

FINANCE COMMITTEE

MEETING, January 9, 2019

A scheduled meeting convened at 7:00 p.m. in Room 5.

Members of the Committee in attendance: Mr. Creighton, Mr. Weld, Mr. Oldeman, Mr. Pratt and Ms. Mellish. Ms. Harrison and Mr. Even were not present.

Town Administrator, Mr. Federspiel, Finance Committee Clerk, Gail Hunter, BOS Member, Ms. Driscoll, Town Accountant, Ms. Mainville, FD Interim Chief Beardsley, PD Chief Conley, Harbormaster Pike and Mr. Herendeen (Fire Department) were also in attendance.

Mr. Creighton called the Finance Committee meeting to order.

Review of Meeting Minutes: Minutes for January 2, 2019 were reviewed and will be approved at the next meeting.

Review of Public Safety – Fire Department

Chief Beardsley and Mr. Herendeen initiated the review of the Fire Department budget. Chief Beardsley stated one of the challenges of budgeting for the Fire Department are unfunded mandates. He asked rhetorically where do the funds come from? He went on to state December was a month of unexpected breakdowns citing the hydraulic system on the handicap door, SCBA refill system and apparatus issues with older equipment including the 2001 Ladder Truck (repairs recently cost \$8K) and second ambulance did not pass inspection.

Mr. Creighton asked about the previous Chief's choice of a smaller and lighter vehicle and did Chief Beardsley think that was a good choice. Chief Beardsley agreed that having one smaller vehicle made sense, particularly given the numerous long narrow drives in town. However, the Town still needs the larger Engine 1 and the ladder truck.

The Chief indicated there was a chimney fire on Summer Street last weekend and the Ladder Truck was essential in stopping the fire from spreading and resulting in the loss of the house. The Ladder Truck was also used to rescue a drone out of a tree.

Mr. Weld asked what would have happened with the chimney fire if we needed to call Gloucester to provide a ladder truck? The Chief stated it would have taken 30 minutes and if it took 30 minutes the house would have been a total loss. Call times: Beverly if coming from Beverly Farms it might take 20 minutes – Essex and Gloucester about 30 minutes or more and it depends on availability of fire fighters and equipment.

Mr. Creighton asked about the Call Fire Fighter (CFF) status: there are currently 6 CFF; is there a way to build that back? The problem, according to the Chief, is CFF come from the population of the community and this community's population is not young and flexible. The Chief believes the population of an age to join the CFF ranks have jobs and family commitments that preclude training and joining the CFF. This is an issue throughout the country not just in Manchester. Training takes 4 months 2 nights a week and all-day Sat. and Sun. and then the CFF is being called out at all hours of the day, night and weekends. We're trying to think of a way to attract new candidates.

Mr. Federspiel states that the budget before the Committee is a status quo budget with the previous year with the Floater added last year remaining in place. This will provide the Department with 3 on duty with the small number of CFF as possible additional support.

Mr. Weld moved to approve the Operating Budget for the Fire Department, Mr. Oldeman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Capital Budget includes a replacement of the first ambulance with ambulance 2 as a back-up and going out approximately 50 times a year. Current front-line ambulance will roll into ambulance 2 position.

Mr. Weld asked if there was any reason to have only one ambulance for a Town our size? If you depend on another Town or a private provider, you may end up waiting. Chief Beardsley stated in 2017 there were 565 calls and of those 565 calls 52 were handled by the second ambulance. Ms. Mellish asked what percentage of the medical emergency calls resulted in transport to the hospital. Mr. Herendeen indicated 90% to 95%.

There was some discussion regarding reimbursement costs from Insurance Companies. The full costs are not retrieved by the Department. This issue is under further study.

Cost of the new ambulance will be \$255K and will stay useful for 15 years. There was some preliminary discussion of the advantages of a larger ambulance. The Chief has discussed the issue with both sides and there is no consensus. He believes MBTS is well served with the smaller vehicle.

Mr. Weld asked if the public radio system was used by all Public Safety Departments. Mr. Federspiel replied yes, and the Capital Budget line is a 3-year project. We are starting Phase One. (Police Chief noted that a complete overhaul would likely require much higher expenditures.)

Mr. Oldeman asked about a vehicle assessment on the rolling stock. Chief Beardsley indicated there was a company that did that, but they are no longer in business.

The Committee discussed the possibility of leasing fire equipment. Chief Beardsley indicated it was a possibility and Georgetown leased a Ladder Truck. Ms. Mellish asked about an ambulance, Mr. Federspiel indicated it was possible to lease an ambulance too.

Review of Public Safety – Harbormaster

Harbormaster Pike spoke to the challenges of the past summer season and thanked the Committee for approving the Deputy position last year. He indicated having 2 boats patrolling this past summer made a significant difference. One of the focuses moving forward is coping effectively with the number of boats at Long and Black Beaches.

