

IN BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1981

Present: Chairman Anne W. Donald, William J. Cossart, and John E. Murray

The statutory requirements as to notice having been complied with, the special meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. in the Loring Parsonage by Chairman Donald.

Fire Department Budget

Present: Fire Chief Josiah F. Frost and Finance Committee Liaison William Maurhoff.

The Board reviewed the FY83 Fire Department budget prepared by Chief Frost, which contained increases above last year's budget totalling \$70,650 and including \$40,000 for four civilian dispatchers and \$20,250 for an Acting Assistant Fire Chief for a period of nine months.

Chief Frost recommended the appointment of an Acting Assistant Chief to facilitate a smooth transition when he retires; this would allow the new chief to have prepared the first budget under which he would have to work. Selectman Murray suggested that, before any such action is taken, consideration should be given to the possibility of one administrative department head controlling both Police and Fire departments, since the Police Chief may also be retiring soon.

Selectman Murray also questioned whether there was enough money in the fuel and overtime accounts.

It was agreed that Mr. Maurhoff would relay the Selectmen's request that the Finance Committee address the subject of fuel and utilities for all budgets, with the idea that budgets would be adjusted at a later date concerning these items.

Chairman Donald noted with concern that adherence to level funding (as requested by the Finance Committee) means that the service life extension program will suffer.

Richard E. Thompson, Executive Secretary, informed the Board that the Finance Committee is asking departments to report to them their priorities and needs, along with the budgets, referencing Finance Committee Liaison David Wallace's letter of December 10.

Concerning the requested addition of civilian dispatchers, Chief Frost explained that one would be assigned to each group, working an eight-hour shift, and he estimated a need for \$97,000 more in the Overtime account to cover the projected hours of the dispatchers if they are eliminated.

Responding to the Board's question, Chief Frost stated that approximately \$18,000 would be needed for buy-backs for three anticipated retirements.

The Executive Secretary recommended that the Board support a budget which maintains current levels of funding and personnel, with the exception of a 7% increase in Overtime over this year's (FY82) \$42,610 budget and an increase of \$18,000 for retirement buy-backs.

Chief Frost stated that to follow the above recommendation would probably mean closing Station 3 fifty percent of the time (it is now closed thirty-three percent); if two dispatchers were added, Station 3 could be left open. He further stressed that the purpose of hiring dispatchers was to keep the overtime low and maintain the level of service, and that even considering the benefit cost for new men there would be an overall savings because of the lower hourly rates.

Chief Frost informed the Board that the budget he had prepared would, most economically, restore the Fire Department to its 1980-81 level of service.

There was some discussion concerning regionalized dispatching and also combined Police and Fire dispatching. It was noted by the Chief that dual Police/Fire equipment is very expensive, Wayland's running around \$95,000. Mr. Thompson recommended not adding the civilian dispatchers - that he would rather wait and convert to central dispatching when we are ready.

There was a general agreement by the Board that it was not ready to support the Fire Chief's budget as presented.

#### Police Department Budget

Present: Police Chief Nicholas Lombardi and Finance Committee Liaison William Maurhoff.

Chief Lombardi discussed with the Board his 1982-83 budget prepared in keeping with Finance Committee guidelines, with the exception of an increase of \$7007 for step and longevity personnel increases. He noted that the budget funds a force of five sergeants and twenty-three patrolmen.

During discussion on the Chief's request for establishment of a new position of Lieutenant, to act as a deputy chief, the Chief stated that at the present time the only position other than sergeant is the Administrative Assistant, who received a stipend of \$1000. It was noted that this position would be subject to Civil Service regulations and possibly collective bargaining. The Board indicated it would be favorable to exploring this matter further.

Overtime - Chief Lombardi explained that the Overtime budget of approximately \$57,000 would cover only some of the sick time, but not holidays or vacations. He stated that the current year's budget would very likely be inadequate to complete the year. The Chief expressed his concern that the proposed FY83 budget would not allow him to maintain the same patrol coverage as in past years and recommended more money be added to the Overtime account. He informed the Board that, at times now, calls are stacking and with the budget as it now stands he foresaw next year having to respond to calls on a priority basis.

Receipts - Chief Lombardi recommended that fees and fines from traffic citations received by the Town be applied as offsets to the Police Budget.

The Executive Secretary recommended adding 7% to the Overtime account and that the highest priority should be given to establishing the position of Lieutenant.

In summary, it was agreed that the level of staffing shown in the budget should be kept; however, the following priorities were made:

- 1) Police Department should have manpower to maintain its three-sector patrol;
- 2) Maintenance of Safety Cruiser - need budget money not now provided - possibility of using receipts as offsets for this; and
- 3) Replacement of three cruisers.

Engineering Department Budget

Present: Town Engineer James V. Merloni.

Town Engineer James Merloni reviewed the history of Engineering Department personnel since he has been the Town Engineer, stating that in the summer of 1974 the department had twenty employees, which last summer had shrunk to seven. He noted the loss of key men with experience and education, who have been replaced with less qualified personnel, in addition to the elimination of the co-op program.

Mr. Merloni stated that he had decreased everything possible in his budget by ten percent and that, without the equipment request in the budget (which could have been a warrant article), his budget is below level funding. Further, relative to Equipment Account -51, Mr. Merloni stated that due to the cuts in personnel he would not need a second survey vehicle, but that his request for one new survey vehicle and survey computer was vital. He recommended use of unused walkway engineering and design article monies (1978 ATM Art. 10, Puffer and Fairbank Walkways) in the amount of \$11,811.88 to partially offset this line item of \$15,000. The Board expressed its agreement and support of these capital expenditures.

Building Department Budget

Present: Inspector of Buildings Joseph E. Scammon.

The Board reviewed the Building Department budget for FY83 with Inspector of Buildings Joseph E. Scammon, which was in keeping with the level funding guidelines for budget preparation.

Mr. Scammon requested that an excess Engineering or Highway vehicle be transferred to the Building Department for use by their custodians.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Attest:

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Richard E. Thompson  
Executive Secretary-Clerk