

Approved

POLICE COMMISSION MEETING

Minutes of the Meeting of Tuesday, March 2, 2010

The Hooksett Police Commission held a public meeting on Tuesday, March 2, 2010, at the Safety Center. Present were Chairperson Joanne McHugh, Commissioner David Gagnon, Chief Stephen Agrafiotis and Town Councilor Paul Loiselle.

1. Call to Order:

Chairperson McHugh called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

Public Session

2. Proof of Posting:

3. Pledge of Allegiance:

The pledge of allegiance was held.

4. Public Input:

None at this time.

5. Old Business:

Chairperson McHugh began the meeting with discussion concerning the 2010-2011 Budget.

Chief Agrafiotis stated that the information we have from the Financial Director is that the budget will be cut \$350,799. This is the Budget Committee's recommended budget.

Discussion amongst Chairperson McHugh, Commissioner Gagnon and Chief Agrafiotis regarding a spreadsheet showing the figures from the Budget Committee and figures from previous years.

Chairperson McHugh stated she would like to be at the Budget Committee meeting on Thursday, March 4, 2010 to discuss matters. She was confused on the wage line. Looking at the 31st week of 52 weeks, she came up with a different figure than what they did. She has done some research in comparison with Goffstown Police Dept. concerning how many members there are of their command staff. Denise Roberge of the Goffstown PD said they have 2 captains.

Chief Agrafiotis said we are on track with the comparatives with other towns.

Chairperson McHugh moved on to the subject of pay equity raises. She had received a letter from the Town Council asking the raises be suspended.

Commissioner Gagnon brought up the status of the budget. He feels they should go after it to get it back up.

Chairperson McHugh went on to discuss what we agree on with the Budget Committee.

Chief Agrafiotis agreed with no new cruiser in the proposed budget. There are other areas which can be absorbed or cut. He is most concerned about wages being cut by \$200,000, which equals and additional 3 – maybe 4 positions could be funded.

Chairperson McHugh asked if we are in agreement on cutting the vehicle and canine line.

Chief Agrafiotis said he is only concerned about the negotiations, wages and overtime. Other issues are not that important. He brought up that heading into next fiscal year, we can't just have 23 officers and have cuts on overtime because we need to spread them out to make up for the missing officers.

Chairperson McHugh went back to the spreadsheet and was talking about the legal union negotiations line and pointed out the legal line for the Police Commission. Can they take money from that line to help fund more officers.

Chief Agrafiotis said that is up to the Commission.

Chairperson McHugh and Commissioner Gagnon discussed the cost for the fiscal year that was needed for the negotiations line and would seek paperwork from the Executive Assistant to review those figures.

Chairperson McHugh went to the overtime line which has been cut \$97,000. She wanted to know the history of overtime pay.

Chief Agrafiotis left the room for a short period to get the estimates from his office.

Chairperson McHugh asked if anyone wanted to publicly speak while Chief Agrafiotis was gone since we were just waiting. No one wanted to speak.

Chief Agrafiotis returned with the estimates of overtime history. Stated as follows:

2005-2006 = \$231,163
2006-2007 = \$242,625
2007-2008 = \$270,379
2008-2009 = \$208,756
2009-2010 = Executive Assistant is working on.

Chairperson McHugh reviewed the regular wage line and said \$212,870 has been cut. They were working this out based on 24 or 25 officers at \$70,000.

Commissioner Gagnon brought up that the "education" is contractual.

Chief Agrafiotis stated that they can only spend up to that amount.

Commissioner Gagnon moved on to the subject of vehicles. He wanted to explain the purchase of the transportation van. They researched investing in this vehicle because House Rep. Boutin stated that the Hooksett Courthouse was closing and we would need to transport prisoners to Concord.

Chief Agrafiotis agreed with him that he had the newspaper article stating that the Governor listed the 8 district courts that would be closing. This information went to House Rep. David Boutin on March 11, 2009 and that explains the idea for purchasing a transportation van.

Chief Agrafiotis stated that they had researched the need for a van with the Laconia Police Dept. so they could "mirror" using the van the way they did. Sgts. in Laconia drive the van around. It's primary operational purpose is to give Sgts. a vehicle to go to the arrests and supervise. They also use it to transport prisoners. He stated that this would be an added use if the court closed.