Harbormaster Pike stated the increased number of boats at these beaches is the result of restrictions in Marblehead and the good economy. There are more boaters in the area, and they have found Long and Black Beaches favorable mooring areas for day trips. The new boaters are inexperienced, and not knowledgeable about water safety and boating etiquette.

Mr. Creighton asked what would happen when the number of boats reaches 500. Harbormaster Pike stated the Town could build more infrastructure or limit the number of boaters in the area. The debate on limiting boaters will begin on January 16, 2019 with an open meeting at the American Legion with the Harbor Advisory Committee (HAC), Harbormaster and Police Chief.

Harbormaster Pike said one option is to install 20 environmentally friendly moorings at Long Beach – the moorings could each accommodate 20 boats and the Town would agree to define the area as no anchoring. The moorings would be free to individuals currently paying a Waterway Fee and Stickers would be available for those not paying a waterway fee. The goal would be to educate, enforce and sell a place on the Town owned moorings at Long Beach.

Mr. Weld asked the Harbormaster about leasing the area to Crocker or Manchester Marine to manage. Harbormaster Pike indicated that would be difficult because there are issues with law enforcement and property owner's rights. The enforcement piece is challenging – the Harbormaster is not law enforcement, although the Harbormaster has some abilities under Chapter 90B to stop and observe boaters. The Harbormaster's role is to handle moorings, infrastructure issues like dredging, floats and transient visitors. Mr. Weld stated he thought the challenges were just beginning.

Harbormaster Pike believes the Harbormaster needs 2 boats. A State grant pays 75% of the costs for the pump out boat. The boat is occasionally also used for patrolling, but the funding requirement is such that it use for patrols must be kept to a minimum. At some point the Town will need a Police boat for enforcement.

Mr. Creighton asked if the Town's liability insurance is appropriate to cover problems that may arise around Long Beach. Mr. Federspiel stated there had been concerns regarding mooring coverage and the Town's liability and coverage is currently being reviewed with leads on additional carriers for this specific need. Mr. Pratt asked about current coverage. Mr. Federspiel indicated the Town carried a \$1M, \$3M policy with an umbrella policy for \$5M for each incident. Mr. Pratt suggested increasing the umbrella policy to \$10M.

Mr. Weld stated there were no boats in the Capital Budget. Mr. Federspiel indicated there was \$150K in the 2022 budget.

The meeting on January 16, 2019 at the American Legion with HAC, Police Dept. and Harbormaster is an initial step in addressing the Long and Black Beach issue. Harbormaster Pike stated the Harbor Department is 6 years old and the Department is light on enforcement. MBTS is a medium size harbor with 850 boats moored compared to Marblehead which has 3,000 boats moored. The weekend transient boaters are creating the most significant challenge for the Department.

Mr. Weld stated the current budget continues with the deputy – he asked if the Town should add a police officer. Mr. Oldeman asked if the Town should capitalize an additional boat for the summer of 2019. Harbormaster Pike stated things have changed and the community has come a long way in 6 years – 6 years ago the additional patrolling would not have been welcome. He suggested a “safe boat” with 2 police officers every Saturday and Sunday for 8 hours each day indicating that additional coverage would make a difference.

Chief Conley stated the Town has relationships with other Harbormasters and the Coast Guard. He commented that the mass casualty event on Labor Day was supported by Beverly, while the Salem Harbormaster was near the event and was the first to call the incident into Harbormaster Pike. The Town relies on mutual aid and provides mutual aid – the Town enjoys good relationships with other communities.

Mr. Creighton asked about the docks for Reed Park. Harbormaster Pike indicated the contractor has been hired and the materials are about to be ordered. Construction of the docks will take place in the garage at the Water Treatment Plant. 250 Feet of dock will run parallel to the tracks with a capacity to hold an estimated 13 boats. The docks are being built to address the issue of transient boaters taking up resident in-town docks.

The new docks will generate revenue for the Town – fees have yet to be set, however once the Long and Black Beach issues are resolved the HAC will focus on fees for Reed Park Docks. When asked how the fees will be collected Harbormaster Pike stated there are several possibilities: SCORE students, Retired residents working for a tax abatement or swipe a tablet and eventually a parking kiosk. Additionally, Harbormaster Pike hopes to have the Harbormaster office at the

Reed Park site. Mr. Weld indicated CPC has received a \$140K funding request for the Harbormaster's office and restrooms.

Ms. Mellish moved to approve the Harbormaster Operating Budget, Mr. Oldeman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Review of Public Safety – Police Department

Chief Conley stated the 2 primary areas in his budget to be addressed were the Harbor and School Resource Officer (SRO). The Harbor has already been fully addressed. The SRO will be new to MERSD and a new State Law provides for School Departments to be part of any SRO hiring. Mr. Pratt asked if MERSD was late to the table for hiring an SRO? Chief Conley stated the Towns likely were behind, but the School Committee and Superintendent are on board with the need. The SRO would likely work from the MS/HS with time spent in the Elementary Schools. The role of the SRO according to Chief Conley is primarily to develop relationships with the students. He does not see an SRO inspecting lockers or being intrusive in any way.

