

Swampscott Finance Committee  
April 10 2018

Attending: Marzie Galazka (Chair), Mary Ellen Fletcher, Joan Hilario, William Jones, Jill Sullivan, Cinder McNerney. Polly Titcomb

Not Present: Tim Dorsey, Gail Rosenberg

Also Attending: Kevin Breen (Fire Chief), Ron Madigan (Police Chief), Ron Mendes (ATA)

Chief Breen discussed the Fire Department budget. He described how he and the town administrator worked on a zero based budget this year by looking at employee costs associated with the CBA, vendor expenses, and five years of expense history. There is an increase in the overtime budget due to zeroing out the sick time and injury leave lines and adding them to overtime. Mr. Jones wondered whether the chief feels comfortable with building maintenance moving to the facility maintenance department. The chief expressed cautious optimism.

Ms. Hilario asked if the chief is responsible for emergency management. He indicates that we are seeing some damage from storms and they are waiting to see what support we might get from the federal government to compensate for the damages. Chief indicates that the Emergency Operations Center is almost completed at the Police Station. There are unexpended capital improvement funds available to complete this EOC. They are awaiting the selection of a new vendor to help complete the project. Chief reports that FEMA spent some time here documenting the damage to the sea walls. Mr. Mendes indicated that there have been internal conversations about using some of the unexpended capital funds (in excess of \$130k) to fund an engineering study to determine the cost of repairing the sea walls. Ms. McNerney wonders why we don't simply fix it using debt financing instead of funding a study.

The fire chief explained his capital requests for fiscal '19. Chief has applied for the fourth time for a grant to cover the SCBA replacement – the expense is \$204,933. He is cautiously optimistic that we will get the grant. He is also looking into a lease/purchase option. The fire station design study request is \$52,000. The program of the building is from 1960. It predates female firefighters, fire prevention, modern turnout gear, etc. He feels the building needs to be upgraded to reflect modern firefighting practices. In order to plan for the building's replacement, there needs to be a study done. The third project is the fire department apron. Ms. Titcomb asked about the protective clothing line and the vehicle repair number. The chief explained that he has three additional sets of protective clothing to buy this year for new firefighters and that last year there was some catastrophic breakdowns in the vehicles that needed to be repaired.

Chief Madigan described the same zero-based budgeting approach as well as the maintenance consolidation. He then went through his budget. One big change is that the overtime budget has been split into five separate line items that indicate the types of overtime that occur.

The chief went through the items he presented to the Capital Improvements Committee. These are \$35K for a Use of Force Simulator and \$80K for two cruisers. Chief explained that he determines when he needs to replace a cruiser based on mileage. This year one cruiser was damaged in the winter storm. This loss was covered by insurance. The training simulator is to teach the officers about use of force. Chief explains that incidents involving the use of force have come more to the fore in recent years and he feels that his officers need training on these kinds of scenarios. Mr. Jones asked if this simulator would replace the twice a year live fire training – the chief indicated that it would not. Ms. Titcomb asked if there was another way to get training on a simulator. The chief indicated that the overtime costs of sending the officers to do this training would not compensate for the piece of equipment. In addition, this simulator offers far more scenarios. This would allow the officers to be trained while they are on duty. Ms. Fletcher asked if other communities have it and what are the results? The chief was unaware of any. He indicated we could possibly work with Marblehead to share the cost.

Ms. Fletcher questioned the positioning of the assistant harbormasters' budget being inside the police budget. She feels that this will have negative impacts on the overtime budgets and on the financial situation of the town.

Motion to adjourn: Fletcher/McNerney 7-0