Commissioner Gagnon agreed that the vehicle has a 2-fold purpose ... if the courthouse closes, they can use it to transport prisoners. He wanted to get other reasons to use it also.

Town Councilor Loiselle asked to speak. He mentioned the Minutes of March 11, 2009. There was discussion about whether or not the courthouse would close. He stated that now the Governor has changed his position about it but it is still lined out.

Some discussion between Commissioner Gagnon and Councilor Loiselle regarding this point.

Commissioner Gagnon then brought up the police equipment line. He wanted to know what that covered. Is it for vests, etc.?

Chief Agrafiotis said that it may include canine.
Commissioner Gagnon wanted to know why the canine expense doesn't come under Personnel.

Chairperson McHugh stated that \$11,000+ was taken out completely that went with the dog such as dog food, boarding, etc. She then asked the Chief if he was not in favor of having a canine unit during the next fiscal year.

Chief Agrafiotis said we can do without a canine unit for one year but his main concerns were wages, overtime and the negotiations.

Chairperson McHugh said that it would be a good idea for the Commissioners to put together where we stand regarding wages and benefits and find out what we feel overtime will be with less officers. This would help determine what our costs are.

Chairperson McHugh wanted to review the status of how many officers we have and how many are in the process of interviewing and being hired. She stated she knows that there is one in the academy.

Chief Agrafiotis said they have started the interviews and paperwork. He does not want to hire before July 1st so he can find out what will actually be in the budget.

Chairperson McHugh wanted to know if the expectation was to bring the full complement up to 27.

Chief Agrafiotis stated that with the cuts to wages, we cannot afford them.

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Chairperson McHugh asked if we need 27.

Chief Agrafiotis stated he had put in for 29 but it was cut to 27 for level funding.

Chairperson McHugh said that based on cuts, how many can be funded?

Chief Agrafiotis said we can fund 23 or 24 if money gets added in.

Chairperson McHugh then brought up the merit pool of 2% along with the pay adjustments of \$26,000.

Chief Agrafiotis said that the 2% merit pool is for non-union only. He went on to say that the base salary for an incoming officer is \$37,300; with holidays it is about \$39,000; then you need to add in benefits which on a family level is about \$13,000+/-.

Chairperson McHugh thought that health care was around \$19,650 with the Town paying \$17,000+/-.

Chief Agrafiotis said they did not cut benefits line.

Commissioner Gagnon confirmed about \$38,000 base pay, not counting benefits.

Capt. Daigle brought up that it is in the low 40's for salary because they go to the academy. That is 14 weeks at 43 hours a week – part of that is 3 hours overtime.

Chairperson McHugh stated that we could not fund the 25th officer.

Chief Agrafiotis said they would have to look at every single line that we would need to cut to come up with funding for the 25th officer. As is, we will have two positions less than we requested. The citizens are asking about it.

Commissioner Gagnon stated we need to discuss vehicles and also education we need to fund if someone wants to use it.

Chairperson McHugh said that no one has availed themselves to the education benefit so they didn't put it in.

Chief Agrafiotis stated again that we will be 2 or 3 officers down with this budget. Asked Commissioners if they want to ask for more money to be added for additional complement of officers.

Commissioner Gagnon said that we cannot cover overtime.

Chief Agrafiotis stated we'll be running shifts.

Commissioner Gagnon stated there will be 5 officers to cover 24 hours each day.

Chairperson McHugh asked if we should look at lines to see how to change things or go to deliberations and ask for money to be put back in.

Councilor Loiselle brought up that the Town is now able to fix our police vehicles. They have the technology for this now.

Commissioner Gagnon said we should explore using the Town to fix our vehicles.

Councilor Loiselle mentioned that the Fire Dept. used someone in Maine for their trucks.

Commissioner Gagnon agreed that using the Town to fix our vehicles would be good if things have changed. In previous years they did not have the equipment.

Chief Agrafiotis questioned if they have the manpower to handle this.

Chairperson McHugh looked at the budget then stated that publications will have to go.

Commissioner Gagnon restated that we need to get complement to 27.

Capt. Daigle said that there are about a dozen being processed right now.

Chairperson McHugh was questioning if we should get complement back to 27, when we only have funding for 24.

Capt. Daigle said bringing in new officers will take around 2 months ... depends on how many. If it is just one or two, it goes quicker. The more officers, the longer it will take.

