

**TOWN OF NORTON
FINANCE COMMITTEE**

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March 7, 2022

7:00 P.M.

The meeting is being held via hybrid model at Norton Media Center and via Zoom

MINUTES

Call to Order

The March 7, 2022 meeting of the Finance Committee was held in person and was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Ms. Aimee Sawyer, Chair of the Finance Committee.

Finance Committee members present: Paula Daniels, Kevin Snyder, Joe Parker, Yelena, Zach Tsilis, William Rotondi, Kevin Bugaj, Bonnie Yezukevich

Absent: Michael Fiore, Stephen Evans

Guests: Police Chief Brian Clark

New Business

Ms. Sawyer opens with talking about the hybrid meetings and seeing if they will work for the Finance Committee, if they do not Ms. Sawyer will figure out an alternative option

Mr. Yunits starts the discussion of data processing, Charlene Fisk is part of this conversation

Ms. Fisk starts discussing the FY 2023 budget. The first topic discussed are the expenses, radios are brought up. The radios are no longer under warranty, some are too old to be repaired. Phone repairs and light repairs are discussed. Pamet is no longer used since communications have changed. Professional services were discussed. The website and all of the programs that are used were discussed. Payroll, cameras and fingerprint scanners were all part of the discussion. Vendors, subscriptions, agreements were all discussed.

The list of expenses discussed by Ms. Fisk amounts to \$415,000.00

Mr. Parker asks about the radios no longer being under warranty. What would the cost be to actually replace the radios or extend the warranty?

Mr. Yunits replies by saying there is a replacement program in place for the radios

POLICE UPDATES:

Police Chief Clark starts his portion of the conversation with the topic of communications. Chief Clark talks about the assessment that the Police pay to SEMRECC every year (\$300,000), that has not changed in a couple years. This covers Fire Department as well. More towns will hopefully join to cut down the cost.

Chief Clark then discusses the police operating budget. Many of the increases in the budget are contractual, looking for additional hours for the records administrator, there is an increase requested in the budget for this year. Chief Clark discusses the school resource officers. Overtime hours are discussed, special police are discussed, uniform and clothing cost is discussed. Ammunition cost is discussed, along with training. Cost of fixing vehicles is discussed. Steps of pay are discussed, the years of service determines your pay.

Mr. Tsilis asks what the resource officers do during school breaks, Chief Clark answers that the resource officers are assigned to a patrol shift during the times that school is not in sessions but the officers also take vacation time during school breaks.

Mr. Tsilis asks what the age of retirement is for a police officer (65), and asks how many officers will be at that point within the next 5 years.

Mr. Parker asks how difficult it is to find someone who is qualified to be a police officer. It is a long process to get to the academy and then through the academy.

Mr. Tsilis asks who pays for someone to go through the academy (Norton) and what their commitment is (5 year contract or paying the town back). The Fire department has an agreement as well.

Chief Clark discusses the breakdown of how over time is used. Vacation time, sick time, and holidays accounts for 65%, training is 11%, investigations are 5%, court is about 4%.

Chief Clark discusses Post C, Peace officers standards and training commission, and what they are responsible for.

Chief Clark discusses police cruisers, the need for them, how many of them are down, and the difficulty and time it takes to not only fix them but to get new ones. Requesting three new cruisers.

Chief Clark discusses the new tasers that the police received and the 5-year payment plan that is in place for them, he goes on to discuss portable radios and how they are replacing about 5 radios/year and that it has been working well so far. There is also discussion regarding the public health inspector coming out yearly to check the cell block at the police department, there are some suicide proof areas that need to be attended to in the cell block.

FIRE UPDATES:

Fire Chief Simmons starts his portion of the discussion with the grants that have been received this year.

Station one(Charlley) was opened on January 7, 2022.

Chief Simmons talks about the programs that are being implemented and the federal grants that are being worked on.

Chief Simmons discusses salaries and wages, over time, there is discussion on the new hires and the losses.

Chief Simmons discusses the cost of training/seminars/educational assistance.

Chief Simmons discusses how there have been changes made to the Fire Station to make it more efficient and that there will be changes made to station one as well.

Chief Simmons discusses the need to care for the gas meters and how much goes into it, vehicles are also discussed, along with medical equipment.

Chief Simmons discusses the difficulty of finding people and having people stay long term, and then continues to go on and discuss the 5-year capital plan, and that the ladder truck will need to be replaced in the next couple of years.

BOARD OF HEALTH UPDATES:

Chris Zahner is present to speak about the board of health budget, there are contractual increases in their salary line item, but their expenses have stayed the exact same.

The public health nurse budget has stayed the same.

Ms. Sawyer asks if all the funds from the Cares Act, and other similar funds, have been allocated or if there is more left and what it can go towards.

Mr. Parker asks when you could change or remove a budget for something that has not been used for a while.

Sanitary landfill budget is discussed.

INSPECTIONS UPDATES:

There are two full time people in the inspections department, and a couple individuals that are part time, and outside individuals that are part time.

There is an increase in the budget.

Mr. Tsilis asks if there is enough inspection coverage with everything going on within the town. Nick lafrate replies that we are in good shape for the time being.

DOG OFFICER UPDATE:

There is a full-time dog officer and a part time officer at the moment, overtime is part of the increase.

The salaries have been increased, and there is no change in the expenses.

Ms. Sawyer gives updates regarding the next meeting; she makes the decision for the next meeting to go back to zoom.

The Chair would entertain a motion to adjourn.

Joe Parked has moved to adjourn the meeting.

Zach Tsilis has seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

Vote is unanimous.

Meeting is Adjourned at 8:43 PM

Respectfully submitted by

Rachel Medas, FinCom Secretary

Minutes Approved by Committee on:

6/6/2022

Signature:


Aimee Sawyer, Finance Committee Chair