



# MANCHESTER-BY-THE-SEA

FINANCE COMMITTEE • TOWN HALL  
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## Minutes of the Finance Committee

January 27, 2022 7:00 p.m. Zoom Meeting

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ms. Mellish, Chair, Mr. Creighton, Mr. Weld, Mr. Oldeman, and Mr. Nahatis

**MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:** Mr. Pratt and Mr. Twining

**STAFF PRESENT:** Town Administrator, Mr. Federspiel, Finance Committee Clerk, Ms. Hunter, Police Chief Fitzgerald

**GUESTS:** BOS Members, Mr. Bodmer-Turner, Chair, Ms. Harrison, and Ms. Jaques

- **Call to Order** – Ms. Mellish called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.
- **Review Operating & Capital Budgets, Police Department**



Bridge Academy  
january 27 FY23.ppt

Chief Fitzgerald stated the Massachusetts Police Training Council (MPTC) a council made up of multiple policing organizations on July 1, 2021 stated that reserve officers who had completed training through MPTC were certified. However, reserve officers with no break in service in 5-years will be required to attend the Bridge Academy for 200 hours. If a reserve offices has 2,400 hours of police experience the Chief can apply for an exemption. The Department currently has 12 reserve officers with one officer needing to be qualified this year, three qualified in 2023 and three or four qualified by 2024. The Chief is concerned that the cost of training officers is expensive and once officers are fully trained, they will move on to full-time positions in another departments. He does not believe the investment in training will pay off for the Department.

The Department currently has one officer out on disability and the situation remains unresolved. The Chief stated moving forward he would like to fill one full-time position in FY23 and another full-time position in FY24 to provide for a Sergeant and 3 patrol officers assigned to each shift. In the event of vacation, sick or other leave he will be able to maintain minimum coverage.

Mr. Weld requested clarification around what the Chief was requesting. The Chief is hoping that the situation with the officer out on leave will be resolved and his position filled and in addition the Chief is requesting one additional new hire in FY23. Mr. Weld asked what the current budget reflected, the Chief replied, status quo. Mr. Oldeman requested confirmation around the all-in cost of hiring a new officer. Mr. Federspiel stated close to \$100K but benefits would not be included in the Department budget and to add \$80K for to the salary line for a new officer. It was noted that the officer on disability is at two thirds pay. Chief Fitzgerald indicated without sufficient staff this past year the Department has been required to utilize forced overtime for 110 shifts.

Mr. Oldeman asked if the budget could accommodate the Chief's request. Mr. Federspiel stated yes but the Committee needed to be mindful of additional requests from other Departments. Ms. Mellish stated the Police Department is at a disadvantage given the new law and we need to accommodate the Police Department. Mr. Federspiel supports the Chief's phased in approach noting the proposed hiring will save on training and overtime. Mr. Creighton asked how other small towns were managing. The Chief replied Essex hopes to hire three new full-time officers and Rockport is down five officers.

Ms. Mellish asked for the consensus of the Committee around Chief Fitzgerald's request. Mr. Weld, Mr. Creighton, Mr. Oldeman and Mr. Nahatis were all in support.

#### Police Department Capital Budget

- Annual vehicle replacement part of fleet maintenance.
- Motorcycle lease will be paid off with the FY23 payment.
- Dispatch records management system, assuming Dispatch remains in Town.
- Speed trailer – the Town was able to get 2 for 1 and this is the pay off of the balance.
- Tasers – the Department currently has 3 tasers one for each officer on duty and a spare. The proposed capital item provides for a taser assigned to each officer with training cartridges and certification. This will allow all officers to have the same level of force including the SRO and an officer on the Harbor.
- Radio upgrade to digital.

Mr. Oldeman asked if the tasers were being purchased. Chief Fitzgerald confirmed this was a purchase. Ms. Mellish asked how long tasers last, the Chief replied 10-years with an up-front cost of \$2,500.00 including training and cartridges and purchased over 5-years at the end of 5-years the Department will need to pay for training and cartridges. All officers are required to be certified annually on firearm and taser use.