Commissioner Gagnon asked if we would know by May which new officers were to be hired.

Chief Agrafiotis said they are continuing with the paperwork process for the latest applicants. They will know after the Budget Committee meeting on Thursday what we can do and how many officers can be hired once we know how much money there is.

Chairperson McHugh reviewed that we have one in the academy right now and who else are we talking about.

Capt. Daigle said that if the latest candidate passes the polygraph on Friday, then they will give him a starting date. He also mentioned that if you bring in certified officers, according to the matrix, you bring them in at a higher pay rate.

Chief Agrafiotis does not want to hire until we know the budget.

Chairperson McHugh said we can't shy away from this. We need to ensure the safety of the community. Now we're saying we need to back away from it. If we back away, they'll think we don't need more officers.

Commissioner Gagnon asked how do you want to fund them? What should we eliminate? Everyone is worried about what is on the table and about the equity pay raises. We did comparisons and it was a unanimous vote by the Commission to give the raises.

Chairperson McHugh stated she did not know about the 2.5% prior raise. This would have played a part in her consideration of the raises. She asked the Chief if we have overtime figures for this year. Would like to compare the figures to previous years.

Chief Agrafiotis said that the Executive Assistant would be able to give her the figures. It will be a long process because they need to go by who was scheduled, did they work overtime, why did they work overtime.

Chairperson McHugh stated she is trying to come up with money because of the lack of officers and how to compensate others for the loss of officers.

Chief Agrafiotis can look at overtime spent thus far but needs to go back week by week, schedule by schedule, shift by shift, officer by officer ...

Councilor Loiselle asked the Chief if overtime was high because staff is low? He stated that if subtracting for vacation time and sick leave, then you come up with the absolutes.

Chairperson McHugh stated it's doable and satisfies the arguments being made. Overtime line is too high because we don't have as many officers.

Councilor Loiselle said he would tell the Budget Committee where the Commissioners are coming from.

Chief Agrafiotis asked Chairperson McHugh to come into the office to go over this. He feels Finance should be able to help with coming up with figures.

Chairperson McHugh feels they need to explore these issues.

Chief Agrafiotis asked that Chairperson McHugh come in tomorrow and meet up with the Executive Assistant to see what we have.

Chairperson McHugh wanted to know if there were any suggestions of what to say to the Budget Committee.

Commissioner Gagnon said we should respond that we need to go forward to raise complement of officers to 27.

Councilor Loiselle said they need a spreadsheet for Thursday night's meeting.

Chairperson McHugh asked if Councilor Loiselle could get back to her tomorrow about using the Town's mechanics. He stated yes.

Commissioner Gagnon said the labor rate will be cheaper to use the Town's mechanics. This will not help us get officers back. We might save about \$20,000, and that is not enough to fund another officer.

Chairperson McHugh brought up again what are we doing with merit raises? The police contract was voted down. Did town get voted down? (others stated they were zero) The school? (others again stated they were zero) Need figure for 2% merit raises and should the pay adjustment be delayed.

Commissioner Gagnon said it wouldn't be delaying it, it would be taking it back.

Chairperson McHugh went on to say she needed figures on what was spent for union negotiations.

Commissioner Gagnon wanted to know if they could take a vote by email on these subjects.

Chairperson McHugh said they cannot do it without a public meeting.

Councilor Loiselle stated that whatever is done from now to Thursday is “homework”. Bring info forward at meeting.

Chairperson McHugh asked again if we were taking 2% merit raises out for next year. Also the pay equity adjustment – are the commissioners willing to take it out of the 2010-2011 budget or suspend it.

Commissioner Gagnon stated it was bad timing for the equity adjustments, but the adjustments were justified. They had taken four meetings to work on this and review the ultimate reason for it.

Based on what has come forward. It was bad timing to consider it right now and it needs to be addressed. They need to work amongst themselves to work with either the Budget Committee or Town Council on it. She then asked the Chief if he thought it was the right thing to do to suspend the equity pay raises.

Chief Agrafiotis said that they should talk to the staff that were adjusted and discuss with everyone involved.

Chairperson McHugh asked Commissioner Gagnon if he wanted to meet with those involved. She also stated as far as the budget is concerned, they could take it out due to bad timing or suspend it. They would need a motion to remove it though.

