

**Truro Budget Task Force**  
**Monday, January 27, 2020**  
**Public Safety Facility**

**Finance Committee Members Present:** Chair Robert Panessiti; Lori Meads, Raphael Richter  
**Board of Selectmen Members Present:** Chair Janet Worthington; Robert Weinstein, Susan Areson, Kristen Reed

**Present:** Town Manager Rae Ann Palmer; Assistant Town Manager Kelly Clark; Town Accountant Trudi Brazil; Fire Chief Timothy Collins; Police Chief Jamie Calise; Lower Cape Ambulance Association Chief Operations Officer Steve Roderick

Select Board Chair Janet Worthington and Finance Committee Chair Robert Panessiti opened the meeting at 4:01 p.m.

**Police Department Budget**

Police Chief Jamie Calise distributed a summary of police activities for the past year. He included the 2017 and 2018 summaries for comparison. He noted the young department, which is reflected in many of the calls. The number of arrests has increased, but property crimes have been cut in half. He discussed calls for safety and for checking vacant properties. Chief Calise said contraband is often found in vehicle stops. He said there is still training needed for marijuana-related situations. His focus on the department is to apply best practices.

Chief Calise gave the overall budget increase, mainly for salaries. Training has not changed, but it is a very needed line. He said the budget is solid for services, equipment and training. The Chief addressed specific questions on the FY21 Budget: overtime; the court overtime line; retention of officers; numbers of male and female officers; calls where two officers are necessary; liability issues; the tuition line; and the training conference line. There is a total increase of 2.21%, Ms. Palmer said. Although communications and telephone services had been taken out of all department budgets, some handheld user equipment for beach safety appeared in the police budget. She discussed funding for the installation of the new communication system. Chief Calise discussed the decreased amount for bottled water. He promised to replace the batteries in the Public Safety Facility Conference Room clock, which has been stuck on the same time for months.

**Fire Department Budget**

Ms. Palmer distributed an updated Fire Department Budget. Fire Chief Timothy Collins said the budget was broken down differently this year. There are four additional staff members and new paramedics. He and the Town Manager explained the increases for salaries and the contract with Lower Cape Ambulance. Chief Collins gave the proposed summer schedule for staff and beach EMTs. There is a replacement ambulance request in the capital budget, Ms. Palmer said. Task Force members discussed the use of the Lower Cape Ambulance services. Lower Cape

Ambulance will continue to bill for their service, Ms. Palmer said. Ambulance services have been a topic of concern for at least the past five years. Ms. Palmer said the Town will try to hire paramedics, or current staff members might be interested in training to become paramedics. Revenue generated by cannabis sales in Provincetown would not be available for Truro. Town Counsel predicts that municipal controls of cannabis businesses will change, so towns should not count on that revenue.

Chief Collins said the Fire Department is stable at this time. The Fire Chief explained staffing practices during the summer season and the off season. Ms. Palmer discussed the importance of attracting new paramedics to Truro. Housing for staff is still an issue for the Fire Department, Chief Collins said. The Town Manager and the Task Force discussed incentives and other measures to help with workforce housing. Ms. Palmer said there is an advertisement ready to go for fire fighter paramedics after Town Meeting provided the budget is approved. She discussed budget increases that would occur over the next few years. Chief Collins said there are grants, but there is competition for them.

Chief Collins explained the lines for overtime, vacation, vacation buy backs, personal time, and sick time. He said that there is an increase in services for a leased copy machine, for devices for CPR machines, and for mandated testing of equipment. He said there is regional scheduling for certain tests. Ambulance cost proposals were displayed on the screen with various scenarios. Ms. Palmer said she would prepare a fact sheet to explain the options. Mr. Panessiti recalled previous studies on ambulance services used by the Lower Cape towns. He suggested presenting some historical perspective at Annual Town Meeting.

Chief Collins explained safety concerns behind the capital budget request for two sets of gear and shelf life of the gear. This information should be provided to the public in advance of Town Meeting.

