

**COMBINED BOARD OF SELECTMAN AND BOARD OF FINANCE
PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING
MINUTES OF MEETING
MARCH 7, 2013**

Pursuant to the call and written notice, the Public Budget Hearing of the Board of Selectman and the Board of Finance was held on Thursday, March 7, 2013 at 7:00 pm in the Board of Education Administrative Offices, Seminar Room 300, 501 Kings Highway East, Fairfield, Connecticut.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chairman Thomas Flynn, Robert Bellitto Jr., James Brown, Christopher DeWitt, , Mary LeClerc, Robert Stone, Michael Tetreau

MEMBERS ABSENT

Ken Brachfeld, James Walsh

ALSO PRESENT

Kevin Kiley, Cristin McCarthy-Vahey, Michael Tetreau, Board of Selectmen, Town of Fairfield
Robert Mayer, Chief Fiscal Officer
Caitlin Bosse, Controller, Town of Fairfield and Clerk of the Board of Finance
Linda Gardiner, Budget Director, Town of Fairfield
Richard Felner, Chief, Fire Department, Town of Fairfield
Arthur Reid, Deputy Chief, Fire Department, Town of Fairfield
Richard Popilowski, Chairman, Fire Commission, Town of Fairfield
Gary MacNamara, Chief, Police Department, Town of Fairfield
Chris Lyddy, Deputy Chief, Police Department, Town of Fairfield
Josh Zabin, Captain, Police Department, Town of Fairfield
James Perez, Lieutenant, Police Department
Paul Miller, Animal Control Officer, Police Department, Town of Fairfield
Walter Flynn, Chairman, Police Commission, Town of Fairfield
Selma Cohen, Chairman, Human & Social Services Commission, Town of Fairfield
Terry Kiegengack, Director Human & Social Services

Chairman Flynn called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Chairman Flynn asked for a moment of silence in memory of Grace Evanko, a fourth grade student at Osborn Hill School, who passed away from cancer this week.

The budgets were reviewed as follows:

4010 Fire Chief Felner and Deputy Chief Reid presented this item to the Boards.

Chief Felner reported that the requested increase for this budget is 1.7% or \$164K. Chief Felner reported that this budget is approximately 5% of the total Town budget. Chief Felner then indicated that there are

Combined Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance

Public Budget Hearing

Minutes of Meeting March 7, 2013

no new initiatives in this budget request and this request will merely keep operations up-to-date. Chief Felner also reported that there are a few adjustments to the budget request as it appears in the budget book. Chief Felner reported that the department put 6 men in the fire academy from this current budget year resulting in a \$60K reduction for line 51065-OT Earnings-Training Relief for the FY 13-14 budget. The Chief also reported that line 58100-Education and Memberships will be reduced by \$15K resulting in a budget reduction of \$75K for the FY 13-14 budget request.

Chairman Flynn noted that, with these reductions to the proposed budget request, the requested net budget increase would be \$89K.

Deputy Chief Reid reported that there are currently four budgeted vacancy positions and, in addition to those positions, there are 4 more vacancies that would need to be filled with new hires still to be trained at the academy.

In response to a question from Mr. Kiley, Chief Felner reported that the payroll lines do not show any significant increase due to open contracts that have not yet been settled.

Chairman Flynn questioned why the new Assistant Chief positions salaries are listed with increases when the new people in those positions, replacing people who had been in those positions for some time, just be starting out and would probably be starting out at a lower rate of pay.

Chairman Flynn requested that Mrs. Gardiner research this item and report back to the Boards with revised numbers for the salaries for those positions.

In response to a question from the Boards, Chief Felner explained that the hydraulic lifts currently in service are 20 years old and are at the end of their useful life. Chief Felner also reported that the new lifts are much easier to move from station to station. Deputy Chief Reid reported that the issue with the current jacks, six in all, is that their maximum capacity is just enough for the current equipment and the new equipment is getting heavier which would require more capacity. Deputy Chief Reid also noted that the current jacks were obtained from the DPW. Deputy Chief Reid noted that it is standard policy to replace all the hydraulic jacks at one time so that all the equipment is of the same specifications for the safety of operations.

In response to a question from Mr. Kiley concerning the current balance in the overtime account for this FY , Mr. Mayer stated that it is difficult to determine at this point just what FEMA share will actually cover but those figures will be calculated very soon and he will report to the Boards regarding those figures.

