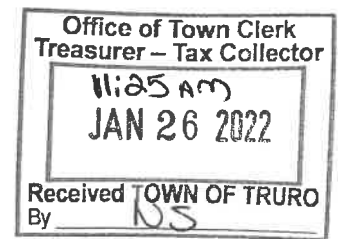


Budget Task Force Minutes
January 10, 2022, 5:00pm meeting
Via GoToMeeting Platform



Select Board Present: Chair-Robert Weinstein, Vice Chair-Kristin Reed, Clerk-Susan Areson, Member-Stephanie Rein, Member-John Dundas

Finance Committee: Chair-Robert Panessiti, Member-Steven Roderick

Finance Committee Absent: Vice Chair-Richard Wood, Member-Lori Meads, Member-Raphael Richter

Others Present: Town Manager-Darrin Tangeman, Assistant Town Manager-Kelly Clark, Town Accountant-Trudi Brazil, Police Chief-Jamie Calise, Fire Chief-Tim Collins, Michelle Thomas-Truro Police Department

Chair Weinstein called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

Police

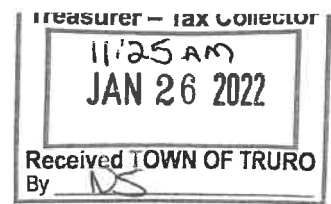
Chief Calise stated that before the Board is the proposed budget for FY 2023. It is close to being level-funded with very minimal change. It is two-tenths of one percent, or about \$4,000 different than the previous fiscal year. Consistent with years past, salaries represent the largest portion at about 89 percent of the overall budget. He wished to highlight a few items.

- There was a small increase for advertising. Staffing is the greatest challenge, so many of the increases are related to that.
- Training monies were added to include an online training platform for some of the training requirements.
- The lab fees are related to testing for a new candidate. That would include psychological testing as well as medical testing.
- With respect to travel, and training for that went down a bit.
- Academy costs for new candidates is up to \$3,900. He's budgeted for potentially two for the academy.

Member Areson pointed out that areas of the budget went down. She also asked if he could explain hourly wages and shift command pay, which Chief Calise detailed.

Finance Committee member Roderick asked for an explanation of the salary increases. Chief Calise clarified. Finance Committee member Roderick then asked the Town Manager if the percentage increase for salaries was in line with other Department Heads in other departments. Town Manager Tangeman stated the increases were aligned with other police chiefs, lieutenants, and other contracting officers in adjacent communities. In some cases the amount was less. Finance Committee member Roderick was more interested in knowing if other Department Heads in Truro got the same increase. Town Manager Tangeman stated that the positions are different, and he would not make comparisons between them. He has a market survey of all the senior positions on the Cape that helped inform decisions based on contracts of senior administrators in the Town.

Finance Committee Chair Panessiti reminded people that we are undergoing a compensation study across all departments and that to lose employees to a neighboring town is unacceptable. He noted that some events aren't happening this fiscal year, and asked, as we look forward in the budget was the Chief able to "Rob Peter to pay Paul" a bit. He also noticed that the overtime number is pretty solid, compared to last year. His understanding is that we lost a few officers this year and he asked if the Chief would be able to manage that number within the budget given his constraints of staff, etc. Chief Calise



went into detail about the tremendous staffing challenges being experienced across law enforcement, not just on the Cape, but statewide and nationally. The overtime isn't as much of a worry as is filling the positions. He just lost two officers that went to neighboring departments that had a greater salary. The National Police Foundation is seeing that 86 percent of the nation's law enforcement agencies reported staffing shortages over the past year. He spoke to the high cost of living, very few housing options and minimally competitive wages.

Member Dundas had a question about demographics of recruits. He asked if the Chief is seeing people moving from a previous vocation or is he seeing recruits that are coming straight out of college or straight out of the academy. Chief Calise stated that what he is seeing, because of excessive vacancies, is not many applicants at all and only a few of the ones that do apply have a college degree or training. He has not seen many recruits coming in as a second career.

