

The Wilbraham Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wilbraham Fire Department
February 6, 2017
7:00 p.m.

Present: Dan Miles, Nancy Piccin, Carolyn Brennan, Marc Ducey, Todd Luzi, Anna Levine

Absent: Tim Murphy, Mike Mannix, Kevin Murray

Also present: Chief Roger Tucker, Police; Chief David Bourcier, Fire; Nancy Johnson, Town Accountant

I. **Open Forum:** Meeting next week with the school committee on February 15th. The Finance Committee will meet again on February 22, 2017. Dan is asking the committee to try to make the meetings as it is important to make quorum. Some discussion followed to determine where we should hold the meeting on February 15. Marc talked to Beth about what the Finance Committee is hoping to learn about the school's budget at next week's meeting.

II. **FY2018 Budget – Police Department – Chief Tucker**

Chief Tucker added the allowed 1% increases of expenses to the Equipment Maintenance Contract line, as new contracts with radio services have been added. Last year the Police Department bought one less cruiser in order to be able to hire new patrolmen. This year Chief added that cruiser back into the budget, to purchase a total of 3 in FY2018. Another request is for \$4000 (yearly) for an automated scheduling system. This would highly and effectively streamline the scheduling system (including regular shifts, vacations, sick time personal time, etc) relieving an officer of 2-3 hours of work per day that they could then spend performing actual police functions. Currently \$32,760 worth of man power hours are used on scheduling. This \$4000 system would significantly reduce the man power needed for scheduling. Tucker discussed his concern for the cleaning service for the police station. If the cleaning doesn't improve for the new station, Chief Tucker feels a problem will develop in short order.

FY2018 Budget – Fire Department – Chief Bourcier

Chief Bourcier tried to keep his expenses under the 1% increase over last year. The Rental Equipment costs went up due to a new 5 year lease, with maintenance, of a copier. The cost is \$4900/year, currently that line only has \$3100 budgeted. Also the Uniforms line may be under funded as the cost for uniforms and equipment has been rising. There is a state requirement for uniforms/equipment to be turned in and replaced after these uniforms/equipment have been used for 10 years. Chief feels this line needs to be increased by \$500. Cleaning the gear is an expensive requirement as well. Chief is keeping an eye on the overtime budget, but right now it is looking pretty good. He wants to do "real time studies" on live calls and multiple calls, and use the data collected this year to better utilize next year's budget. Regarding overtime, currently two privates and 1 officer can be out on the same shift at the same time. This, at times, can put a heavy burden on the overtime budget. Dan asked if the contract could be changed regarding how many firefighters can be out in one shift. Chief said it would be very difficult to get that changed in the union contract. He explained that each 24 hour shift consists of 1 captain and 4 privates, covering 2 fire stations. So if someone is on vacation or sick, the spot needs to be filled, using over time. Also, when they have back-to-back-to-back calls, they do call other towns for help (They have a "Mutual Aid Agreement" with other towns). If they get a medical call, two people respond with an ambulance, and one with a truck. They are able to handle two calls simultaneously, but it's when they get that third call that they need help from the outside. Last month they used outside help 8 times to do a transport, which is lost revenue for the town. It's all about service delivery and providing proper service to the community,

because people's lives are at stake with emergency services. It's a balancing act, explained Chief, he is mindful of both the budget and the quality service the Fire Department needs to provide to the community.

Chief is asking for a Captain of EMS & Training. This position's role is currently being filled by two firefighters; a Fire Training Officer that gets a certain percentage of his base pay and an EMS coordinator. The request is to merge these two positions into one full-time position. It will give better oversight. There are many state regulatory procedures and protocol that must be met/followed/maintained and this position will have primary responsibility in that respect. They would also maintain the inventory of narcotics. The biggest cost savings with this new position will be the cost of training. The Town's EMS personnel have to test out every two years to get recertified. They go to Springfield College for training, and it costs money for the training and in overtime pay. If this new position is created, money will be saved as the training can be done in-house and only pay the people overtime pay, with no extra cost in training. The new position can do the monthly training in firefighting skills, as well. They just were in negotiating with the union, and they negotiated this position with the union. Also this Captain can go out on calls when they run into those times when there are back-to-back-back calls. This will decrease the number of times when Wilbraham has to call in mutual aid help. Chief provided a handout that showed the potential savings in training if this position was created. The potential savings amounts to \$11,338 in training. Also, there will be a \$4,500 in salary savings of the ancillary Fire position currently being paid, but no longer needed if the Captain is hired. The overall cost of a Captain is approximately \$102,696. Since the majority of the work load for this position is from EMS, Ambulance will pay \$70,000 in salary for this position. Therefore, approximately \$28,164 will be needed from the general fund if this position is approved. The incentive for Firefighters was not included in the total cost of this position; this incentive could be nothing up to as much as \$6,500, based on the employee's level of education. This position would be part of the mutual aid agreement to other towns, as Wilbraham will also use other Town's instructors. This will save money for all towns that are part of the mutual aid agreement.

The new Ladder Truck will be purchased in FY2018, from the capital budget. The truck will cost close to \$900,000. The cost of the truck will be supplemented \$300,000 from the Ambulance account. There is approximately \$700,000 currently in the Ambulance account. The remaining \$600,000 will be borrowed. This new truck will replace the two oldest vehicles in the fleet, a pumper truck and a ladder truck. The cost to maintain these trucks are becoming cost prohibitive. They will get \$15,000 trading in those two vehicles. This new truck serves two roles during an emergency, and is much more useful than either of the trucks it is replacing. The maintenance budget will be cut in half because they will be maintaining one truck instead of two. Wilbraham Monson Academy is donating \$25,000 towards the purchase of the truck. WMA understands it is important to help the town protect the school's buildings.

Prepare for meeting with HWRSD on Wed. February 15, 2017: The school has already been given a preliminary number. The town is losing more students which will result in less Chapter 70 aid. The Finance Committee would like to be informed of the impact if the amount of money received from the town to the school is not equal to the amount requested. The finance committee further discussed what questions they would like to ask the school in order to be able to have a complete understanding of the school's challenges and to determine the final amount to give the school for FY2018.

Carolyn informed the Finance Committee about the spring workshop of the Association of Town Finance Committees being held on May 10th, 2017. Open Meeting Law and Capital Planning will be discussed. The workshop will take place in Amherst.

III. **Vote Minutes:** None voted

Debbie Brennan
Staff Accountant