

**West Newbury Finance Committee
Minutes of the Meeting
Monday, February 12, 2018**

Finance Committee Meeting

Vice Chairman Beaudoin called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. in the second floor hearing room of the 1910 Building with Mr. Kelly, Mr. Durey, and Mr. Ellis in attendance.

There being no public comment, the Committee considered its agenda.

Transfers: none

Public Safety — Chief Arthur Reed

Police Department

Chief Reed reported the Police Department is at full staff with ten full time officers and ten reservists. He stated, in his tenure he has filled two necessary positions; a midnight to seven and a School Resource Officer (SRO). The chief hired five part time reservists in the fall. Unfortunately, two have since moved on. The three remaining officers are in training. Mr. Kelly expressed concern regarding the commitments of new hire. Chief Reed replied, at the time of hire, he does require a two-year commitment to West Newbury. He added training could amount to a cost of \$10,000.00. Candidates sign a contract to commit. Officers resigning before the two-year commitment are required to pay back training costs. One of the departing officers has paid their training costs and moved on.

Mr. Kelly inquired if there was a balance in the sense are three part timers equivalent to one full time officer. Chief Reed responded the situation is more complex. Each new recruit trains with current officers for 400 hours. The training takes time away from officers performing their regular duties. Mr. Durey asked if the ratio of Full timers to Part timers is similar to other local police departments. Chief Reed replied in the affirmative.

Chief Reed remarked both Police and Dispatch operate 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. Currently, his sergeant spends several hours a week on the phone to schedule part time personnel to cover shifts. Chief Reed added there are only four Full Time employees in Dispatch. It is impossible for them, alone, to cover 24/7.

Acting Chairman Beaudoin stated, even with the addition of two new officers, overtime continues to increase. Chief Reed suggested overtime has never been totally funded resulting in the chief to request transfers towards the end of a fiscal year. Mr. Kelly agreed. However, he noted a 30% increase in the total police budget from FY16 to the present. He questioned Chief Reed if he sees an eventual plateau in police expenses, not counting contracts and increased salaries. Chief Reed stated the amount of overtime fluxes with the ability or lack of for reservists to the cover open shifts.

Chief Reed explained there are several factors responsible for overtime. Among them are illness, training, and Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). The department currently has two officers on FMLA. The chief also stated contracts every three years influences the budget.

Chief Reed remarked West Newbury Police officers were behind in their training when he joined the force. He hopes that officers will all be up to date in their training within the year.

SRO

The addition of the SRO helps to steer the West Newbury Police to a more community-based force. When school is not in session, the SRO is available to fill vacant shifts at the Police Department. If the SRO were ill, Chief Reed, a former SRO, would substitute. Thereby preventing the need for overtime.

Mr. Durey inquired if there were a contingency if the Pentucket School system does not contribute to the SRO's salary. Chief Reed stated the School Superintendent is committed to contributing funds to maintain the SRO. However, if the school does not contribute, he reported the Board of Selectmen would not support fully funding the SRO.

Through his own experience, Chief Reed stated it takes approximately three years to show the value of a SRO. Acting Chairman Beaudoin asked the chief to compare the value of a full time officer to that of a SRO. Chief Reed replied there is no clear answer. Currently, there are two officers covering most shifts. However, it is important for the SRO to work with the schoolchildren. It is difficult to place a dollar value on that relationship.

Mr. Ellis asked if there are some tangible statistics to demonstrate the positive presence of the SRO. Chief Reed replied the SRO fills many positions including teacher, mentor, coach, and community liaison. He added it takes time to develop trust of both students and their parents. It is also difficult to show the very presence of the SRO may prevent a young person from making a poor decision. Chief Reed reiterated his own experiences suggest three years are necessary to show the worth of the SRO.

Firearm Purchases

Acting Chairman Beaudoin inquired if the department had looked into a buyback program in order to prevent guns from going back into circulation. Chief Reed replied the problem with guns is two-fold. Firstly, most of the guns are 17 years old, twice the life span of a typical serviceable firearm. Secondly, individuals own most of the guns used by the police. The chief stated firearms should be the property of the department. Mr. Ellis remarked the chief is attempting to streamline the department and set everything in order. The goal is for West Newbury Police to become a nationally recognized agency, which offers excellent training opportunities. Additionally, adequate equipment, proper staffing, and fair treatment is a positive approach for long-term commitments of police officers.

