

**MINUTES
BUDGET WORKSHOP
DOVER CITY COUNCIL
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
WEDNESDAY
MAY 18, 2005
6:30 P.M.**

Councilors Present: Mayor Scott Myers, Mayor Pro Tem Jason Hindle, Bob Keays, Doug DeDe, Dean Trefethen, Darlene Colwell Ellis, Bob Lewis and Otis Perry. Councilor Matt Mayberry arrived at 6:55 p.m., left at 7:10 p.m to attend meeting in auditorium and returned at 9:40 p.m.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Prior to beginning the budget presentations, Councilor Otis Perry read a statement recusing himself from any discussions or voting on the selection of a new City Manager due to a perceived conflict of interest.

2. BUDGET PRESENTATION:

A. POLICE DEPARTMENT *(See Page 195 of FY2006 Budget Document)*

Acting City Manager Mike Joyal reviewed the Police Budget stating that there is a 6.9% increase over last year. He brought attention to Account 4130, Overtime which has been historically under budgeted and he has tried to make this a more realistic figure although the \$171,108 is still not going to be enough.

Lewis asked for a breakdown of the officer/supervisor ratio.

Police Chief William Fenniman explained there are 3 shifts with 6-8 officers per shift who work 10 hour shifts. There are 3 sergeants and lieutenants on duty who serve as shift supervisors but perform other duties as well such as detectives, MIS, etc.

DeDe discussed overtime and detail work. He has researched the cost of assigning an officer to detail work and feels that it costs more than the \$40.00 per hour which is charged to the private contractors to put an officer at these locations. He discussed implementing a part-time auxiliary force or hiring a flagging service as is done for other projects as these types of duties do not need the level of service of a police officer. He referred to an "anti-merical" that he received from an officer, upon his request, with the reasons that this could not occur. He feels that this was a biased report by the police department for the police department and was endorsed by Joyal and wants an independent study as he does not feel that every stone has been unturned. He suggested a regional approach with officers from other surrounding towns etc.

Joyal clarified that this report was presented for informational purposes. He does not feel however, that the auxiliary officers are a good alternative for what was being proposed. He discussed the overtime issue explaining that an officer may need to be removed from the rotation for training and must be replaced by another fully trained officer and his response was regarding this situation.

Secondly, regarding detail work and the suggestion to use college students or teachers, etc. there is a liability issue as well as insurance, training, certification that does go along with these positions. He would rather hire an outside contractor and that option is always available to the contractors, but some prefer to have a police vehicle and officer at the scene. It is also a requirement of some contracts that officers be present.

DeDe feels this is an oversimplification and in his conversation with the Chief he was explicit that he would not allow officers from another town to do detail work in Dover.

Discussion ensued.

Keays stated the he feels the Chief is competent to handle his staff and feels that the Council should not be reviewing this issue nor the performance of the department or the Chief and should be discussing the budget only.

The Mayor stated that this is a part of the budget in that do the revenues generated cover the costs of the service provided or can we provide it at a lesser cost.

Mayberry asked Joyal to clarify a rumor regarding police overtime, sick time and vacation time abuse.

Joyal stated that these allegations were brought forward and were followed up with no substance found to that allegation and stated that there is no opportunity for the staff to manipulate their schedules in that way as it is a management function.

DeDe then referred to an overtime breakdown analysis submitted on May 11th (No report made available to the Clerk) and asked what comprises special assignments and special events. Chief Fenniman explained that a “special event” would be when a candidate comes to town, the Christmas parade, etc. A “special assignment” would be a target patrol i.e. criminal mischief in the downtown area, etc.

Lewis stated that we are all fully aware that we will be \$1.4 million short and wants to find places across the board to cut. He asked the Chief what could be cut without damaging the safety of the citizens.

Chief Fenniman began by stating that he expects that at the next School Board meeting Carolyn Mebert will be correcting her figures regarding the drug usage survey, and therefore, to say that DARE is not working would be incorrect.