#### **Truro Emergency Management Agency (TEMA)**

Tim Collins, as Emergency Management Director, explained the TEMA budget. He discussed the public safety phones and the satellite phone at Longnook which were initially bought with grant money. Truro partners with Provincetown for a shelter, which needs replacement supplies. Ms. Palmer said past cuts explain the big jump in percentage in this year's budget. Ms. Palmer said there is an ongoing discussion about being part of the regionalized shelter system.

The Fire Department has pursued Assistance to Firefighter grants without success for replacement fire tender but has received \$30,000 for thermal imaging equipment. Chief Collins said the next round of grants will be opening in a few weeks. He will work with the Town Manager on an application.

#### **Lower Cape Ambulance Association**

Steve Roderick, Chief Operation Officer (COO) of Lower Cape Ambulance Association, explained their budget's increase. It isn't as large as last year's, he said. There was a 10%

increase in transports last year. He broke down the personnel used for the transports. This is the basis of the billing, he said. He explained percentages covered by Medicare, Medicaid, private insurance, no insurance, Workers' Comp, and catastrophic insurance. Lower Cape Ambulance makes the bulk of their money on the private insurance, he said; however, they do offer a free care fund. Lower Cape tries to keep their rates in line with other Cape towns, but they are considering raising the base rates.

Mr. Roderick explained the terms Advanced Life Support (ALS) and Basic Life Support (BLS). He discussed the challenges of staffing and service, mileage allowances, wear and tear on the ambulance, the distance to Cape Cod Hospital, and retaining qualified staff. One EMT and one paramedic go on every call.

Lower Cape Ambulance started as transport service in 1937, but in their last contract they changed to include response to rescue calls. They are now the primary rescue service for Provincetown. The Truro contract has the provision that both Lower Cape and Truro respond to calls. Lower Cape Ambulance anticipates more income with their increased service. They are offering more incentives to keep personnel: matches for retirement, dental insurance, more paid holidays, and double time for holiday and Carnival coverage.

Truro needs to plan for Lower Cape Ambulance's changing model. Lower Cape is taking steps to stay viable. Their collection rate is better than municipalities because they do follow through and send to collection agencies. They have the ability to hire quality staff. There has been an increase of transports from nursing homes and the elderly. Because of an improved Emergency Room, people are more willing to go by ambulance to Cape Cod Hospital, Mr. Roderick said.

Mr. Roderick detailed Lower Cape's administrative costs, which go mostly to a billing company and consultancy bookkeeping. Scheduling is another significant component of administration, Mr. Roderick said.

Lower Cape Ambulance and the Town will need to sort out everything in the next year. Rae Ann Palmer has been a good ally, Mr. Roderick said. He would be happy to share any additional information upon request.

### **Next Meeting**

The next Budget Task Force meeting on February 3, 2020 will cover budgets for Recreation & Beach, Health & Conservation and the Council on Aging.

### **Adjournment**


Susan Areson moved to adjourn. Kristen Reed seconded, and the motion carried 4-0.

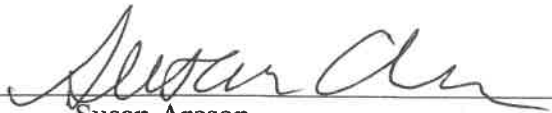
Finance Lori Meads moved to adjourn. Rafael Richter seconded, and the motion carried 3-0.

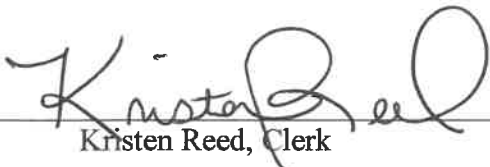
The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.


Respectfully submitted,

  
Mary Rogers, Secretary

  
Janet Worthington, Chair

  
Susan Areson

  
Kristen Reed, Clerk

  
Robert Weinstein, Vice-chair

**Public Records Material of 1/27/2020**  
FY21 Budget booklet

