1. APPROVED BET Budget Comm. Dept. Reviews Minutes

Documents:

APPROVED_BET_BUDGET_COMM_DEPT_REVIEWS_MINUTES_02-10-05.PDF
Present:
Committee: Valeria P. Storms, Chairman
Jara Burnett, Laurence Simon, Stephen Walko

Board: Janice Gardner, Kathryn Guimard, Michael Mason,
Alma Rutgers, Bob Stone, Peter Tesei (left during Police Departmental Review)

Board Ex-Officio: First Selectman Jim Lash

Staff: Peter Mynarski, Roland Gieger, Finance Department; Ed Gomeau, Town Administrator; Police Chief Jim Walters,
Deputy Chief Pat Chila (for Police Departmental Review); Commissioner of Public Works Marcos Madrid, Jim Lavin
Bob Kalm, Bill Marr, Jim Maloney (for DPW Departmental review); Maureen Kast (for Human Resources Departmental Review); Commissioner of Social Services Carol Femia, Judith Cullen, Sue Steck, Ray Butler
Bob LaMarche (for Social Services Departmental Review)

Other: Pat Geismar and Anne Drake for Social Services
Departmental Review

Ms. Storms called the meeting to order at 9:05 A.M.

Police Department

Chief Walters reviewed the plan to have a combined civilian dispatch system in place when the new public safety facility, with a new dispatch center, is completed. He said that the plan, which will be phased in over two years, was "financially prudent and feasible." The implementation of the plan is projected to ultimately result in a net savings of $35,592 in salaries and will put six more uniformed police officers into patrol as well as free up six firefighter dispatchers for reassignment to the firefighting force.
Of the six police positions being reassigned from dispatch, three will be assigned as neighborhood resource officers and three will become new sergeant positions allowing for a more appropriate span of control for police officer supervision.

There are now twelve police full-time equivalents and six fire full-time equivalents in dispatch. These eighteen FTE’s will be replaced with sixteen FTE civilian dispatchers once the plan is fully implemented.

Chief Walters provided members of the Budget Committee with handouts outlining the implementation plan.

In Phase I of the plan (2005-2006 budget year) the following steps would be taken:

- Six civilian dispatchers will be hired (expected to be ready to assume full responsibilities by February).
- Three police officer dispatchers will be upgraded to sergeant.
- Three police officer dispatchers will be upgraded to technician.
- The “Hire in Advance” money ($160,000) will be dropped from the budget (the department has not been using this money, reflecting the difficulty of getting places in the Police Academy).
- Two unfunded positions ($122,250) will be dropped from the budget.

The net reduction in the 2005-2006 budget is $39,275.

In Phase II of the plan (2006-2007 budget year), the remaining ten civilian dispatchers will be hired and two police officer positions will be deleted from the table of organization through attrition. The cost increase in the 2006-2007 budget is projected to be $383,087.

In Phase III of the plan (2007-2008 budget year), the six fire fighter dispatchers will be reassigned to firefighting duties.

Questions from members of the Budget Committee elicited the following information:

- The police contract permits the elimination of eight patrol officers as long as eight existing positions are upgraded to premium pay.
- The question of how many officers will ultimately be in the table of organization is still under discussion with the union.
- Of the twelve FTE’s currently in dispatch, only eight are dedicated to dispatch.
- There are nine people who are pulled to fill holes and only spend part of their time in dispatch (we spend $64,000 on overtime filling holes in dispatch).
- Civilian dispatchers work a 40-hour week as compared to a 35 and 1/2 hour week for police dispatchers (this is worth tens of thousands of dollars).
- If retired police officers slide into the civilian dispatcher positions there will be healthcare cost savings (only three are expected to do this).
- Neighborhood resource officers will provide for better continuity of personnel in geographic regions.
• The Sector Commanders (Captains) will select the neighborhood resource officers and put them into training mode by April 2005; there will a three-month training period until June 30.
• The 2005-2006 budget book will be updated to reflect the position changes.
• There are currently fifteen sergeants in the Patrol Division; this plan will give us eighteen, which mathematically allows for three on each shift, a supervisory capability that we currently do not have.
• Civilian dispatchers will be completely physically separated from the police in the new public safety facility (this was not done in the past, which led to problems).
• Separate civilian dispatch is the industry practice throughout the U.S., and this issue was settled as long ago as the 1970’s.
• There is state mandated training for civilian dispatchers done by “various entities”; no recruitment problems are anticipated.
• The move to community policing is consistent with the PAS study recommendations.
• There is an advisory council for community policing with chairmen for each of the three sectors who meet with the police captains. Monthly meetings are held, and the officers are well received in the neighborhoods and see the benefit as they have begun to attend meetings.
• The number of officers on the street has declined substantially over the last decades; the additional officers will get us back to the staffing model we had ten to fifteen years ago.
• The budget and headcount numbers in the 2005-2006 budget book are not the final version, as discussions are still underway with the union; changes can be expected over the next ten days; updated final numbers will be available in time for the budget vote.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. Madrid handed out DPW’s written responses to questions from members of the Budget Committee. He also handed out written materials explaining the request for a Zoning Inspector and a flow chart illustrating investigation of illegal apartments.