Next, he stated that regarding where to cut, 84% of his budget is in personnel and is mandated by federal grants until January 2006 or they would be fined.

Lewis asked about physical entities i.e. the horse barn, Dover Housing sub station etc.

Fenniman stated those are paid for by those entities. He stated he could cut supplies and artificially cut overtime and vehicles.

Discussion ensued.

Perry discussed vehicle replacement and repairs which we have been doing in-house for several years and tracking it closely and asked if a study has been done to determine the real break-even point of getting new vehicles versus replacing them.

Joyal stated there was money in the budget last year for a consultant to do that survey but it hasn't been done. He stated that Fleet services has better computer tracking now so we will be able to generate that information.

Trefethen stated that the list of vehicles has a dozen vehicles that were supposed to be reassigned in 2003-2004 and asked if they have been yet. Joyal stated no.

Trefethen clarified that when police vehicles are taken out of police services they are then redistributed throughout the city departments and have a lot of wear and tear on them regardless of the actual mileage.

He then discussed the mounted patrol and stated that we are always told that this doesn't cost the taxpayers any money but pointed out various places in the budget that are related to that unit, including 3 vehicles and personnel.

Fenniman explained that through donations they have raised \$100,000 over the years. 2 of the vehicles are government surplus and the other was funded through donations. He explained that the personnel are the downtown patrol unit which was requested by the downtown merchants and the horses are just one of the modes of transportation they use, which also includes foot, bicycles, etc. He further stated that the \$9,000 in the budget is there because a Councilor directed that it be put there.

Lewis asked about the building itself. Fenniman stated that PSNH pays for the building and that there are 14 volunteers who help with the upkeep, etc.

Myers asked when the last time we purchased police cruisers. Fenniman stated 2002.

Joyal continued to review various changes to the police department budget.

In 42180, Public Safety Dispatch, there is a need for a 2nd dispatcher on the overnight shift which is not in the budget. Having this position would help alleviate the overtime costs.

Discussion ensued regarding full-time, part-time and floating positions and benefits.

Joyal explained that this position requires training, availability and retention and therefore would not be a good floating position.

Joyal continued reviewing the police budget.

Hindle asked if we can pay parking tickets on line yet.

Joyal stated we are looking to do this within the next 6 months and are upgrading interfacing to allow for it.

General discussion ensued regarding salaries, benefits, etc. and it was clarified that the Council cannot make cuts to specific positions.

Lewis clarified that the only decrease agreed upon at this point is the \$9,000 for horse feed.

Myers stated that there will be a overall budget discussion after the public hearing on the 25th.

RECESS/RECONVENED 8:15 – 8:20 p.m

B. FIRE AND RESCUE (See Page 233 of FY2006 Budget Document)

Joyal began reviewing the budget.

Myers asked if there are any grant funded firefighter positions.

Joyal stated we have no obligations but we do have a grant for an education specialist for elderly education.

Fire Chief Perry Plummer explained that this will be matched in services that we already do and is a one shot program. There will be an additional person under this grant, but then the position ends. He explained the goal of the program is to result in less calls through education.

Lewis is concerned that this was not approved by the Council.

Joyal discussed account #4661, Fleet Maintenance which has decreased due to the work on fire apparatus being done in-house by a part-time vehicle maintenance laborer at the station.

Plummer explained that this position has been in place for a year and a ½ but is the first time it is appearing in his budget, but the position receives no benefits.

Myers asked about the ambulance billing service and have they gotten a higher percentage of collections since switching to the collection agency, and asked about the increase in revenue from \$420,000 to \$510,000.

Joyal explained that the revenue is driven by the rates and the allowable medicare rates have increased as well as volume of calls and therefore, the billables go up.

Plummer stated they are actually projecting the increase to be up to \$592,000 due to the collections rates that are being achieved by the agency. There was \$90,000 additional revenue realized for the current fiscal year, so he feels the updated figure is right on.

Myers asked if there have been any customer service issues with the new system.

Plummer stated that he has only had 3 comments – all praising the company.