Chief Felner informed the Boards that inspections etc. done by the Fire Marshal generated approximately \$57,274.50 in fees this year.

Chairman Flynn requested that Mr. Mayer report back to the Boards where that money was deposited in the current budget.

Mr. Popilowski thanked the Chief and Deputy Chief for their efforts working on the budget in order to bring it in as flat as possible. Chief Felner also thanked his staff for their diligent work on the budget.

Public Comment

None

4090 Hydrant and Water Chief Felner and Deputy Chief Reid presented this item to the Boards.

Deputy Reid explained that Aquarion Water Company gives the numbers to the Chief and they are regulated by the DPUC. Chief Felner reported that Aquarion Water Company has applied for a 15% increase so this budget reflects that request. Chief Felner stated that, if the request is denied, the amount

Combined Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance

Public Budget Hearing

Minutes of Meeting March 7, 2013

of this budget will be lower.

Public Comment

None

- 4110 Emergency Management** Chief Felner, Deputy Chief Reid and Assistant Chief Lyddy presented this item to the Boards.

Chief Felner reported that line 55300-Communications includes a request for \$34K for the Code Red System which is a reclassification from the ECC budget. Assistant Chief Lyddy explained that this cost is an annual service fee.

Public Comment

None

- 4150 Emergency Communications Center** Police Chief Gary MacNamara, Police Captain Smith and Deputy Fire Chief Arthur Reid presented this item to the Boards.

Capt. Smith reported that much of the budget increase is due to a settlement with the unions otherwise the increase would be almost flat.

In response to questions from the Boards, Mr. Mayer reported that there was a 4 year increase in one jump due to the contract settlement.

Capt. Smith reported that line 55300-Communications covers the police and fire departments together and this is for all of the hard lines for communications. Capt. Smith reported that line 55301-Comm- CMED is a new line in the budget having been moved from the not for profit area at the request of the First Selectman and Mr. Mayer (CMED stands for Coordinated Medical Emergency Dispatch). Capt. Smith reported that the amount here is set by the State on a per capita allotment.

A lengthy discussion followed concerning obtaining group discount rates for the Town with Verizon, the formation of a central area to negotiate cell phone service and costs for all Town departments and the reasons behind moving this entity from the non-profit area when other for profit entities remain with the non-profits.

Chairman Flynn requested that Mr. Mayer follow-up on these questions and report back to the boards with his findings.

Public Comment

None

- 4030 Police** Chief MacNamara, Deputy Chief Lyddy, Captain Smith and Walter Flynn, Chairman, Police Commission presented this item to the Boards.

Mr. Flynn stated that the Police Commission is mainly responsible for policy and the Commission fully supports the Chief and his staff in their work. Mr. Flynn noted that this budget request contains a request for some additional staffing, a sergeant and some officers, specifically in an attempt to provide school security and security for public buildings in light of the events that took place in Sandy Hook in December.

Chief MacNamara started his presentation by stating that, over the course of this past year, the men and women of the Fairfield Police Department, and all Town departments have been tested over and over

Combined Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance

Public Budget Hearing

Minutes of Meeting March 7, 2013

again in many different ways and their dedication and hard work in some unique situations needs to be acknowledged.

Chief MacNamara stated that last year his department came in pretty flat including the overtime account. Chief MacNamara reported that this year they wanted to put the overtime estimated at a consistent rate over time in a conscious effort to reduce some costs/expenses and this is reflected in some line items..

Chief MacNamara reported that overtime in 2010 came in at \$1.8M, 2011 at \$1.8M, 2012 at \$1.9M and 2013 was approved for \$1.5M. Chief MacNamara stated that this budget requests \$1.8M for overtime. Chief MacNamara also noted that overtime is subject to a great deal of unpredictability.

In response to a question from Mr. DeWitt concerning staffing levels, Chief MacNamara stated that the department used to have a staffing level of 108 but somehow only 107 positions were funded. The Chief stated that currently the department is operating at a staffing level of 105 and two vacancies (but actually three) and a portion of the overtime budget is used to cover the responsibilities for those vacancies.

In response to a question from Mr. Stone regarding why the school crossing guards are not in the BOE budget, Chief MacNamara said that they have always been under the police budget. Chief MacNamara stated that the only reason he can think of for having the crossing guards in the police budget is because, if a crossing guard is not able to be at his/her post, the police can dispatch someone to safely cross the students to and from school. Chief MacNamara stated that currently the crossing guards are supervised by the Special Services division under the leadership of Lt. Perez.

