

**Board of Finance
Budget Presentation Fire Departments
March 11, 2009**

BOARD OF FINANCE MEMBERS PRESENT

Marie DeSousa, Chairman

Jack Mannette

Robert Little

Cathy Pippin

Al Floyd

Jason Bowza

Robert Little

Cathy Pippin

Unable to attend: Joanne Koubek (scheduled)

Also present: Catherine Cabral, Treasurer

Ms. DeSousa called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. at the East Windsor High School.

Ms. DeSousa addressed some items before tonight's budget presentation, including that Tim Howes prefers to come before the board before April 1st to address additional issues. Also, at the workshop with the police department, questions were brought forth and a copy of updated salaries from last year which were provided for cross reference comparison purposes. The right numbers are in the hand outs distributed. It was noted that the newspaper reported funding coming from the State as part of the recovery incentive one town to receive this is East Windsor according to the Courant. The figure referenced in the paper for East Windsor funding figure is \$21,288. Also in reference to the Police Department presentation the numbers used for animal control in budget were accurate and they are standing by those numbers.

TREASURER

Ms. Cabral explained the packets distributed, including that there was no workers comp info as they are still meeting with CIRMA; or pension information as they are still awaiting calculations and they are trying to get better insurance figures from CIRMA – as the figures she has are high and she would rather wait to hear on figures for insurance.

If anything else the members do not have please let her know. It was stated that the public hearing packet will have remaining information.

BROAD BROOK FIRE DEPARTMENT MEMBERS

Gerald Bancroft, Deputy Chief

Lieutenant Vincent Lemay

Captain Steven Long Captain

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The administrative pieces remained status quo. The building maintenance (200) increased for utilities. Communications has an additional 9500 for radios that are not funded thru safety committee when upgrade was done they were still short and they are supposed to have enough for every position in truck. It had been discussed with the Selectmen about taking this item out of the department budget and putting it into communication, they were not sure if that had been done.

Engineering, fuel costs, tools and supplies increase and truck repairs for service maintenance provider. Ms. DeSousa was surprised that the cost of repairs went up. Mr. Long indicated maintenance needs are necessary for equipment to be checked and tested with state mandates and the cost of oil and lubricants are up. Equipment increases are seen as costs in products such gear are raised which is beyond the department's power as manufacturer passes cost onto them.

In this request there is seen an increase hoses. This was discussed before as the department is trying to get on hose maintenance system. Ms. Menard clarified the hose is not in the current year CIP plan, but it is in years out. There is an increase in medical response supplies as this seems to be going over the budget year after year, for priority one call medical supplies – the department does not want to fall behind on the budget, thus the increase for this.

Insurance (700) is status quo. Included in this budget request is the scot air packs \$38,000 for five Scot air packs as the Department was not sure if the item as requested was included in the Capital Improvement Plan. Ms. DeSousa indicated that is in the CIP plan at \$40,000 a year for each department of next five years. Also detailed was the thermal imaging cameras in the Capital Improvement Plan.

In training line there is an updated list for NFPA manuals which department goes by when discuss NFPA compliance – these are the books that detail training manuals. The books current go to 1980's . The department has not had a current set of books for years and they want to buy a library of books to have available. That is the increase. It was suggested the department investigate getting this on line or maybe look at memberships which would enable them to get the books. These are training manuals.

As for personnel, full time firefighters were on last years plan due to lack of coverage in daytime. It includes a projected 10% increase in workers comp (as recommended by treasurer). The departments understands this won't happen so they also put in for two part time firefighters as an option in lieu of the five firefighters, The shifts would overlap so four hour time frame during day working together. No insurance necessary, just part time driver. The scenarios of what happens when a truck cannot get up and running during the day was discussed. There is mutual aide with all surrounding communities but automatic during the day mutual aide is with Warehouse Point and Enfield. It was noted that if BBFD have to call Enfield in – not only become parasite fire department but there is major concerns with what can happen in the lag time. The packet information was discussed, including healthcare plans for requested full time firefighters

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The two part time fire fighters would be drivers. There are times when two or three people at firehouse, but not certified to drive truck. It was inquired if one person can drive truck – could situation where that person is at BBFD, tones off no one shows up – can that truck still go on mutual aide. It was indicated, yes, but not much help with one person. It was asked how many members were certified to drive trucks? They did not have the number at the meeting, but all officers drive and there are more in class. The number is more than 14 – but people are working during the day.