DeDe discussed the lockout policy stating that out of the 734 lockout responses, 17 were of an emergency nature and the rest non-emergencies and feels that there should be a charge for the non-emergency calls. He feels that this puts the city in competition with businesses and feels that people should be instructed to call a locksmith first unless an emergency exists because it inflates the call count.

Discussion ensued.

Joyal will draft a proposal regarding this service.

DeDe discussed the summary of staffing including overtime and commended Chief Plummer for his efforts to contain costs.

Joyal stated that the new staffing proposal which includes the addition of 4 firefighters to begin staffing a northend station, can be funded for a net of \$10,000 with the proposed revenue adjustments.

Plummer continued that during last years' presentation he showed the staffing level requirements which we are now below and explained that by adding the 4 additional people, it will help the current staffing levels and allow for training for staff for a north end station.

Discussion ensued regarding staffing levels and funding.

DeDe asked about the traffic devices used to control lights at intersections.

Plummer explained that it is the Opticom Pre-emption System which allows the lights to be changed from the fire trucks. The system has been in place for a year and is being upgraded in traffic lights throughout the city as well as State intersections.

C. RECREATION DIVISION – Community Services *(See page 325 of FY 2006 Budget Document)*

Hindle began by referring to page 333, Acct #4120 asking to explain the playground supervisors role as there are 18 listed.

Recreation Division Director Gary Bannon explained that there are 2 actual "Supervisors" and that the other should be listed as counselors as they are the people who are assigned to the various playgrounds throughout the city.

Lewis referred to the handout distributed by Bannon (see 05/18/05 folder) listing all programs offered directly through the Recreation Division of the Community Services Department, asking what the asterisks indicate.

Bannon stated these programs are run through the Recreation Special Revenue Fund and are not subsidized by taxes in the General Fund.

Lewis asked which of these items are in competition with businesses.

Bannon stated that the fitness center is a small scale and is for people who are intimidated by big gyms and he doesn't feel they are competing with other businesses.

Bannon continued explaining various other programs that aren't offered anywhere else including swing dancing. He explained that the sports programs i.e., football, soccer, baseball, softball, etc. are all run by associations but the basketball program is run by the city because of the facilities issues and affordability.

Lewis asked if the allocations for the use of the McConnell center for these programs are in the McConnell center budget. Joyal stated no.

Bannon stated that will be included in the next level of adjustments.

Trefethen asked when the last increase to the programs occurred.

Bannon stated that 2 years ago they raised the rates by 10% which caused some programs to die and also pushes some people out, although we do offer scholarships.

Myers stated he feels there is a nice balance in this city that there are other leagues that supplement activities so that the city can run those that there isn't easy access.

Bannon stated he filters requests for programs before starting them to make sure that it isn't already being offered somewhere else.

Lewis feels we offer a lot and it is costly.

Perry feels that offering recreation opportunities is part of the job of the government to its residents and is nervous about trying to make them all self-supporting. He feels that offering scholarships is basically a means test.

Keays stated that he is impressed with the recreation programs and feels we get our money's worth.

Lewis feels we could also spend that money supporting arts and culture.

Next, Joyal referred to page 334, account #4443, rental equipment stating that the bus costs have increased due to gas prices and not piggy backing with the school department any longer.

Hindle asked do we use Laidlaw.

Bannon stated we went out independently and got a better bid good for 3 years.

Joyal continued to review the Recreation budget.

Next they reviewed the Arena Fund.

Bannon referred to his list indicating that the programs noted with 2 asterisks are programs in the Arena Enterprise Fund that are not in the general fund.

He stated that the ice fees will increase from \$210.00 an hour to \$225.00 an hour.

Discussion ensued regarding various operations costs including an issue with a contractor who did not meet its obligation and is currently paying the city \$15,000 a year penalty for as long as the equipment is amortized.

3. Adjourn

DeDe moved to adjourn at 10:00 p.m., seconded and passed unanimously.

Valerie A. French
Deputy City Clerk