Mr. Ellis inquired if individuals on other police forces owned their guns. Chief Reed stated to his knowledge, the only police force allowing personal firearms on duty is the New York City Police Force. Chief Reed added he would like to see the police own everything, including uniforms and gun belt. Eventually, the police would develop an inventory to equip incoming officers.

Mr. Ellis questioned Chief Reed if there is a warranty for maintenance of the guns. Chief Reed stated the company does provide a warranty. However, the officers perform routine maintenance on their guns. The individuals do not totally dismantle the firearm. Total dismantlement of a gun, Chief

Reed stated requires the expertise of a gun armorer. The individual may be an employee of the company or a trained officer on the force.

Miscellaneous Police

Acting Chairman Beaudoin questioned the negative turn back in FY17 for equipment. Chief Reed replied purchased computers and Tasers.

Mr. Ellis inquired if the chief foresees any retirements. Chief Reed replied not in the near future.

Police Vehicle Replacement Schedule

Both Mr. Ellis and Acting Chairman Beaudoin recognized police vehicles have shorter life spans than typical family vehicles.

Chief Reed presented his proposed vehicle replacement plan. The chief suggested, with 85,000 miles on the odometer, it is time to replace a patrol car. At this point, major repairs will be necessary and the resale value will decrease. Chief Reed cited an example. One of the patrol vehicles scheduled for replacement has 101,000 miles on the odometer. The idle meter registers 4,425 hours. Each hour of idle time represents 33 miles of driving. The combined wear translates to 247,025 miles.

The second car scheduled for replacement is the unmarked chief's car. The car is ten years old with 208,000 miles on the odometer. Unlike the patrol car, the idle meter registers only 524 hours.

Acting Chairman inquired if the chief had employed a similar schedule previously. Chief Reed replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Durey asked Chief Reed to describe the revolving police vehicle fund. Chief Reed stated when contractors request police details; the department charges companies ten dollars an hour. The revolving fund receives the accumulated monies. Additionally, earnings from the sale of surplus vehicles go to the revolving fund. At the time of purchasing a new vehicle, the entire contents of the fund defray the cost of the vehicle.

Mr. Durey remarked there was over \$16,000.00 turn back for vehicle maintenance in FY17. He added when reviewing funds used to date, it appears there will be a turn back in FY18. Chief Reed replied a large portion of the requested funds for vehicle maintenance is devoted to fuel consumption. Gasoline prices fluctuate and therefore the chief bases requests on possible elevated costs. Mr. Ellis inquired if the Police Department is under contract with a particular gas station. Chief Reed replied there is no contract but the police department pays no taxes thereby reducing the cost per gallon.

Dispatch

Acting Chairman Beaudoin remarked the use of regional staffing was unsuccessful. Chief Reed agreed but he has experienced positive results with a tri-town regional dispatch. An arrangement with Merrimac and Groveland to form a regional dispatch would be ideal. The contract for the four full time dispatchers is expiring and therefore there are no firm numbers for FY19. Currently, there are at least two shifts open per week. Chief Reed is requesting a $\frac{3}{4}$ person to cover the two shifts

plus one more per week. He noted an individual working 20 hours a week is entitled to some benefits.

Chief Reed stated dispatchers training encompasses 600 hours, in which they receive 911 training. On duty, the officers view 27 screens in an eight-hour period. The chief remarked some part time dispatchers have 20 years but may only cover two to three shifts a year. Acting Chairman Beaudoin queried if five full time and five part time dispatchers is ideal. Chief Reed suggested the number of part timers is not as relevant as their availability is. Additionally, all dispatchers, including part timers, are required to undergo annual training. Refresher training costs per individual is approximately \$1,000.00.

FinCom members expressed similar concerns they stated with the police department. Will the significant increase of the budget reach a plateau, excluding contract negotiations? Mr. Durey inquired if the addition of the $\frac{3}{4}$ person allow dispatch to rely less on reservists. Chief Reed replied scheduling should be sufficient with the addition of the $\frac{3}{4}$ person.

