

**Board of Selectmen's Meeting  
March 23, 2013, 8:00AM  
Sanford Hall  
155 Village Street**

**Present: Andrew Espinosa, Chair; Glenn Trindade, Vice-Chair; Selectman John Foresto, Clerk; Selectman Dennis Crowley, Selectman Richard D'Innocenzo and Suzanne Kennedy, Town Administrator.**

Also Present: Melanie Phillips, Finance Director, Treasurer/Collector; Jeffery Lynch, Fire Chief; Allen Tingley, Police Chief; Jeff O'Neill, Chair, Finance Committee.

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At 8:04 AM Chairman Espinosa called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Public Comments:** None.

**FY2014 Budget Review and Discussion – Police and Fire Departments:**

**Police**

Regarding Blackboard services, Chief Tingley stated the department has contracted with a consultant for high level server functions, and this individual has been working with the department for 11-12 years. The fee for these services is \$290 per month. The Board questioned why the Town IT staff could not handle it. A recent situation allowed the consultant to come in to replace a server and get it running within 24 hours. Selectman Trindade suggested Chief Tingley meet with Mr. Richard Boucher of the IT department to see if these services can be centralized and see what the tradeoffs might be. Chairman Espinosa suggested a policy change that would have Town IT staff contacted first to see if they can handle the issue, and use the consultant as backup. Selectman Foresto reminded the Board that the use of the consultant was intended to be a slow migration of services as the Town IT staff could not take it over all at once.

Chairman Espinosa asked Chief Tingley if he will be able to provide the level of services that is expected with the budget he is presenting. Chief Tingley responded that he could always use more money or additional staff, noting that overtime pay is often just to handle training. The state has cut back its training, and local departments or regional groups have to augment. This includes service and firearms training, as well as CPR and First Aid. The firearms training takes place at a range in Medfield.

Selectman Crowley recalled that an additional person was added last year and asked how that has impacted services. Chief Tingley responded that the officer is in the police academy and will graduate in July so the impact has been little thus far. The extra officer was not intended to reduce the overtime budget but to free up another officer to become a full time detective. The detective position will materialize in April when the shifts change. The selected individual has been doing most of the detective work thus far and has been going to additional training. While there are no retirements this year, there could be three or four in the next few years.

**Selectman Foresto moved that the Board approve the Police Department budget as presented; Selectman Trindade seconded. Chairman Espinosa suggested that, if there are any possible funds available, the Board will support funding the training. VOTE: 5-0-0.**

Police and Fire Communications:

**Selectman Foresto moved that the Board approve the Police and Fire Communications budget as presented; Selectman Trindade seconded. No discussion. VOTE: 5-0-0.**

FIRE:

The Board expressed concern that this budget shows an increase of 82% from last year, about \$700,000, not including the tanker truck, and the Board will have to take a hard look at thing while trying to figure out how to move forward.

Chairman Espinosa stated he is not sure the Town can afford all the things put forth in this budget, at least at this time. He complimented Chief Lynch as having done a great job of identifying things that the Town should pay attention to. It's likely that things will not happen all in one year, but over a period of years.

Selectman Crowley noted that the budget is showing four more people in the Fire Department, and four more in EMS, noting the significant difference in pay scale for fire lieutenant and firefighter. He asked if there was any way this could be changed to two lieutenants and six firefighters. Chief Lynch pointed out that if he is not at the station, there is no one in authority. If there is a lieutenant on each shift, there is no problem. Additionally, they are also in charge of on-call staff as well as regular shift. Chief Lynch stated he wants to have that piece in place while the department grows.

Ms. Kennedy reported that the Chief's request mirrors the recommendation from the consultant a couple of weeks ago. The intent is to maintain the licensure. The Board asked if that requires a lieutenant on each shift to keep the license. Selectman Trindade reminded the Board that the Legislative Breakfast featured elected representatives advising that state aid is reduced or virtually non-existent. The Town will have to figure out how to fund it, not only for this year but on a long-term basis.

