

Swampscott Finance Committee Meeting
Wednesady, April 12, 2017
7:00P

Attending: Marzie Galazka (chair), Joan Hilario, Polly Titcomb, Jill Sullivan, Cinder McNerney, Mary Ellen Fletcher, William Jones, Gail Rosenberg, Tim Dorsey

Also Attending: Police Chief, Ron Madigan, Town Administrator Sean Fitzgerald, Rich Raymond (CIC) Peter Spellios (BOS) Ron Mendes (Town Treasurer), Leah Ryan (CIC). Michael McClung (Town Moderator)

Ron Madigan describes Police Budget. The budget reflects the staffing as it exists today. Retirements are difficult to guess – many officers stay past their eligible retirement age, others give two weeks notice and the force can be understaffed for a period.

Ms. Galazka asked about the cost/benefit analysis between lots of overtime versus additional staffing. Chief Madigan has been a proponent of hiring new patrolman – as of right now there are minimum manning requirements so if there is a sick or vacation day, there needs to be backfilling. The trade-off between overtime and new hire is approximately even from a cost perspective. Chief Madigan would rather keep overtime lower – lots of overtime can lead to injuries.

Mr. Spellios remarked that the Town Accountant and Police Chief went through the exercise of doing a comparison and the dollar savings of hiring were not compelling. The chief sees the benefit of filling that need with new, younger employees versus loading people with overtime.

Request for two motorcycles: Two officers are trained to ride the motorcycles. Historically, the town has had them throughout. They are used during warm weather months. The new machines have technological advancements that we need. They make a good appearance to the public. Officers are more accessible if they are on the motorcycles so they aid with the community policing model. Chief thinks they will be useful for the Rail Trail. They are used during the parades. They use them on different shifts because after being operated for an eight-hour shift, they are hot. The motorcycles have needed more and more repairs over the past few years.

There is an offer of a contract from the Town. The town is waiting to hear back from the union regarding that offer.

Ms. Fletcher referred to the Collins Center Report as to the number of officers who are ready for retirement. What would it do to our force in terms of staffing/timing/cost etc if everyone retired? Chief is keeping some reserve forces in

place – occasionally you can get an officer from a different police department. Chief discussed a variety of ways to mitigate the issue through various incentives.

The vacation / overtime line item is combined as there are a whole variety of reasons that overtime goes up from injury to pay increases to vacation etc.

Chief Breen of the Fire Department came to discuss his budget. Putting the budget together this year was relatively straightforward. Directions from the Town Administrator was to keep salaries level and increase other items by 1%. Hired five firefighters two years ago so there are some steps rippling through the budget. Increased building expense line to do some work that needed to be done in the fire station. Got some volunteer work from his staff. There was a \$6600 increase in protective clothing. Added \$2000 for the Lynn dispatch – they haven't had an increase in years

Chief Breen explained his request for a ladder truck. He asked for \$645,000 for the replacement of the engine. Doesn't think it will take all of that but would rather have the room = Marblehead's cost that much. The engine is 21 years old – generally the life span is 20 years. Insurance becomes more expensive. The maintenance line item shows an increase of \$15,000 to cover the expenses of keeping it another year. There are some significant maintenance expenses coming for a variety of reasons. Chief discusses a variety of ways to try to find a less expensive machine. Chief is concerned having the trucks replaced without sufficient time gaps. The ladder truck will need to be replaced within the next seven years – probably. There may be issues with the configuration of the fire station when that ladder truck needs to be replaced.

Capital Improvements Committee presented their updated budget. CIC has met with the Town Administrator and feels they need to have another meeting regarding the exact list of capital projects that they will be recommending for Town Meeting. Planning to have a better process going forward into further years.

Motion to adjourn made at 9:00 by : Gail Rosenberg
Seconded by: William Jones