Chair Weinstein noted that in the Chief's written preparation the fact that Massachusetts passed a police reform bill (Chapter 253 of the Massachusetts section laws that dates from 2020 and wondered if, going forward, that act has future potential expenses associated with it? Chief Calise said that there are many impacts financially on the Town. All impacts have not been identified because of the rollout process itself. Chair Weinstein's second question had to do with the anticipated cost increases or decreases and his focus on the outmoded dispatch equipment that the Department has. He noticed that the dollar amount includes a 7 percent pricing increase. He wonders if the 7 percent isn't being hopeful given the fact that the Town Meeting will occur well beyond the 90-day quote period and he hopes that when it comes time to put a warrant article together, the Chief will be prepared to hone in on a realistic number. Chief Calise stated that the dispatch system they have is original to the building and is almost 30-years old. Parts have become outdated and deteriorate. Replacement parts are harder to find. He did reach out to get a quote. Once a quote is received, it's good for 90 days, and then after that we're subject to any increases. That 7 percent increase that went into effect should be good for one year. Chair Weinstein asked if there would be any cost in terms of training to use the new equipment? Chief Calise said that the software will be the same. Town Manager Tangeman added that this would come out of the Capital Stabilization Fund. Town Accountant Brazil stated the current balance in the Capital Expenditure Stabilization Fund is \$533,000.

Member Reed joined the meeting at approximately 5:34pm.

Member Reed asked if there have been any suggestions or problem solving being discussed among the other chiefs in other communities that could be part of the Compensation Study when it's in full swing. Chief Calise said the group discusses this regularly. Everyone is in the same predicament. All options are on the table, but with the reform law, which is such a stringent session act, it puts a greater strain on the staffing challenge he's seeing.

Fire & Rescue

Chief Collins began his presentation of the FY 2023 budget.

- They have an increase of roughly \$81,000 compared with that of last year's budget. Two big areas of increase were salaries, which account for almost 78 percent of the increase and an increase to the Fire Academy training of 18 percent.
- There is a substantial increase to fuel costs. Last year they were budgeting at \$3.00 per gallon and this year it's at \$4.00 per gallon.
- Fees for licensing have increased.
- The Department has attempted to digitize a lot of training, recordkeeping, and scheduling programs. Certain programs that were initially paid for by gifts and grants have been put into this budget as they become more permanent.

Member Areson asked the Chief to speak more about what is included in the increase. Chief Collins stated that four additional firefighters at step one and firefighter/EMT/paramedic are not included in

the budget and would be addressed on an override. Town Manager Tangeman stated that they wanted to present the operational budget and present a discussion on the four firefighters at a future meeting. For this meeting, the budget is focusing on continuing operations. Questions were asked about sick time and where in the budget that was located.

Member Dundas noted that Chief Collins listed training as one of the problems. He asked for an explanation, which Chief Collins went into.

Chair Weinstein asked about the per diem line item. He sees the FY2023 budget of \$60,000 and noted that last year it was \$51,000. A note with that line item states this is to allow staffing increases and overage during high call volumes with a breakdown of 480 hours. Chief Collins stated the 480 hours is mutually exclusive if they were to bring on four additional staff. The increase of \$9,000 is partly because they received wage increases. With this contract, per diem's were bumped up to the entry level that his current firefighters are at.

Finance Committee Chair Panessiti asked the Chief to talk about staffing challenges. Chief Collins said that the people applying have no qualifications. The applicant pool is not what it was. This is a nationwide problem, and he echoes Chief Calise's statement that recruitment and retention are down. Finance Chair Panessiti asked him to speak about what happens if he is short-staffed and someone calls in sick. How is that accommodated? Chief Collins stated it's accomplished two ways. They can try and utilize overtime to fill those positions, they can try to plug them in with per diems, or there is mandated overtime which can be problematic.

Member Areson wanted to make people aware that Lower Cape Ambulance is not included in this budget. That is an entirely separate budget.