Mr. Jeff O'Neill, Chair, Finance Committee, noted that this budget does not even compare to public safety budgets in other communities. While the budget was good during tough times, the Town is paying for it now having to replace a lot of equipment all at the same time. Brief discussion followed on how other budgets in Town have been impacted. Selectman Trindade stated the Board is trying to maintain costs while identifying recurring revenue so there is a level income stream to fund the budget over time.

It was noted that the staff positions mentioned represent promotions and are not new hires. Chief Lynch specified that he would like a distinct chain of command for every shift. Right now there are lieutenants in place, before that there was no one available. The contract with the fire department states that there has to be a lieutenant on every shift, and there is a need for one for each of the three shifts. If the Board approves this budget, a fourth shift will be added. Chairman Espinosa theorized that this action produces a cascading effect across the budget, not only involved with salary, but equipment, training, etc. What is the impact of one person on the overall budget? Some of those expenses are one time and are not recurring. Can we identify the areas where the addition of a person could be reduced?

Discussion followed on the on-call staff. The Board wondered why these people are kept on staff if they do not respond to calls. Chief Lynch noted that the requirements for on-call personnel have changed substantially over the years in that they are required to train and take classes. Many families need two incomes, which reduces available time for on-call service. Since the 1990s this department has had difficulty staffing on-call personnel. In the four months since Chief Lynch arrived in Medway, four on-call

personal have moved out of town. Even with increased stipends, people are not taking the shifts. Having full time people will cover the shifts will help. Some of the increase in stipends (\$46,000 total for fire and EMS) reflects an attempt to hire additional people as on-call firefighters.

Ms. Melanie Phillips, Finance Director, stated there is a one-time cost to get everyone up to Firefighter 2 level, in this case, a total of \$85,000. Brief discussion of costs to hire one person revealed a cost of around \$100,000 including vacation, holiday, training, and associated costs. Ms. Phillips pointed out the bulk of the budget is personnel. Discussion followed on how to reduce some of the other expenses, modifying the stipend policy for regular and on-call personnel and possibly hiring additional staff.

Chief Lynch pointed out that, even with the two new people, there are still shifts that are not completely covered. Keep in mind that if people are on the schedule, there are overtime and pension ramifications. When on-call people do not put themselves on the schedule, full time people will fill in. Ms. Phillips suggested that the big unknown is how to get people to commit to serving on-call. If the Town hires new people, the commitment is there. The Town's certifications are at risk by not covering shifts. Chief Lynch added that, because on-call personnel have families and other jobs, they are limited to the number of hours they can be available. He clarified that he does not want anyone to believe that on-call personnel are not performing. They are not always able to leave their regular jobs when there is a call. The system itself is challenging. They will not stay with the program over time, as there is a great turnover in on-call personnel. After paying to train and outfit them, they will leave if the commitment becomes too great.

Selectman Crowley asked if all the training has to happen in the same year. Chief Lynch responded that, contractually, they have to be trained in the first year they are hired. This can reduce the amount of turn-out equipment by \$5,000 as it can be shifted from on-call to full time.

Regarding ALS personnel, Selectman Crowley asked about the cost to get personnel trained to that level of service. He noted that he had previously asked for analysis on what it would cost. Ms. Kennedy responded that they do not have access to data on revenue projections. Ms. Phillips stated it is not a worthwhile exercise without knowing the billable amount or revenue. She will work with Chief Lynch to compile the cost figures. Ms. Kennedy wondered if it was possible to combine services with another community to reduce overall costs. Brief discussion followed on stipends built into budget. The Board asked Chief Lynch to review stipend amounts relative to on-call shifts and come back to the Board's meeting on Monday night.

Selectman Crowley asked about EMS purchase services. Chief Lynch responded that increased staffing has reduced the number of calls that other providers are taking so Medway is getting more of the revenue. Selectman Crowley would like to see a revision of the indirect costs. Ms. Phillips reported that those are unknown until the budget is final.

