

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE AND BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
February 1, 2012

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Meeting Date: February 1, 2012

Called to Order: 5:30 PM

Location: 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls MA

Finance Committee Members Present: John Hanold, Michael Naughton, Andrew Killeen, Roy Rosenblatt and Lynn Reynolds

Board of Selectmen Members Present: Pat Allen, Christopher Boutwell and Mark Fairbrother

Others Present: Frank Abbondanzio (Town Administrator), Carolyn Olsen (Town Accountant), Christopher Williams (Acting Police Chief), Marsha Odle (Dispatch Supervisor)

Minutes

Postponed to next meeting

Fiscal Year 2013 Budget Discussions

Police Department

- Scope of activities – as a police department they do a little bit of everything from traffic control to sexual assault investigations. The department also responds to dog complaints, rabid animal calls and reports of horses in the road.
- Chief Williams was asked if the range for part-time officers (also called reserves) on Schedule II was adequate. Chief Williams raised a few issues including how to address issues of training and experience of reserve officers and a new wage scale for police officers for Fiscal Year 2013. The Personnel Board will review the wage scales for reserve officers and part time dispatchers and bring back a recommendation to the Finance Committee.
- The current year shows an increased expense for part time wages. There are specific shifts on the weekends for reserves, but this year reserve officers have been used to fill in for people going to the academy. Reserve officers are also currently filling shifts for the vacancy resulting from Chief Zukowski's retirement.
- Ms. Allen asked about the increase in insurance. This is not something that the department can control, and they had no advance notice of the increase. It was suggested that someone follow up with the insurance company to find out the reasons for the cost increase.
- There may be 2 people going to the academy in Fiscal Year 2013.
- Mr. Hanold asked about increases in vehicle costs, Chief Williams noted that they've already spent \$20,000 on gas alone, so they will probably go over budget in that account. They may need to increase that request. For building supplies, they'll be short this year because they had to repair the radio system. When the server blew, they also had to upgrade their software to work with the new system.
- There was some concern that the requested budget for next year might be too lean. Chief Williams and Ms. Odle will review the budget and resubmit it within a week.

- Mr. Naughton pointed out that there is money available for unforeseen costs through either a reserve fund transfer or a special town meeting appropriation.

Dispatch

- Dispatch handles all 911 calls including police, fire (except tone-outs – calls to pagers within departments), medical and accident calls.
- If Baystate Health Ambulance stops service in the area, our dispatchers would be required to be certified as Emergency Medical Dispatchers, which would be a huge liability issue given that there is only one dispatcher on duty.
- Mr. Hanold asked about staffing. Ms. Odle said overtime is an issue because a lot of per diem dispatchers have other jobs which make them unavailable to fill shifts. Those open shifts then are filled by full time dispatchers at overtime.
- There is still a problem with training people and then having them leave. In the past there was a problem with dispatchers leaving for higher paying positions. We are still on the low end for pay compared to other communities.
- New employees now have additional training mandates requiring more outside training sessions.
- Mr. Naughton asked if there is a possibility of recouping training costs if someone leaves within a certain period of time. There is not.

Update on Gill-Montague Regional School District Budget

The school district sent a preliminary assessment to the Town Treasurer. It shows a Fiscal Year budget of \$16,774,424 and a Montague assessment of \$8,027,611.

Topics not anticipated within the 48 hour posting requirement - None

List of Documents and Exhibits –

- Minutes of January 18, 2012
- Preliminary Assessment from the Gill-Montague Regional School District Treasurer
- Budget reports for Police, Dispatch and Animal Control through 2/2/12 (to show full 7 months expenditures)
- Monthly budget summaries

Next Meetings

- 6:00 PM February 8, 2012 Department of Public Works, Water Pollution Control Facility
- 6:00 PM February 15, 2012 various departments
- 6:00 PM February 22, 2012 Franklin County Tech School, Council on Aging, Parks & Recreation, Libraries

Adjourned 6:30 PM