Ms. DeSousa inquired on a line as it was determined this item was for water, Gatorade, grinders to feed people for long fires. Mr. Bowsa did rough bottom line comparison 08/09 and 09/10 → 23.87% increase reported – but take out things already in the CIP for this and communications the increase is shy of 6% increase.

The fire departments were urged to talk to the police department about communications, as well items discussed at a recent senior staff meeting.

Ms. DeSousa reiterated that the Board of Finance stated they do not entertain entities without financial statement or audit. Broad Brook gave the audit for the year dated June 30, 2008.

It was relayed that some of the big increases were in the presentation as the Department did not know if CIP passed and what went in it. The CIP implemented some kind of replacement program – three items in CIP for fire departments with automatic renewals so it is scheduled out – no matter who in fire department or who is on the CIP Committee – that is plan to have an actual schedule. Rotating schedule and both departments on same schedule and ability to share was the thought process in that.

It was question if Medical response supplies can be obtained thru the ambulance association? Now they are first responders – it was inquired if ambulance association gets a better rate and maybe the emergency personnel can get better cost savings by shared services. Purchase in bulk those items. Chief Bancroft will have the equipment officer discuss this with the ambulance. It was thought the police might be an avenue as well for the medical supplies.

WAREHOUSE POINT FIRE DEPARTMENT MEMBERS

James Barton, Chief

Nick DeCapula, Chairman Board of Fire Commissioners

The members present noted the items that stayed the same and discussed more thoroughly the areas of increases. The increase for insurance was noted. There was a payment to make for this year and the department had to move money around, need to put money back there. Increases in building maintenance and repairs are due to working with a building built in 1965 and there is general upkeep with this.

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Snow removal was way under budget and \$2,500 was not enough. The cost was up to \$4000 this year. To cover that cost the department is cutting money from somewhere else. The Town does Broad Brook side as they own the building. Fire district owns the building and properties on WHPFD side. It was inquired how difficult to add those two fire departments to the Town side. Mr. Barton frankly stated that was entertained with last administration and said that the District to turn the building over to the town to get plowing. Ms. DeSousa stressed her goal to focus on today and not what historically may or may not have occurred. Shared services committee is making changes and the Board of Finance will entertain the idea to put that change thru to be discussed at the shared service committee.

Fuel line, \$6,000 for fuel is too low – one delivery at one station covers that – and that item is way under budget. It was asked how much spent out of budget spent so far this year on fuel oil. It was stated almost \$8,000 and the line is already over budget. It was explained the department piggybacked on town side for fuel oil, a decision which is now seen with regret. They are charged 3.60 when could have gotten 1.08. Currently the department gets from private dealer. BBFD had same problem. They signed a contract and are taking a beating but the fire departments have gone elsewhere for oil. It was noted this will item be investigated soon and it was noted that East Windsor is probably not alone in this dilemma.

The driveway project has been cut for several years and this year it had to put in the budget as it is unknown if it remained in the CIP request. This item has to be funded this year as there is a need to have a driveway to drive the trucks on. This is at bridge street station. Later it was noted if parking lot done 8 year ago could have saved over \$108K – that was acknowledged. Ms. Menard indicated it is not in the CIP for this year.

Similar to BBFD, the Scott air pack replacement is in this budget presentation as the department not sure if was included in the CIP. That was discussed above.

Medical equipment – all AED's out of date – a lieutenant who is in department is working with police department and ambulance association to get updated items.

Protective clothing – need to buy sets and recently they had to move money to pay for “other things” such as snow removal; fuel, whatever items are under budget.

It was asked if the Board of Finance could get list of what the department moved within line items to get a better understanding of that. So if clothing allotment used to pay for fuel – the board needs to know that – the scenario comes up when the budgets are reviewed and discussed. Ms. Menard also contributed to this conversation by asking that any budget overspent for now, let it go, as long as bottom line in zero – any line overspend, show it as overspent, instead of transfer money from “paper line” because needed “toner for copier”. This will present a clear picture to show how much absolutely needed. Chief Barton indicated the department does that on the working budget. Ms.

