

Selectmen's minutes of Work Session March 23, 2021

Members present: Brian O'Rourke, George Riley, Mark Newman, Dolores Harasyko
Fire Chief Ralph Morrison, Police Chief Michael Morrison, John Burrows

Called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Remote participation information provided for the public.

Mike provided information on Covid Stimulus Funds. We might be eligible for \$260,000. It could be used for fire and police department purchases. He received this information through the Western Mass Chiefs Association. Brian thanked him and said we would follow up on it.

Mike would like to replace Car 1 the 2008 Ford Explorer. He presented pictures and information regarding the damage and rust to the 2008 vehicle. Brian responded that their budget was very confusing with little detail, we only own 2 police vehicles and it looks like they are requesting a police vehicle to replace a fire vehicle.

Ralph explained that they tried to explain this to Roger Brown when they met with him to review their budget and Roger didn't want any explanation, that there was no need for discussion.

Brian responded that we are using a budget forecasting exercise.

Brian clarified that the vehicle to be replaced is fire not police.

Mike explained that the 2014 police vehicle would replace the 2008. The newest vehicle will be the police patrol vehicle. The 2008 would then become surplus property and can be sold.

Brian asked what happens if the legislature doesn't approve our age request extension, what is the plan to replace the Fire Chief. Ralph responded that there is no one ready to take his place.

Mike said that once we get the personnel issues straightened out there is someone interested in the job.

Brian is concerned that we will purchase a new vehicle and not have a fire chief to drive it.

George asked if approved what is the process that happens to transfer the vehicle to the fire dept., Mike responded it's an internal transfer.

Brian stated that from a financial situation, last year we thought we were over prop 2 ½, then we weren't. Margaret and Dennis straightened it out. As it looks now we may not be over. There are no expensive purchases other than police and fire.

Brian suggested we could pay for it out of free cash.

Mark suggested a separate line item for the new police cruiser for \$45,000 and fund it from free cash.

Brian explained to Mike that email's are public record and having Mike accuse the Selectmen of speaking with the DPW outside of a meeting and causing an open meeting law violation is absolutely incorrect. We had 2 work sessions with the DPW regarding their budget, everything was discussed in open posted meetings.

Ralph asked for better communications.

Ralph presented a lease agreement for both fire houses. The Selectmen will review it and address it at a future meeting.

Discussed the Jaws of Life. Brian asked if we own 3 items, cutter, expander and ram. Ralph responded we do own all 3. The town bought 2, Fire Dept., Inc. bought one. They are 32 years old.

George asked for an estimate as to how many times they get used, Ralph responded it gets used 15 to 18 times.

Discussed the need for 3 chargers and 6 batteries. Ralph responded that 3 batteries are in the vehicle and 3 are in the charger.

We will have a separate line item for the Jaws of Life for \$45,000 funded from free cash.

Discussed fire hoses. Per Ralph the current hoses do not meet NFPA rating.

Ralph is using the State bid for pricing.

Ralph would like to replace the hosing for all trucks.

Mark would like to do one this year and one next year.

This will be a separate line item funded from free cash for \$20,000.

Ralph asked why the maint. of new equipment wasn't increased. Brian responded that expenses aren't automatically increased by 2%, salaries increased by 2%.

Ralph responded that the expenses have increased on the ambulance, wear and tear and batteries.

Amend Fire/Amb. Equipment to \$22,623 and Fire/Amb. Maint. to \$12,948.

Discussed fire dept. salaries. Selectmen approved the hourly increase for John Burrows from \$14.33 to \$15.60.

Ralph asked why he hasn't gotten a raise in 3 years.

Brian reviewed the original proposal from FY2018. The contract states re negotiate and provide numbers of similar size towns, Brian stated that he gets a salary plus and hourly rate.

We will amend the salary to reflect a 2% increase.

Ralph does not want to renegotiate a new agreement.

Ralph asked about registering the army trucks. Mark spoke to the insurance company, they will not insure the vehicles as we do not own them. If the town gets clear titles then they would insure them.

The DPW wants the title for the Peterbuilt. Ralph will provide the title.

Discussed old surplus equipment, we need titles for the old equipment.

Brian asked that the Tolland ambulance information be provided on Comstar letterhead.

Meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Brian O'Rourke

George Riley

Mark Newman