Mr. Kelly inquired if a regional dispatch were established, what the ideal staff level would be. Chief Reed replied six full time dispatchers and four or five part timers. The chief stated towns would alternate shifts. However, regardless of what town were in charge of dispatch, there would be one person on duty in each town for all three shifts. Acting Chairman Beaudoin stated the coordination of three towns would be much easier than dealing with several police chiefs in a larger regional arrangement.

Mr. Kelly inquired the amount of staffing needed for a tri-town regional dispatch. Chief Reed envisions six full time dispatchers and four to five part timers. The towns would alternate covering shifts. However, each town would need to employ one person to staff the office at all times. The larger regional dispatch base is in Middleton. Chief Reed explained at one point they were experiencing software issues. Amesbury recently opted out.

Prior Police Monies Update

Chief Reed reported there are some remaining funds from a 2015 Warrant to improve console in the public safety building. Chief Reed proposes transferring the funds to purchase cameras and monitors for the Public Safety Building. There is also need of repairs in the jail. Joining the meeting, Mr. Gould stated a reworded request is now Special Town Meeting Article 6. *Mr. Gould will forward the request to FinCom members.*

Fire Department — Chief Michael Dwyer, Deputy Chief David Evans, and Fire Engineer Benjamin Jennell

Mr. Durey advised FinCom members the three articles are in the FinCom Dropbox:

- Firefighter Protective Gear
- New Tanker Grant Match
- Communications Phone Pole Transfer

Fire Department Budget Discussion

Chief Dwyer commented, in addition to the three Articles, there are increases in communications (equipment costs) and expenses (increase in license fees). Chief Dwyer stated payment of the communications repeater at the Page School was in 2016 and therefore there is no capital outlay in

the current budget. The chief also noted increase of fire protection fees is an effect of the increase in water fees.

Chief Dwyer noted a new pumper truck is in the capital budget this fiscal year. Additionally, replacement of the 1993 Ford rescue vehicle is in the capital budget for FY19. The Fire Department plans to hold off its replacement for another year. At the same time, the plan is to downsize the vehicle. It may be possible to utilize a surplus forestry vehicle and outfit it with current equipment.

Deputy Chief Evans brought one of the FY18 purchased self-contained breathing apparatus to show FinCom members. The firefighters reported due to the large quantity, the purchase price was below the anticipated cost.

Communications Update

There is a three-phase communication update plan in place. Phase 1, adding a Communications Repeater at the Page School, is complete. Installation of the repeater alleviated some dead spots in town. Police, Fire, and Department of Public Works (DPW) communications all benefit. Handheld devices also experienced improved clarity. Previously West Newbury shared a frequency with Methuen. West Newbury is now on a separate frequency. Phase-two will coincide with building of the new water tower. A rack built into the new water tower will support the second repeater. Phase-three will address the valley near Pentucket and will be the most costly at over \$1M.

Fire Department Article Requests

Municipal Fire Alarm Service-Utility Pole Transfer Maintenance - \$31,000.00

Chief Dwyer explained Verizon and National Grid replaced several utility poles on Main Street. Utilities cannot remove old poles until West Newbury transfers communications equipment is to the new poles. Chief Dwyer stated the department received one quote of \$19,000.00. Some of the equipment needs replacement. Additionally, some unused water department equipment remains on the older poles. Mr. Goud suggested leaving the requested amount as is. A motion can alter the amount. Mr. Gould stated Verizon completed the project in conjunction with the paving project.

Firefighting Personal Protective Gear - \$115,000.00

Chief Dwyer stated the request comes from the fact current protective equipment is ten years old. Deputy Chief Dwyer brought his own gear to illustrate several repairs to the gear. Manufacturers will repair gear. When new, protective gear has a rating of protection of 800° F. Protection decreases with age. After ten years, manufacturers will not repair equipment. West Newbury Fire Department consists of 35 members.