Chief MacNamara explained that his plans for the new officers and sergeant that are requested in this budget will allow the Police Department to address safety concerns at the town schools and public buildings that have become apparent since December 14th. Chief MacNamara stated that he would like to increase the number of officers dedicated to the schools; there used to be 5 personnel (high school resource officers, Officer Friendly and a DARE officer) but there are currently only 4 positions. Chief MacNamara stated that he would like to add a DARE officer at the Middle School level to serve as a presence in the building.

Chief MacNamara stated that school he feels safety is divided into 3 tiers:

1. existing buildings (27) security surveys to assess current conditions and future improvements
2. training of staff in the buildings
3. information sharing between Police, BOE and the staffs at the schools.

Chief MacNamara stated that he would like to model this unit after the Traffic Safety Unit and have stops at all schools during the course of the school day with the sole responsibility being to have a presence at all schools as well as having an interaction with the school community. The chief also would like to have this unit provide a presence in al public buildings as well. The Chief also noted that this will not happen overnight; there will be some lag time for hiring and training of the new officers but the future will be better because this was implemented.

Mr. Brown thanked the Chief and his staff for all of the assistance they provided for the Sandy Hook tragedy and asked the Chief if other communities are doing things to improve security within their schools. Chief MacNamara said that the response runs the gamut from nothing to doing a lot but every law enforcement entity is looking at school safety in a new way.

In response to a question from Mr. Kiley on grant monies that might be available, Chief MacNamara said that with funding the way it is currently, not much is available but his department is always looking.

Mr. Kiley asked if it might be better to take this out of the budget request and make it a special appropriation to facilitate this process by moving it along at a quicker pace. The chief said that discussion needs to take place among other bodies but he would not be averse to speeding up this process.

Combined Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance

Public Budget Hearing

Minutes of Meeting March 7, 2013

Chairman Flynn asked if overtime is being used too much or not enough; does using overtime to save money spent on benefits affect safety by staff working too many hours? Chief MacNamara stated that there are strict guidelines that are adhered to regarding how many hours an employee may work at one time so safety is not affected.

Chief MacNamara also noted that line 55400-Advertising will no longer be needed since testing will be done through a consortium so this \$3,500 can be removed from the budget request.

Public Comment

Philip Dwyer, Chairman, Board of Education

Mr. Dwyer thanked the BOF for talking with the Police Department regarding school security and asked the BOF to support this budget including the school safety expansion plans.

Pamela Iacono, Vice Chairman, Board of Education

Please support the new school safety unit proposed by the Chief of Police.

Chairman Flynn thanked all town employees for their dedication and hard work especially this past year which involved several very challenging events.

- 4050 Animal Control** Paul Miller, Animal Control Officer presented this item to the Boards. Officer Miller reported that the van replacement is sorely needed as the current van has major problems.

Public comment

None

- 6010 Health** Sands Cleary presented this item to the Boards.

Mr. Cleary stated that his budget contains a 1.50% increase due to salary and benefit costs. Mr. Cleary stated that the insurance costs have been reduced because an employee has opted to take a stipend(\$2500) in lieu of insurance coverage.

Chairman Flynn requested Mr. Mayer to research how this stipend program is managed and to research how best to incentivize it and report back to the boards.

Public comment

None

- 6050 Human & Social Services** Selma Cohen and Terry Kiegengack presented this item to the Boards.

Mrs. Cohen introduced Ms. Kiegengack as the new Director of Human & Social Services. Mrs. Cohen also noted that the budget request contains two new positions (Senior Services Director and a part time clerk) that are needed to operate our Senior Center.

Public comment

Jerry Stollman, 71 Somerset Avenue, Affordable Housing Committee

Mr. Stollman noted that the Top 10 Committee Report is interesting and informative and recommended that everyone read it. Mr. Stollman also asked the boards to support this budget.

Combined Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance

Public Budget Hearing

Minutes of Meeting March 7, 2013

Cristin McCarthy-Vahey Board of Selectmen

Ms. McCarthy-Vahey welcomed the new Director

Michael Tetreau, First Selectman

First Selectman Tetreau thanked her for all of her departments help during Hurricane Sandy.

Chairman Flynn announced that the Follow-up discussion would wait until the Board has had time to review the responses.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:25 p.m.