Mr. Walko asked Mr. Madrid to elaborate upon the written response to question #5 regarding the organizational structure of the Building Division and the relationship with the Land Use Agencies.

Mr. Madrid said that according to the Town Charter (Article 12, Section 152), the Zoning Enforcement Officer (Jim Maloney) reports administratively to the Building Official (Bill Marr) and the Commissioner of Public Works. Regarding zoning interpretations, however, the Zoning Enforcement Officer reports to the Planning and Zoning Commission. The Zoning Inspector reports to the Zoning Enforcement Officer. The Zoning Enforcement Officer and the Zoning Inspector report to the Building Official with regard to the building permit approval process and to the Planning and Zoning...
Commission with regard to zoning policy, interpretations and the enforcement of permit conditions imposed by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Building permit applications go first to the Zoning Enforcement Officer to determine if the application meets the zoning requirements. The Zoning Enforcement Officer attends the Planning and Zoning staff meetings, not the DPW staff meetings, to keep up to date on zoning regulations. State statutes require that any building permit first be reviewed for zoning compliance.

Mr. Maloney, the Zoning Enforcement Officer, is the staff for the Zoning Board of Appeals and must attend their meetings every other week. The Zoning Enforcement Officer reviews all building permits applications, handles all staff work for the Zoning Board of Appeals, handles all trade permits and all citizen complaints. At the moment, Mr. Maloney can only deal with 20% of the complaints coming to him.

Referring to page 11 of the handout explaining the request for a Zoning Inspector position, Mr. Madrid said that in the period between March 2004 and December 2004 there were 252 inquiries catalogued (unrelated to issued building permits). Of these only 31 (12%) were concluded, while 88% were still “out there” unresolved.

Mr. Madrid said that the Zoning Inspector will focus on illegal apartments. If this issue gets publicity, people will think twice about creating or maintaining illegal apartments.

Mr. Lash said that he was not suggesting that one person can do all this work, but that he just wants one additional person in the 2005-006 budget year.

Ms. Storms inquired about the Town’s responsibility for persons displaced from illegal housing. Mr. Madrid replied that there is a document describing the process and that Valerie Maze of the Law Department has drafted a Town policy consistent with state statutes. Mr. Lash said that the Town would pay the cost of relocation, but then would recover this cost from the landlord, with a cap on the amount recoverable. To recover its costs, the Town can also put a lien on the property. He said that this is not a process without cost.

Mr. Walko asked if the goal was to answer all complaints. Mr. Madrid said that this was “still a work in progress.” He said that they would be able to get to an 80% - 90% category in terms of looking at the sites referred to in the complaints, but that priority would be given to illegal units as these constitute a health and safety hazard. The hope is that 100% of the complaints regarding illegal units would be resolved.

Ms. Burnett asked if there were referrals from GEMS. Mr. Madrid said “no.” He said that most referrals come from the Fire Department, the Police Department, tenants, and also from the Health Department.
There is cross training to promote understanding of the other trades and inspections involved.

In terms of measurement, Mr. Lash said that:

- We should measure what actually happens and then work over time to reduce variability in performance.
- Once we know the capacity and decrease the unpredictability, we can ask what level of service is desired, and then begin to ask how many people are needed.

Mr. Walko asked why it was not a policy to contact homeowners by cell phone when the homeowner isn’t home, rather than to keep returning.

Mr. Marr said there was currently no policy to have inspectors call from the road. Inspectors are not to enter a home if no one is there unless it is a construction site. There is a new inspection result card that better documents failures. They are working to improve the process. There are now 80 to 100 inspection requests a day, which cannot physically be accomplished. Mr. Lash said that because of the workload the inspector must move on to the next inspection and it would not be feasible for the inspector to call the homeowner and wait for the homeowner to come. Mr. Marr said that if they can limit the number of inspections per day to a manageable level, then Mr. Walko’s suggestion (to contact homeowners by phone when they are not home) would be more viable.

There are habitual offenders causing repeat inspections. There is no charge for re-inspections, but the possibility has been discussed. We have the capability to grade contractors who create a larger percentage of the workload and to print out pass/fail percentages.

Those most upset are individual homeowners who might wait all day. Mr. Lash said that he is aware of this.

