



CITY OF DOVER

CITY COUNCIL - MINUTES

Meeting Type: Regular Meeting
Meeting Location: Council Chambers - 288 Central Avenue, Dover, NH 03820
Meeting Date: **Wednesday, April 29, 2009**
Meeting Time: **7:00pm**

Present: Mayor Myers, Deputy Mayor Trefethen, Councilors Callaghan, Carrier, DeDe, McCusker, Scott and Weston.

Absent: Councilor Cheney.

Also Present: City Manager Joyal, City Attorney Krans and City Clerk Lavertu.

1. BUDGET REVIEW

A. POLICE

City Manager Joyal invited Police Chief Colarusso to speak to the Council regarding the Police Department's budget. He wanted the Council to know that he calculated that the employees of the Police Department were foregoing \$62,192.00 in wage increases and adjustments in insurance.

Police Chief Colarusso spoke on the major items in his budget that have been reported in the newspaper. He said his FY2010 budget proposes the elimination of two police officers, saving \$93,000. He said he has applied for grants to fund these positions, but he won't know the outcome until midsummer, and the chances were less than 50%. He said he has also eliminated two part-time secretarial positions, by adding some hours to existing secretaries in order to handle the workload, leaving a total deduction of 27 hours per week for a savings of almost \$38,000. He referred to the Parking Traffic Bureau, and said the budget removes the Police Sergeant position from the Parking Activity Fund and puts it into the Operations Budget for the Police Department. He said the Police Sergeant will still supervise the parking and traffic enforcement issues. He said there will be a new Parking Manager position put into the Parking Activity Fund, and that position will be responsible for dealing with all the parking issues downtown. He spoke of the grants the Police Department did receive. He said they received a \$75,000 contribution from Wentworth-Douglass Hospital, which allowed him to move a position into the grant account. This allows the Police Department to continue with the Youth-to-Youth Program. He said the Police Department was also slated to receive \$65,000 in Justice Assistance grant funding. He said the Police Department also received the Teen Center Director's salary. He said they also received \$36,000 from the Dover Housing Authority to continue to pay for a part-time officer working there. He wanted to thank the Police Department employees for their hard work and dedication. He gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Police Department's budget to the Council.

Councilor DeDe complimented Police Chief Colarusso and the entire police force. He said they have achieved things many thought to be impossible.

Deputy Mayor Trefethen referred to the proposal of eliminating the two patrol officers. He said it was his understanding that the Downtown Liaisons/Mounted Patrols will continue through the summer. He asked if the eliminations would be through attrition.

Police Chief Colarusso said his goal would be to maintain a force with 46 sworn officers. He said the Police Department was at a bare minimum. He said they have maintained the Downtown Liaison/Mounted Patrol positions since 1998, because that was how important they were, but felt that it was the only place left to cut the budget.

Councilor Callaghan complimented the Police Chief on his presentation. He said he was concerned about the elimination of two patrol officers, and the Police Chief's presentation



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was a compelling argument to keep these positions. He referred to the recent deaths in Dover as an example of putting an extra burden on the Police Department, and asked if there was a measure that showed if something was getting put off or put aside.

Police Chief Colarusso said a death investigation takes a significant amount of staff time. He said if there is an unattended death in Dover, for whatever reason, a patrol officer, supervisor, and detectives are there for at least several hours. He said a DWI arrest keeps an officer off the streets for a minimum of three hours.

Councilor Callaghan said in these bad economic times he was worried about shoplifting, but more importantly he was worried about domestic violence, alcohol abuse, and weapons issues. He didn't want the Police Department to be so short staffed that one of these events occurs, which could have been avoided if these positions weren't eliminated. He referred to the statistics that showed the increase in calls, arrests, and services provided by the Police Department, and said they will probably go down now that there will be fewer police officers. He asked the Police Chief if he felt more people will get away with motor vehicle violations. Police Chief Colarusso said that was potentially true. He said the fewer officers there were meant there was less time for performing proactive measures. He said right now they have a four-minute response time for emergencies, and he would like to get it to three minutes. He said four minutes doesn't sound like a lot unless you're in trouble and waiting.

Councilor Callaghan referred to the grant money that the Police Department is waiting to hear about, saying the Police Chief said there was probably a 50% chance of getting the grant.

Police Chief Colarusso said he felt it was less than a 50% chance. He referred to the grant that they didn't get last year to retain the Middle School officer, which seemed probable at the time.

Councilor Callaghan asked what would happen to the grant money if the Council decided to keep the officers.

Police Chief Colarusso said that would be supplanting the positions.

Councilor Callaghan asked if the grant money was for one year.

Police Chief Colarusso said this was a three-year grant, and the City must retain the officers for four years.

Councilor Callaghan asked the amount of the grant.

Police Chief Colarusso said it was \$375,000 for two officers.

Councilor Scott complimented Police Chief Colarusso on his presentation.