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DeSousa indicated the board needs to see that to help and it is helpful for the public as well – so no credibility is questioned. The Board of Finance understands the department has to make due with what they have for a budget - no one is disputing that – just looking for true numbers.

The Department is required to do more training which is on a two year cycle; mrt /ert classes after re certified – that line will run short this year too – as discussed above he will show that.

Volunteering was discussed and the tough aspect of this was discussed again.

Mr. Bowza noted this request is \$18,500 more than last year – of that the bulk is the new parking lot → \$30K for easy math what part of that is mandated? Chief Barton training and medical AED's are mandated. The rest is cost of living and under budgeted items.

It was noted the Departments are reaching point of change and the Town needs to look at what their needs are vs. needs of the town. IT was noted that, because the way country is now, news accounts often reference getting fire departments and other public safety venues getting significant money – if town puts minds together anything we can do to put a grant request that puts us five years from now to help us.

Mr. Bancroft for detailed the last four years grants applied for. Up until last year because proper paperwork had not been filed on time to meet deadline (NIFERS) if that not on time the federal government considers the grant disqualified. The department did not know that until this year.

Mr. Barton also stated they have been putting in grants last two years together – it is competitive. It was confirmed the departments have submitted grants. Also submissions are done as a region. For regional resources re apparatus for example apparatus serves Windsor Locks, Enfield, south Windsor as those are mutual aide towns – so they do that to try to get the money. It is competitive.

Stimulus packages and grants were discussed in detail, as well as regional requests

Ms. Menard detailed a recent CCM meeting and talks with other towns where police chiefs and fire chiefs discussed involvement for shared service possibilities that will get stimulus money on bigger scale. There was extensive discussion regarding grants and how they can be applied for and the fact that some of these grants, will take numerous man hours to put together, but sometimes there will be a matching funds – more than likely 5% of cost, sometimes 10% - if awarded grant and need to come in for % town contributions. The departments would hate to spend 3 /5 hours a week to be awarded grant, but come before board and be told cannot get money. It was stated that BBFD eight to ten years ago received grant for 80K received one. Also once you receive the grant you are at the bottom of the list. In conclusion it was noted that many types of grants are constantly sought year after year but none have been awarded.

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It was inquired if any towns similar in size have a paid department? Other towns 10,000 – 15,000. Windsor locks has part time – there from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. work \$10/\$12 hour. Someone noted Windsor Locks gets a ton of money from airport. South Windsor may be going that way as well but the size of the town does not matter – it is about the demographic of volunteers. At one time had a good 2nd 3rd shift crew – now it is different crew.

Fire department 2150 budget

Ms. Menard for the Selectmen discussed this and the line items, including those removed from another area to present a complete picture of the fire department budgets.

Annuity, incentive and physicals are all identical to what budgeted last year. The incentive program wanted to look at increase, but felt did not need to and the annuity piece standard amount every year.

Ms. Menard detailed the physicals and immunizations situation which has been probably eight months of getting information. After researching the town's provider for physicals, the physicals were way beyond what firefighter physical needed. Ms. Menard had the two fire departments work together to narrow down what was needed for whom specifically to know budgets and how projected. It was also realized fire departments start physicals now during budget season which presents fiscal challenges. Ms. Menard asked the departments to suspend physicals for the time being to start at a later date, as long as not jeopardize anything. Both departments stated that would be fine – they will do physicals in second quarter of new fiscal year – need to encumber this year's money – both departments will start doing physicals in September and there is now a list going out five years with specific physicals and costs. Also the Departments are asking to go back to St. Francis instead of the current carrier, Concentra. If that is a better deal that will be. Budgeted same amount as last year – there is a cycle of older folks coming in for physicals. Back up information will be provided. Going forward this should be a good process with a plan. Ms. DeSousa thanked ms. Menard for doing this that needed to be done.

For the communications piece some Fire Department members were at senior staff meeting and there will be a separate committee to discuss communications.

There was brief discussions regarding the Incentive Committee. Ms. DeSousa detailed some of her discussions with this Committee and the recent successes in getting on track with correct timing of their budget.

The workshop concluded at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Cynthia D. Croxford