EMS has been run as an Enterprise Account, and the reserves have been built up. If Medway goes to a new plan, the EMS will no longer make revenue for the Town. The general account is going to have to supplement the enterprise account during the time the Town is working up to the ALS level of service. Discussion followed on increasing rates to those who use the service. Ms. Kennedy confirmed that she is the one who has the authority to increase the rates. She added that Medway is the only area community running their ambulance service as an enterprise account. Medway has 53% of their clients come from Medicare and Medicaid accounts, and as the population gets older, it will increase. Selectman Trindade noted that insurance companies will cap what they will pay, and the delay in payment is the remaining balance that is billed to the patient. Discussion followed. Private companies are having a harder time collecting the balances from patients, given the economy.

Selectman Crowley theorized that, because of the arrangement the Board made with the schools, that budgeting change will occur year after year. The billing rate was increased on the recommendation from billing consultant Bill Mergandahl, and is now 200% over the Medicare bill.

Discussion followed on non-payment recourse, hardship fee-forgiveness, connecting with collection agencies, shift analysis review, cost to ALS, stipend review and indirect costs. Chairman Espinosa summarized that the Board will wait for the additional numbers and vote on the budget on Monday. At this time, he asked if anyone in the audience had comments or questions for the Board. Selectman Crowley asked for a copy of the state statute that defines the requirements of the department.

Chief Lynch stated that he understands that this is a huge increase and that the Board has to ask these questions. No matter how people in the past did their jobs, things now need attention. He pointed out that there will be some revenue coming in that will offset the costs. The Board asked Ms. Phillips to provide calculations on how that income level was defined. Chairman Espinosa thanked Chief Lynch and his staff for their hard work.

At 10:10 AM Chairman Espinosa suspended the meeting for a brief break. At 10:22 AM Chairman Espinosa reconvened the meeting.

Chairman Espinosa asked for a breakdown of local receipts. Selectman Crowley asked for an updated “year to date” report as the February one does not show excise taxes that were due. Ms. Phillips will bring both reports to Monday’s meeting.

Discussion followed on percentages of staff time billed to enterprise accounts. Ms. Kennedy noted that those percentages have not changed from last year, but the dollar amount will change due to increase in salaries and variation in debt service costs. Chairman Espinosa wanted to know, strictly from a manpower basis, the percentage increase in the budget which contractually is 1.5%. He would also like the step increases identified. Some of that cost could be divided between an enterprise account and general fund.

Selectman Trindade reported he spoke with someone from the baseball league and asked if Cassidy Field be renamed, whether the baseball league can place signage at the field, who oversees signage and ultimately grants permission. Sponsor signs would be a good way to gain some revenue that could be used to support field improvements. Ms. Phillips advised that all monies would have to be paid first to the Town and then disbursed by the authority overseeing the parks.

Looking ahead to Monday’s meeting, Selectman Crowley stated the Board still needs to finish the budget, but is still waiting for the Gale Report. Selectman D’Innocenzo reported he has reached out to Gale Associates for the report which is supposed to be available on Wednesday afternoon in hard copy. He hopes to get a verbal report in time for Monday’s meeting. Discussion followed on the cascading effects of adding personnel.

There was brief discussion on revolving account for the parks. The variety of uses of these funds will be presented on Monday. Selectman D’Innocenzo suggested that if the fields are brought up to standards, permitted use will increase, and associated revenues will go up. He is trying to set up a meeting with school officials this week to get a fuller picture of field maintenance costs. Discussion followed on what tasks would be handled by the Town and which ones are currently outsourced and would remain so.

**At 11:00 AM Selectman Trindade moved to adjourn; Selectman D’Innocenzo seconded. No discussion.  
VOTE: 5-0-0.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeanette Galliardt  
Night Board Secretary