could do it before April 1st because of the work that was being done in preparation of the override.

Stewart Washburn suggested that if the overrides did not pass that the Town maybe better off eliminating some departments all together. He did not feel it would be the role of the Finance Committee to push for the elimination of some functions, but rather that of the Select Board.

Greg Lynam also pointed out that the FinCom was receiving individual department budgets, but not a consolidated budget. This format makes it impossible to see what is feasible to maintain and what has to go. Currently, one cannot see how it fits into the greater puzzle. Peter Friedman asked Mr. Iacaponi if the FinCom could receive an overall budget in addition to the individual department budgets. Mr. Iacaponi responded that he was still providing information for presentations related to the override questions and trying to make sure that the data presented is factual. He is also attempting to prepare a summary of projections with and without the override and trying to build in some sustainability in the override

questions. If the override passes, he is sure it will take the Town through 2011, but not sure that it will take the Town to 2012.

POLICE BUDGET

Chief Pacheco said that he was given an estimate of what the 2009 budget for the police would be and he used that to build his budget. Mark Pacheco went through the various components of the police budget.

Larry Fox asked how many officers would be provided if the override passes. Chief Pacheco responded that the override would provide 7 officers, including 1 school resource officer (SRO) for the schools. If the police override does not pass, the police are still asking for 2 officers.

George Jacobs asked the minimum number of officers on any shift. He was told by the Chief that there are 8 officers scheduled for any given night, if the number falls below 5 officers on a shift than the officers are replaced, so 5 is the minimum number of men on during any given shift. Mr. Jacobs asked how the minimum number is determined. Mark Pacheco said the minimum number is based on the number of calls received annually.

Mr. Ferreira asked why the SRO was part of the police budget. When budgets were cut, Chief Pacheco had asked Dr. Russell to include the SRO in the school budget. However, the next year, Dr. Russell said that the school budget could not pay for the SRO. At that time, the police were forced to eliminate the position.

Peter Friedman pointed out that there has been a lot of discussion about a regional police dispatch and the savings is estimated to be \$440,000. Mr. Friedman asked Chief Pacheco if he could discuss this idea. Mark Pacheco said that dispatchers are an integral part of Dartmouth's police department. They not only answer the telephones, but they also monitor cameras, prisoners, do research and clerical duties. Since Dartmouth has no officer stationed in the lobby like other departments, dispatchers also answer complaints. They are not merely waiting for calls to come in. Regional dispatch may work for less populated communities, but not for a town that receives 26,000 calls for service a year.

Shannon Jenkins asked about comparisons with other communities in terms of the number of traffic supervisors and officers for our town. Chief Pacheco indicated that other communities do not have traffic supervisors, but have volunteers instead. Potter School is the only school with out a traffic supervisor because there is not the same amount of walking traffic at Potter School. Chief Pacheco pointed out that he had recommended against traffic supervisors, but Town Meeting voted to put traffic supervisors in the budget. If the Select Board were to come back and ask for a cut, traffic supervisors would be the area to be cut.

Peter Friedman asked about the cost of the K-9 units and could that function be done by the Sheriff's department. Chief Pacheco pointed out that the cost of the K-9 unit was only approximately \$2,400 per dog per year. The Department has a nationally accredited bloodhound and two German Shepherds, one for drugs and one for crowd control. The K-9 officers do patrols. The only thing they do not do is transport prisoners. Melissa Haskell asked if we bill other entities when our dogs get called out for use. The Chief responded that we not only bill them, but we get paid for their time. Stewart Washburn asked when the last police contract was signed. The Chief responded that officers are currently working without a contract and contract negotiations are ongoing now. Mr. Washburn followed up with the question of how many officers are required for minimum staffing. Mark Pacheco responded that while the contract requires a minimum of four on at a given times, he did not think that was safe, so he required at least five officers. As an additional question, Mr. Washburn asked if they Chief's contract had also expired. To which the Chief responded that if had. George Jacobs asked who does the negotiations for patrolman and officers contracts. Mark Pacheco said that he negotiated the contracts with Bill Strauss and Michael Gagne representing the Select Board.

Mark Pacheco expressed concern that they would not receive community policing grants because they are unable to house prisoners in their cells. He pointed out that the cells were renovated in 1985, but had become at issue on the last inspection. Mr. Iacaponi pointed out that some funding had been used to

upgrade the cell. Expressing concern about losing grant money, Melissa Haskell expressed a desire to revisit this issue if we do not receive funding because of it.

Peter Friedman questioned the fact that Repair and Maintenance costs did not go down despite the addition of new cruisers. Chief Pacheco attributed these costs to other vehicles that are aging and pointed out that the Police have a request in with CIP for additional vehicles.

Greg Lynam asked about the 25% increase in communications costs. Responding to this question, Chief Pacheco pointed out that there is only one repeater and he is trying to get a micro link to the UMASS tower and then cards can be eliminated and there will be some phone lines that the police will not need to pay for. The savings from the portables will make up for the maintenance costs.

Larry Fox zeroed in on the cost of office supplies and where the police buy them. Chief Pacheco said they purchase a lot of them online. Greg Lynam followed up by asking about whether or not the central supply was working. Ed Iacaponi said that most routine supplies come from WB Mason and the schools do their own purchasing.

Gasoline continues to be a major expense and the budget was based on \$3.15 per gallon. Ed Iacaponi pointed out that the DPW bids for gas and diesel are due next month. Peter Friedman reminded Mr. Iacaponi that Larry Fox is the point person for the FinCom on this issue and asked if Mr. Iacaponi could send that information to Mr. Fox when it came in.

LIBRARY BUDGET

There was discussion about the minimum funding required for the libraries and the ramifications of not maintaining certification. Shannon Jenkins asked if the minimum will decrease because the last three years of appropriations has decreased. Denise Medeiros, the Director of Libraries, acknowledged that the minimum would probably be reduced based on the last three years appropriations. Ms. Medeiros pointed out that decertification would result in loss of reciprocal borrowing privileges. Bridgewater has been decertified and it cannot borrow from other libraries. Ms. Medeiros pointed out that any further cuts in funding meant further reductions in staff. There are still costs associated with North Dartmouth Library because it still has a working collection. Smaller libraries can actually save money because they have lower heating costs and have lower staffing requirements.

Shannon Jenkins asked about receiving donations for computers to address some of the computer needs. Ms. Medeiros said many of the computers that are donated and not useable for the library, but they would certainly take donations.

The various library positions were discussed, rational for each position given and questions were asked about benefits and part-time employees.

Shannon Jenkins moved that the meeting be adjourned. Melissa Haskell seconded the motion.
(Vote 8-0-0)

Meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Haskell