Chief Conley stated additional costs in his budget were from hiring 2 new police officers who have completed their training and have been sworn in. Fortunately for the Town both new officers are women – the first women officers in the Department. Chief Conley believes the Department is solidly staffed with officers who have an association with the Town.

Ms. Mellish asked about the increase in patrolmen's salary line. Chief Conley stated all salaries are established within the collective bargaining agreement and the increase is likely due to longevity and educational incentives. Mr. Pratt asked how the Department matched up salary wise with other Departments. The Chief indicated he felt we were in a favorable position salary wise, stating one officer who left the Department to go to Haverhill took a pay cut to work in a bigger department.

There was some discussion regarding the mission of the Manchester Police Department and Chief Conley stated some of the biggest challenges were with fraud against elderly residents which are being investigated. Additionally, the Department is working to address areas of code violations around hoarding. As always "call ins" which are unique to a small town occur regularly – this past week a resident called in to ask why the lights on the Christmas Tree were not on. Working with other Cape Ann communities the Department is coordinating with a mental health councilor to address some issues outside the Departments role.

Mr. Weld asked about the pending matter with an injured patrol officer. The matter is still pending, the Department continues to carry his salary and benefits in the operating budget. Mr. Weld stated the Chief deserves credit for working with one less officer consistent with the

recommendation of the Finance Committee last year. Chief Conley stated unlike Call Fire Fighters it is easier to attract Reserve Officers in the Police Department.

Ms. Mellish noted there was a reduction in parking enforcement. Chief Conley indicated that is where he cuts because it has the least impact on his mission. He noted that in the course of the year parking enforcement is usually put back for the summer. The Committee had previous discussions about the maximum fine of \$25 per ticket and to change the fine required Legislative approval. However, there is the possibility of issuing a ticket every 2 hours – increasing the fine 4-fold if a vehicle was parked illegally for 8 hours. Additional discussion focused on Resident Only parking and the lack of enforcement around Resident Only areas. This area has been addressed by the Department with a new Open and Transparent Policy. However, this does not stop resident complaints.

Ms. Mellish asked about the Radio Technician line item. Chief Conley indicated he had folded that line item into the MA 911 grant he received for \$14K. The new MA 911 program accepts calls from wireless phones within the Town limits and to the exclusion of Route 128. The Chief is impressed with the MA 911 program; when first instituted there were some issues with Dispatch receiving calls from Beverly, but the program was very responsive, and any issues were addressed quickly, the program is working well. There are built in redundancies in the event of a major catastrophe resulting in increased 911 calls – the calls will all be handled.

Ms. Mellish asked about the reduction in part-time dispatch line item. The Chief replied the line item had been high for the past few years due to Family Leave – he does not anticipate any Family Leave requests this year.

Mr. Weld moved to approve the Police Department Operating budget, Mr. Oldeman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chief Conley moved onto the Capital Budget. He is requesting a new cruiser and additional support for radio transmission. Radio transmission is a problem due to old equipment which results in dead zones throughout Town. This line item also appears in the Fire Department budget and the coming Fiscal Year is Phase One of process to improve radio transmissions. Mr. Federspiel anticipates a 3-year process to address and solve the problems.

Ms. Mellish asked about the motor cycle. According to Chief Conley the Town has always had a motor cycle and needs a motor cycle. However, the motor cycle was not listed as a separate line item – that changes with this budget. The Town is in the second year of a 5-year lease.

Animal Control Officer is shared with Hamilton. Hamilton has not finalized costs. Approval of that budget will wait for Hamilton's final figures.

Ms. Driscoll stated that prior to this evening's meeting Chief Conley received the news that the Department had received Accreditation from the State. A major accomplishment for the Department and the Town. The Chief explained the 2 levels of certification and accreditation a lengthy process requiring extensive policy writing. The Department became certified last year and accredited this year. Accreditation is for 3-years.

The Committee extended its congratulation to the Chief and to the Department for their work on behalf of the Town.

Mr. Creighton asked about Building Department. Mr. Federspiel would like to move the Building Department to Land Use section of the budget and Building Department will be addressed at a later meeting.

Emergency Management

Ms. Mellish moved to approve the Emergency Management Budget, Mr. Oldeman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Creighton moved to adjourn the meeting, Ms. Mellish seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Meetings Scheduled for Finance Committee:

January 16, 2019 – meeting with MERSD

January 23, 2019 – with BOS

January 29, 2019 – MERSD Final Budget Hearing

January 30, 2019 – wit BOS to discuss tentative solutions to areas of concern

Meeting Materials:

2020 Preliminary Budget

Finance Committee Minutes January 2, 2019