The new position of Zoning Inspector is not in the 2005-2006 budget at this point. The position is on Mr. Gieger’s list.

The DPW departmental review ended at 11:15 A.M. The members of the Budget Committee took a short break. The meeting resumed at 11:30 AM.

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

Ms. Storms invited Ms. Kast to explain some of the changes to the Town’s table of organization.

Ms. Kast said that four reclassifications have already occurred and are in the current budget. There are five or six reclassifications reflecting requests from departments for 2005-2006.
The Department of Human Resources sent a letter to all Town departments requesting changes by December 2004.

New positions approved by the First Selectman are: Zoning Inspector, Parking Enforcement Supervisor, and Civilian Dispatchers.

There have been seventeen positions deleted since the current budget was passed.

Mr. Lash said that seven more positions were in the process of being deleted. Of these, four positions are vacant and three are not vacant.

Mr. Lash said that he would inform the BET of additions and deletions in positions. Mr. Walko asked if he could produce a list that corresponds to the Budget Book.

Ms. Storms asked Mr. Walko if he would like a quarterly report. Mr. Walko said that this was the purview of the Human Resources Committee. Mr. Stone, Chairman of the Human Resources Committee, said that he would like such a quarterly report.

Ms. Storms said that there was very little financial impact based on what “Ms. Kast has told us.”

Mr. Lash said that he was trying to get rid of dysfunctional behavior in relation to the unions, such as unions always grieving the deletion of a position, or never letting a position be added without negotiation. He said that he wants to avoid being in a grievance process all the time. He said that he is trying to create working relationships with unions that are more transparent.

The meeting with Ms. Kast concluded at 11:50 A.M. Members of the Budget Committee then took a lunch break. The meeting resumed at 1 P.M.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Ms. Storms said that members of the Budget Committee had received written answers to their questions for the Department of Social Services.

Ms. Geismar, Co-Chairman of the Board of Social Services, said that the cost benefit analysis of the department’s discrete programs was complete and that, as a result of this analysis, it became clear that 66% of the department’s work is casework. The department needs now to focus on an analysis of its casework. They will be looking at setting goals and measuring success.

Ms. Geismar also said that the Board will review the discrete programs again over the next six months, looking for reasons to expand, reduce, remove, or outsource certain programs. In response to a question from Ms. Storms, Ms. Geismar said that these programs should probably be reviewed annually. She said that the department will be
developing measures as it moves to outcome based budgeting. In response to a question from Ms. Storms, Ms. Geismar said that there were no specific plans at the moment to do comparisons with other communities. The staff did not have the time. She also said that she was not sure there are many comparable programs.

Mr. Simon raised a series of questions regarding “direct” vs. “non-direct” services provided by the department, referring to the calculation that 25.7% of the social services budget is non-direct services. He asked Ms. Geismar for clarification regarding the listing of thirty-five positions as to which people provided direct services and which people provided non-direct services. He asked how we would know what an acceptable level of non-direct service is. Ms. Storms referred to the Liaison Report. Ms. Rutgers said that the Department had somewhat researched this, making comparisons with several non-profit service providers in the community.

Ms. Drake, a member of the Board of Social Services, said that there was a need to look at staff providing non-direct services to find potential savings. Ms. Drake said that the board has been looking at programs to find savings while still providing good services and that the outsourcing of the Friendly Visitor Program was a good example.

Ms. Geismar said that the Department now has a clear mission statement and clear goals and will apply a grid to all programs.

Ms. Storms said that the Board of Social Services has come a long way in a year. Mr. Walko said that the Liaison Report was helpful.

**MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION**

Mr. Simon said that he had questions on the Retirement Board numbers and other questions related to the Retirement Board. It was agreed that there would be further discussion of issues related to the Retirement Board. Mr. Mynarski, Ms. Kast, Mr. Gomeau and Mr. Pagliaro would be in attendance.

Ms. Storms asked Mr. Walko to write questions for Mr. Wetmore regarding the Law Department.

Ms. Storms asked if there were any questions regarding capital projects that department heads should address.

Mr. Simon asked if the Town should be building a training room at Greenwich Library. Mr. Lash referred to the agreement with the library.

Ms. Storms said that the pavilions at Grass Island in the Parks and Recreation capital budget did not seem to be much of a priority.
Mr. Lash raised the question as to what to do about capital projects that should be done, but never score highly in the CIP process.

Ms. Burnett suggested that the Department of Parks and Recreation should wait with its projects and work according to a long-range plan. Mr. Walko said that this was one of the questions the department will answer in writing.

The meeting ended at 2:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alma Rutgers, Recording Secretary

Valeria P. Storms, Chairman