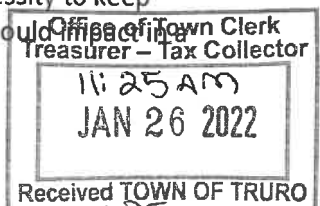
Finance Committee Member Roderick asked, in regard to the salaries and wages how does the Chief feel Truro is doing? There seems to be huge competition between towns to recruit. Chief Collins believes we've made steps in the right direction. He would hold off until he sees the results of the salary study. He feels the increases in the contractual agreement were very well received by members of the department. Finance Committee Member Roderick then asked if there was a training program for EMTs to go into certification for paramedics. Chief Collins said that it is not part of the current budget, but the Town Manager has mentioned that it'll be discussed at another time.

Chair Weinstein had a question about line item 529000 which shows an increase of \$2500 for equipment testing. He stated that in the past there have been issues where there was a company whose sole job was hose testing. He wants to be sure that if there's an advantage to co-joining with the company that does that testing, that it happens at a time when they're not being called back if they're already in this neighborhood.

Finance Committee Chair Panessiti asked if Chief Collins and/or Town Manager Tangeman sees coming to the Town Meeting this year with a separate override request for staffing? Chief Collins said his wish is yes. He runs two per shift right now. There was an incident where in a two-week period he lost 38 percent of the Fire Department staff to other towns. Town Manager Tangeman stated that they will come to the Budget Task Force at a future date in January to discuss the proposal for four firefighters. He listed multiple reasons.

Member Reed asked how Chief Collins has been most intimately impacted as a department by the pandemic and running on a staff that is not sufficient to the needs provided. Chief Collins stated that for anyone in public safety or on a frontline basis, Covid wears on staff. People are concerned they will bring Covid home to their families. Some have young children; some have elderly parents. It wears on your stock level of equipment, frustration and ability.

Chair Weinstein was looking at Item D which talks about recommended efficiencies. Upcoming, there will be an ask for two new fire engines. He thinks it's important to be cognizant that we have around 3300, maybe closer to 3500 single family residential buildings in Town. There is a necessity to keep equipment updated. Chair Weinstein also asked how much the Fire Chief thought it would cost to replace the equipment.



positive direction, our ability to secure and retain the personnel that are necessary if we are actually competitive. Chief Collins thinks compensation is a big portion, but there are other factors that will keep or recruit people to the department. The work environment, the equipment and the staff all factor into that.

Member Areson asked about training costs. Town Accountant Brazil explained that in terms of the Fire Department, training costs are strictly borne by the town. Chief Collins stated that there is no charge to send someone to the Fire Academy. That is subsidized by the insurance industry. Where the Town incurs a cost is that we have to pay them their salary and housing costs (or mileage). The only other option would be to provide a vehicle, but you'll still incur some costs for meals, etc.

Emergency Management

Chief Collins stated that the only change in the budget from 2022 to 2023 is that they need inventory and to potentially increase the supplies provided in the shelter trailer. We have an agreement with the Town of Provincetown that they maintain the shelter and Truro maintains the supplies. Finance Committee Chair Panessiti noted that a lot of the supplies expire each year, and that's why it has to be replaced. He asked if there were medical or food items that could be donated, or does it get wasted each year? Chief Collins doesn't think we'd want to get into donating expired items. Finance Committee Chair Panessiti meant items which could be donated prior to expiration. Chief Collins will look into that.

Member Reed made a motion to adjourn at 6:20pm.

Member Areson seconded.

So voted; 5-0-0, motion carries.

There was no quorum of the Finance Committee, therefore no need to make a motion to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,



Noelle L. Scoullar



Darrin Tangeman

Under the Authority of the Truro Select Board

Public Records material of 1.10.2022

1. Truro Police Department Memorandum
2. Police Department Budget Request
3. Truro Fire Department Memorandum
4. EMS Budget Request

TEMA Budget Request