Mr. Creighton asked if the Town was adequately covered for liability insurance for Public Safety. Mr. Federspiel replied the Town is covered and the Department's certification, training and policies all contribute to a favorable liability rate. Mr. Weld asked if Police Department facilities are included in the Town Hall budget noting the Police Department utilizes every square inch of space in their assigned area. The Police Department is included in Town Hall facilities.

Mr. Creighton asked if overtime could be broken out in the budget, it is currently all in the one-line-item salaries. He would like to see it quarterly. Ms. Mellish confirmed that with the addition of one officer the Department would realize a decrease in overtime. Mr. Federspiel confirmed that was correct. Chief Fitzgerald stated the SRO was doing a great job and had done an exemplary job of networking. He specifically mentioned the 8<sup>th</sup> grade summer series last summer when the entire 8<sup>th</sup> grade class joined her at Captain Dusty's for ice cream.

The Committee discussed the wild card in the Department budget, Dispatch. Mr. Federspiel stated at Annual Town Meeting when residents vote on Dispatch the Warrant Article will include Plan A (move to regional) Plan B (remain in Town) with proposed funding associated with each plan.

- **Quarterly Reports** – Ms. Mainville is on vacation.
  - Ms. Mellish stated she believed most items were in line and we are halfway through FY22
  - Mr. Oldeman asked about excise tax revenue. Mr. Federspiel stated the billing for excise taxes goes out in February and taxes are due in March.
  - Ms. Mellish noted that Recreation spending had picked up this quarter.
  - Mr. Nahatis indicated the Town Clerk was spending faster than anticipated. Mr. Federspiel noted the Fall Town Meeting required a lot of technology and there were two special elections for State Representative. Mr. Federspiel thought the Town Clerk's budget may be over but less than \$10K.
  
- **Discuss Responsibilities Under MBTS General By-Law Article VI**

Ms. Mellish included the General By-Law for discussion. She is hearing from some residents that work is going on in Town and the Finance Committee is not weighing in on the work. Ms. Mellish noted areas of concern appear to be Planning Board (PB) recodification recommendations, ADU's by right, multi-housing one-half mile within the Commuter Rail, and the DPW site. She asked Committee members how they believe the Committee should deal with this type of issue. Stating that residents are looking for additional information not just a statement that the Committee supports a specific warrant article.

Mr. Oldeman noted that anything on the Warrant that is a financial issue the Chair speaks to the issue at Town Meeting. Ms. Mellish stated a small number of people are looking for something in writing from the Committee. Mr. Creighton stated the Committee is focused on the budget through mid-February at which time the Committee meets with the Auditors. If there are specific areas around the PB the Committee could meet with the PB, think through financial issues, and write something up. Mr. Creighton believes the Committee can identify possible areas of concern and look at them through the financial lens.

Mr. Weld proposed a handout around issues that are of concern and residents can join in the discussion when the Committee is meeting. There will need to be some flexibility around timing given the budget process.

- **Next Meeting Date and Subject**

On February 3, 2022 the Committee will meet with and discuss the budget for the Harbor Department and Parks & Recreation. Mr. Federspiel stated there were a lot of CPC project proposed for the Harbor, Parks & Recreation, and the Rotunda

- **Review Minutes**

*Ms. Mellish moved to approve the minutes of December 1, 2021; Mr. Creighton seconded the motion. The motion passed with Mr. Creighton, Mr. Weld, Mr. Nahatis, Mr. Twining and Ms. Mellish voting affirmatively. Mr. Oldeman abstained he was not at the meeting.*

*Ms. Mellish moved to approve the minutes of October 13, 2022 and January 6, 2022; Mr. Creighton seconded the motion. The motion passed with Mr. Creighton, Mr. Weld, Mr. Nahatis, Mr. Twining and Ms. Mellish voting affirmatively. Mr. Oldeman abstained he was not at the meeting.*

- **Other Business not anticipated by the Chair, discussion only**

There was no additional business discussed this evening.

- **Adjourn**

*Mr. Creighton moved to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Oldeman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.*