Councilor Carrier complimented Police Chief Colarusso on his excellent presentation. He asked about other communities, and linking up with them to work on cases. He asked how it was done.

Police Chief Colarusso said they do their best to work together with other communities. He said they have regular investigative meetings with other towns. He said that was one of the functions of the crime analyst, before that position was eliminated. He said they still do crime analysis to keep their accreditation. He said they work with the FBI, Sheriffs, State Police, Drug Enforcement, and Customs.

Councilor McCusker thanked the Police Chief for his creativity. He said the Police Chief had a great dedicated staff, which is why his department survives.

Deputy Mayor Trefethen referred to Councilor Callaghan's comments and said he was positive that most of the Council feels the same angst about eliminating the positions. He



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referred to the Police Chief's comments about wanting 51 sworn officers, which would cost an additional \$300,000 to \$400,000. He said the Council could give the Police Department the money and feel good. He said he has heard it individually from citizens that more money should be spent to add things, but they are not saying it publicly. He said that means they can't spend it. He said these people need to speak up. He said these decisions are hard to make.

Police Chief Colarusso said he wasn't expecting 51 sworn officers, but he needed to make a stand. He said he was not comfortable reducing the force any more than he is now. He said the City Council and the citizens need to know this.

Councilor Callaghan asked, if the Council allowed these positions to go back in the budget, and the grant money came through, could the Police Department hire two new officers.

Police Chief Colarusso said the grant would have to be amended to "add" officers, as opposed to "save" officers. He said the stimulus money was to prevent layoffs. He said the most frustrating part is that the City won't get the answer until after the budget process is over.

Councilor Weston asked if staffing is reflected in getting accredited.

Police Chief Colarusso said that wasn't part of the accreditation process. He said it requires a lot of different functions and tasks, which if there isn't enough staff to do them, won't get done.

Councilor Weston referred to the Police Chief's comments regarding response time, and asked what the impact would be by reducing staff. She also asked about shift coverage and the increase in crime.

Police Chief Colarusso said police coverage was at a bare minimum for the three shifts, but only what the Downtown Liaisons did would be affected by the cuts.

Mayor Myers thanked Police Chief Colarusso for his presentation. He said it was a great overview of what the Police Department does. He thanked the Police Department staff for taking voluntary pay cuts or reductions. He referred to business and residential growth, which affects all City departments. He said people are attending the Library more, instead of buying books. The Recreation programs have increased attendance at the pools and ice arena. He said the City Hall services have increased with dog licensing, voter registrations, et cetera. He said the list goes on and on. He referred to the 18 full-time positions that have been cut since 2005, at a time when the City is growing. He asked Police Chief Colarusso to touch briefly on county dispatch options.

Police Chief Colarusso said former Police Chief Reynolds is the point person for regionalization. He said it was still in the study phase on how much savings would be realized, and expected costs. He said if Dover and Rochester join the County, then they would need a new building.

Mayor Myers said there is something to be said for in-house dispatch. He said some other services may be better regionalized.

Deputy Mayor Trefethen asked if the County dispatch was just safety services, or if it would include Community Services. He said he saw firsthand during the ice storm how the City's dispatch handled Community Services calls.

Police Chief Colarusso said that is one of the questions. He they are researching if the County dispatch can duplicate what Dover Dispatch does.



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Deputy Mayor Trefethen said 911 was a wonderful thing, but he has heard about issues elsewhere, with lost or ignored calls. He said he would like to avoid that in Dover.

B. FIRE

City Manager Joyal invited Fire Chief Plummer to speak to the Council regarding the Fire Department's budget. He wanted the Council to know that he calculated that the employees of the Fire Department were foregoing \$58,086.00 in wage increases and adjustments in insurance.

Fire Chief Plummer passed out his Vision report, which covered what the department is about. He gave his PowerPoint presentation regarding the Fire Department's budget to the Council.

Mayor Myers thanked Fire Chief Plummer for his overview of the Fire Department. He also thanked the employees for what they have agreed to give back in wages, pay cuts and insurance benefits. He said he realizes the budget will not be sustainable for the long term, but appreciates the effort for this year.

2. CITIZEN'S FORUM

Citizens are invited to speak on the subject matter of the Workshop. Statements shall be limited to five minutes.

James Alty, 36 Toftree Lane: He asked the Council to think about keeping the patrol downtown. He thanked both chiefs for their presentations. He felt if the City does away with the Mounted Patrol it won't come back. He said he is all for the Fire Department and Police Department. He said he donated money for oxygen masks for the animals. He said he tries to help when he can. He said it was a great move by the City to put Police Chief Tony Colarusso in the position. He again asked to keep the patrol going.

3. ADJOURN

Deputy Mayor Trefethen made a motion to adjourn at 9:00 pm; seconded by Councilor McCusker.

Vote: 8/0.