

**YARMOUTH FINANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 6, 2021
TOWN HALL AT 6 PM**

NOTE: This is a remote participation meeting.

A meeting of the Finance Committee held by conference call during the COVID-19 pandemic. There was a reading of the provisions of remote meeting law issued by Governor Baker to the Committee prior to the beginning of the meeting.

Present: Nathan Ladley, George Perkins, Sara Kohls, Stefanie Coxe, Brian Gardiner, Robert Ciavara

Absent: Jack Moylan

Administration: Dan Knapik, Town Administrator

1. **Open Meeting:** The meeting was called to order by Brian Gardiner.
2. **Fire Department Presentation:** Chief Phil Simonian gave this presentation. This year there has been a reduction in call volume due to Covid and people being afraid to go to the hospital. Deputy Sawyer has obtained two grants for the police department in the amounts of \$112,727 and \$159,000. The challenges they have seen this year have been Covid related, including keeping people at work, overtime being reduced, the training budget increasing, additional expenses associated with PPE, and needing to move Dispatch. Stefanie Coxe asked if the Cares Act included reimbursement funding for municipalities. Dan Knapik confirmed that they do. Brian Gardiner asked what the cost would be to move Dispatch. Dan Knapik said it was complicated because it involves equipment and the police department. They need a regional partner, and this would add more costs to the budget. Brian Gardiner stated that with weather patterns changing Dispatch needs a safe location. He asked if the mechanic would work in the new DPW building, and Dan Knapik responded it would likely accommodate this. Sara Kohls asked for clarification of the costs of the Captain on the road. Chief Simonian said there are four shift captains, and they are part of the crew that responds to calls. They are asking to put these captains in their own vehicles for safety reasons, such as making critical decisions while not driving an active emergency vehicle. It would make it safer to manage incidents. This is a personnel and equipment issue. Stefanie Coxe asked about needing sixteen new personnel. Chief Simonian confirmed that their studies have shown that they need this to increase minimum staffing, and it would be more efficient for emergencies. The first four new personnel we have are grant funded. Stefanie Coxe asked for clarification of new personnel funding and different options on how to pay for them. Finance Director Senteio responded that funding would depend on the economy and tax levy. Nathan Ladley asked how long the paperwork take for new officers. Chief Simonian responded that they have a list in place to draw from and applications.
3. **Police Department Presentation:** Chief Frederickson gave this presentation. TPD calls are also down due to Covid and the curfew. There has been a high volume of mental health, situations substance abuse, domestic violence and traffic complaints. PD has had recruitment and retention challenges. FY2021 funding is down, and they have lost overtime funding. Another issue is there has been a 65% increase in the cost of ammunition over the last few years because people are hoarding it due to the current political climate in the country. There has been a decrease in new hire salaries, and they

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need to replace their Tasers. PD has unfunded training mandates and concerns for Officers and other staff member's wellness. They recommend increasing their expense budget by \$25,000 from Free Cash and creating an account to pay for new hire equipment and uniforms. They need to increase overtime funds and negotiate a new shift schedule. They want to keep dispatchers salaries competitive with other areas of the Cape. Statewide, all Police Departments should have body cameras within this year for Officer's protection. Nathan Ladley asked if the Union is against body cameras and how many they would need and the cost. The Chief said the Union now wants them. Kevin Lennon said the Axon body cameras are about \$800-\$1,000 a piece, and there is a monthly maintenance fee for maintaining the data in the cloud. PD needs sixty-one. Mashpee is the only town doing a body camera pilot program, but other towns have cruiser cameras. Body cameras are up and coming, but they have been delayed due to a flaw in the law regarding secret recordings. We have been trying to change this for the last seven years. Stefanie Coxe asked if the funding for this was put off until FY22, and the Chief said yes due to other priorities and limited funding. Stefanie Coxe would support this for next year to help with recruitment and the overall atmosphere of transparency. She asked for an update on FY21 overtime, and if it would be beneficial to add more staffing. Kevin Lennon said they are about 65% through their overtime budget, but they are not at 65% of the year. The Chief said they are trying to make it work for these tough years. They might want to add two promotions to Sergeant to fill in the gaps. George Perkins suggested there might be an advantage across the town to fund the highest level for each pay grade and return it in free cash at the end of the year. He suggested making a cost benefit analysis. Mr. Senteio said the Town has a low S & P rating (AA+) and present thinking is that the Admin does not want to over pad the budget with excessive Free Cash at the end of the Fiscal year.

4. **Budget Transfers:** Kevin Lennon is requesting to move \$11,339.60 from the radio system upgrade to Taser replacement. Funds for purchase of the Taser were under a five year payment plan, but this is not allowable under Ch. 30B. A three year plan was obtained and will save \$9,600 on the total purchase. The original quote was \$250,000, and the new Motorola quote is \$218,000. Stefanie Coxe asked if they would need to amend figures in the budget book in the next fiscal year to accommodate this. Ed said they wouldn't need to change this because this is part of the capital and not the police department operating budget. A motion to approve this was made by **Robert Ciavarra** and seconded by Stefanie Coxe. The request was approved 6-0.
5. **New Business:** Dan Knapik's last day will be January 22, 2021. The Committee thanked him for his support. Bob Lawton will be the Interim Town Administrator and Pat Armstrong will be the liaison. They will be searching for an Assistant Town Administrator once Mr. Whritenour has settled in as Town Administrator.
6. **Adjourn:** A motion to adjourn was made by Sara Kohls and seconded by Stefanie Coxe. Vote was 6-0 in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Kiera Oleksak

email Pat A 7/7/21

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