Chief Dwyer stated the Fire Department is equipped with a specialized washing machine. Equipment must be air-dried. Mr. Ellis inquired if gear is out for repair and there is a fire, what are the options for a firefighter. Deputy chief Evans replied he would borrow someone else's gear. He noted there are approximately 15 active firefighters and others who are available at limited times. Fire Department stated they have been satisfied with the manufacturer of their current gear. However, they will ask for demonstrations from three manufacturers. Chief Dwyer reported prices are competitive. Chief Dwyer reported the original plan was to purchase half of the gear this year and half-next year. However, if there were a discount buying in bulk, it would be worth purchasing gear all at once. The department is divided between an A team who responds to most fires and the B

team who responds to some fires. The A team would receive upgraded gear. Chief Dwyer stated the equipment is fitted for individual firefighters. The gear is currently in the capital plan for both the current and next year. It is the hope of the Fire Department to move the cost of Protective fire gear to the omnibus budget. Chief Dwyer plans to meet with FinCom after the budget season to discuss this option. Mr. Durey inquired who owns the equipment. Both Chief Dwyer and Deputy Chief Evans replied gear is town-owned but is fitted to individuals. Deputy Chief Evans added some departments have two sets of gear for each firefighter.

Federal Emergency Assistance Agency (FEMA) — Assistance to Vehicle Grant – Cost Share

The Fire Department is applying for a vehicle grant through the 2017 FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant – Vehicle Replacement Program. The requested funds will be used to cover the 5% cost share from the grant. The grant is to replace the 1984 tanker truck. A replacement is in the capital budget for FY2022. The current vehicle is in good shape. However, it is equipped with old safety systems including lack of air bags and no shoulder seat belts. The tanker is an important part of the Fire Department for the town. This is particularly true in areas relying on well water only. Much of the current equipment on the truck is transferrable.

Acting Chairman Beaudoin inquired about the possibility of the town receiving the grant. Chief Dwyer stated applications for the grant are competitive. Therefore, he is asking for a two or three year sunset clause. If the first application fails, they will reapply next year. Mr. Durey inquired if they should extend the sunset to four years since the tanker is in the capital budget for 2022. Chief Dwyer stated he is hoping the safety issues will assist West Newbury to receive the grant.

Also in the capital budget is replacement of the Zodiac Rescue Boat. Fire Engineer Jennell has located a surplus boat (no cost) that is currently undergoing testing. If the boat passes inspection, the town will save \$30,000.00 for its replacement.

FinCom Discussion of the Fire and Police Budget

Mr. Kelly expressed some concern regarding the increasing Public Safety Budget. Acting Chairman Beaudoin stated the budget is comparable to town of similar size.

Mr. Durey stated the Pentucket Superintendent said Pentucket School System would financially support a portion of the SRO budget. Mr. Kelly added the presence of the SRO changes the community philosophy of Police Work. The SRO builds a trust relationship with students, which continues as they mature. Additionally, Mr. Kelly stated there are more individuals congregated at the school than any other part of town. The SRO is already on the scene.

Following the vehicle replacement schedule, FinCom members are hopeful maintenance costs will decrease.

FinCom members discussed Public Safety increases: 15% for dispatch and 20% for police. Acting Chairman Beaudoin reiterated the budget is comparable to other town of similar size. Mr. Kelly stated he would like to review a police log especially for the overnight shift. He also requested, in order to educate the committee, to ask the SRO to speak about his daily schedule.

Mr. Durey stated he would relocate all of the Articles to on place in the Dropbox. He reported the BOS are reviewing fifteen in total. Three are citizen petitions regarding the solar overlay.

Tentative Agenda for Tuesday, February 20, 2018

- Meet with the Planning Board at 6:30 pm
- Board of Health
- Conservation Commission
- Review and approve draft minutes from February 5, 2018 and February 12, 2018
- Review transfer requests

Upcoming Meetings

Tuesday, February 20, 2018: 6:30 pm

- Planning Board

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.
Respectfully submitted,

Elisa Grammer
Secretary Emerita

Meeting materials:

Draft minutes February 5, 2018

FY19 Police Budget

West Newbury Police Proposal to replace current department issue side arms

West Newbury Police Proposed Fleet Replacement Schedule

FY19 Fire Department Budget

Fire Department Articles

- Transfer of utilities from old telephone poles to new replacement poles
- Protective Fire Gear Replacement
- Request for 5% match on tanker replacement