Commissioner Gagnon commented that there has been a lot of bullying going on out there and that people have been here for over 20 years in most of those positions. Not sure meeting with the people affected would be the right thing and does not want to lose them.

Chairperson McHugh then stated that they should hear from them and work with Town Council and the Budget Committee to work with them about this.

Commissioner Gagnon said that Commissioner Roy is the financial guy and they need to set something up with him.

Chief Agrafiotis brought up that one is away at training.

Commissioner Gagnon asked if they could talk by phone?

Chief Agrafiotis asked if the Commissioners rescind the money, would the Budget Committee put the money back in for officers.

Commissioner Gagnon asked Capt. Daigle for some middle of the road figures so they have some sort of figure.

Chairperson McHugh stated again that they need to decide what to do with the pay equity matter. She said they would take out the 2% merit raise and go to zero.

5. New Business:

Chairperson requested a meeting with all three present. Commissioner Roy was absent.

6. Public Input

Maura Ouellette, 3 Summerfare St., Hooksett, NH

Spoke about the pay equity raises and stated we are missing one key component and that was they did not go through the voters. People are mad about this and it is unbelievable to not ask voters.

Commissioner Gagnon stated she is partially right but that the Commissioners have the right to do this in Non-Public Session. Stated that they put some things to the voters, but sometimes they don't and it is always pointed out. Other departments do the same thing but nothing is brought up. The Fire Dept. got voted down on a new ambulance, then a few months later, they had a new ambulance.

Maura Ouellette then said the voters need to be heard and this was unacceptable to not let them vote.

Commissioner Gagnon said that the raises would not have been on a ballot.

Maura Ouellette said that people would not have been upset if they knew about it. She stated that even with the cuts made to the budget, they still have funding for 25 officers. Two sergeants left so we have the funding for 25 officers. Hooksett PD hasn't been able to keep 28 or 29 officers because of the morale problems, etc. She doesn't understand why they are assuming they will only have 23 officers.

Chief Agrafiotis said that until the citizens decide in May, we don't know how much we'll be given.

Maura Ouellette asked why we don't think we have money for 25 officers.

Chairperson McHugh stated that Mr. Hyde based it on an average of \$70,000 for new officers and that she got the information from the Minutes of the Budget Committee.

JR Ouellette, 3 Summerfare Street, Hooksett, NH

Said that this information is not accurate.

Chairperson McHugh tried to explain that the funding depends on where someone is on the matrix.

Maura Ouellette then said the way you design a budget is how you are working it now. There should not be doom and gloom.

Commissioner Gagnon stated that she is thinking the Town is done growing.

Maura Ouellette stated she looked at statistics and what is left over each year. She also brought up the reason officers are leaving.

JR Ouellette said that Jason Hyde's figures need clarification. If you remove 2 officers at entry level and deducted pay equity raises, that is how you come up with figures. The Minutes are not correct. They have not been approved yet. The Budget Committee wanted a breakout for what officers are still employed. When sergeants leave and others move up, then you are replacing those offices by entry positions.

Chief Agrafiotis stated that the Town needs to decide how many officers needed and the commission needs to know what was budgeted. As the town grows, and we aren't moving up with

the amount of officers, there will be a problem. They are also trying to explain the full complement and not trying to throw out doom and gloom. Citizens question what coverage do we have.

Chairperson McHugh said that the citizens on the west side feel they need more officers to be over there.

JR Ouellette asked if they had looked at other agencies.

Chairperson McHugh said she spoke with Goffstown.

JR Ouellette stated that they are 30% larger than us and they are approved for 28.

Councilor Loiselle stated you can't compare Goffstown to Hooksett.

JR Ouellette said yes you can.

Maura Ouellette stated we have more administration than officers.

Commissioner Gagnon stated "you are wrong."

Chairperson McHugh stopped the conversation and stated we are not having a debate. This is not the type of discussion we are going to have. This all needs to be looked at.

Capt. Daigle then spoke about the equity pay raises stating that it was not done under cloak and dagger and that he had paperwork showing that Carol Granfield even signed off on the pay raises.

Chairperson McHugh then adjourned the meeting. Commissioner Gagnon seconded the motion.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:26 PM.

Drafted by: Prosecution Assistant Cynthia Ullrich

Edited by: Executive Assistant Francine Swafford

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