TOWN OF GREENWICH
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION
BUDGET COMMITTEE
DEPARTMENTAL REVIEWS DAY TWO FOR FY13 BUDGET
MINUTES
Cone Room, 2nd Floor – 9:00 A.M.
Friday, February 24, 2012

Present:
Committee: Joseph Pellegrino, William Finger, Jeff Ramer, Leslie L. Tarkington

Staff: Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Roland Gieger, Budget Director; John Crary, Town Administrator; Alison Graham, Employee Benefits Manager; James Heavey, Chief of Police, Captain Mark Kordick, Police Services, Greg Hannigan, Police Director of General Services, Peter Tesei, First Selectman, Al Cava, Director of Labor Relations, Drew Marzullo, Board of Selectman, Fire Chief Peter Siecienski, Assistant Fire Chief Robert Kick, Dustin Anderson, Office of the First Selectman

Board: Michael Mason, Chairman, Sean Goldrick, Randall Huffman, Mary Lee Kiernan, Art Norton, Bob Brady, Marc Johnson

Mr. Pellegrino called the meeting to order at 9:05 A.M.

SPEAKERS

Healthcare – Mr. Crary started the discussion by stating he has been the acting Human Resources Director since the departure of the previous director, Maureen Kast. Mr. Crary informed the Committee that there would be a new full time director on March 5th.

Mr. Crary explained that working on controlling healthcare costs for the Town of Greenwich was a priority and a team effort. He described the team as consisting of Alison Graham, Al Cava, Larry Simon and the Town healthcare vendor and consultant Ovation Benefits. Mr. Crary stressed that current Town healthcare costs are trending negatively. He added fortunately we are locked into a favorable contract with Cigna, the current provider. Ms. Graham added that the town recently switched healthcare providers to Cigna from Aetna on December 31, 2012. Ms. Graham distributed several documents relative to the Healthcare Budget for the 2012-2013 Fiscal Year and costs of the plan by category. Ms. Graham stated that healthcare costs were down because of the large migrations of Town and Board of Education employees over recent year to Health Savings Accounts (HAS).

Mr. Pellegrino asked what the Town is currently doing to curtail future healthcare costs. Ms. Graham offered that through labor negotiations they are trying to reduce costs by changing the plan designs and are offering wellness programs. Ms. Graham offered to the Committee that the Town vendor, Ovation Benefits, has stated that the Town of Greenwich is a trailblazer in the area of healthcare innovations.

Mr. Pellegrino asked Ms. Graham how the Town stays current in the area of healthcare. Ms. Graham answered she stays current by reading, receiving mailing updates and is also provided educational assistance from the consulting vendor, Ovation Benefits.
Mr. Pellegrino asked about the future governmental excise tax regarding our healthcare plan. Ms. Graham informed the Committee that the Town could be subject to the “Cadillac Plan Tax” if changes were not made to the impending healthcare legislation. She added that Dustin Anderson and Al Cava are currently doing research in this area.

At the conclusion of the healthcare discussion, the Committee had additional time before the next speakers and Mr. Crary gave the Committee an update on several contracts out for bid. Mr. Crary reported that the news was good with large anticipated savings in the electricity and natural gas contracts in future years.

Police – Greg Hannigan, Captain Kordick and Police Chief Heavey appeared before the Committee to discuss the Radio System Evaluation and Design Study for the planned upgrade of the Town’s existing 800-MHz radio communications system to be budgeted in fiscal year 2013-2014.

Captain Kordick started the discussion by informing the Committee that the current system is about 20 years old. Captain Kordick added that 20 years ago all Town communications were bundled into one system and because the Police Department was the largest user they oversaw its daily operations. Besides the aging component of the system, Captain Kordick told the Committee that the current vendor, Motorola, could not guarantee replacement parts after December 31, 2012. Captain Kordick did concede that they had enough backup parts to last a few years with Motorola.

Mr. Pellegrino asked about the annual cost and what would happen if the system went down. Captain Kordick answered the current annual contract cost with Motorola was $124,000. He added that in the event of a system failure, the operations revert to a car to car communication system. Chief Heavey added that there have been brief failures in the past and the department has gone to a mobile unit backup system. Chief Heavey cited, as an example, how Greenwich helped the City of Norwalk, CT when their system went down.

Mr. Pellegrino asked if other municipalities are in a similar predicament with Motorola. Chief Heavey offered that the State of Connecticut was currently upgrading its system. Captain Kordick added that the current system has been taken to the end of its useful life and with the ever changing technologies and we need to adapt.

Mr. Pellegrino asked how the Town stays knowledgeable in this area of communications technology. Captain Kordick responded that there are vendor training opportunities that he and others in the department take advantage of.

Mr. Ramer asked for a further more detailed explanation of the $155,000 capital request. Captain Kordick answered that we are developing an implementation plan for the Town to find consultants who can develop an adequate Request for Proposal to meet our needs for this system.

Ms. Tarkington asked why the Police Department has taken the lead on this project and if the Town’s Information Technology Department (I.T.) had been consulted. Captain Kordick explained that there are approximately 600 pieces of radio and related communications equipment and the Police Department uses two thirds of the equipment and used this as a rational basis for the Police Department to take the lead. He added that the Town’s I.T.
Department was not consulted because they do not use the system and lack a familiarity with the system.

Mr. Huffman asked if there were any alternatives to Motorola. Captain Kordick stated there are many alternatives to Motorola. In addition, he offered that although Motorola may have an expensive product it has been a very reliable vendor over the years.

Mr. Finger asked if there are any grant monies available. Captain Kordick responded there are grant monies available but the State of Connecticut is keeping most of the available funds for themselves.

Mr. Finger restated a previous question about policeman running a communications system. Captain Kordick revisited the history of the communications systems. He stated that 20 years ago a different police chief felt the need to control the system for security purposes. Since that time, the Town has tried to civilianize it. Currently, there is only one policeman assigned to the predominantly civilian operation. Chief Heavey added that he felt that since the majority of the needs are with the Police Department it makes sense to oversee its operations by the Police Department.

Mr. Pellegrino offered his concerns regarding I.T. He stated he is not comfortable with current I.T. capabilities and the Town needs to develop a strategy toward I.T. town wide.

Mr. Ramer asked if the $88,000 request for the Public Safety Portable Radio Deployment Program Phase II capital request could be reduced and Captain Kordick answered yes, that it could be phased over two years.

Mr. Pellegrino asked if the $165,000 request for Storage Area Network (SAN) Upgrade is necessary and Captain Kordick answered yes it is needed at this time. Mr. Finger asked what this purchase was. Captain Kordick replied it is adding capacity to the current system.

The conversation turned to Police Compensatory Time. Chief Heavey explained the police compensatory time process to the Committee. He explained that currently a policeman can build up to 340 hours per state statute. However, he added that some police personnel are grandfathered in and there are also additional exceptions for certain police categories like the dog handlers. Chief Heavey stated that he had met previously with Mr. Finger and Mr. Mason on this subject and he was doing his best to reduce the outstanding amount owed to police personnel.

Mr. Pellegrino stated that the Town needs to build this into the budget and pay down the balance. In addition, Mr. Pellegrino requested the Chief to provide the BET with a monthly report on the progress toward reducing the liability. Chief Heavey agreed and reported the most current figure was down to about $890,000.

Mr. Pellegrino turned the Committee's attention to the overall Police Department budget and asked for explanations on several variances. Mr. Hannigan and Captain Kordick explained the variances to the Committee.

**Labor Relations** – There was a motion to go into executive session by Mr. Finger to discuss Labor Relations issues, seconded by Ms. Tarkington at 11:49 A.M. The motion carried by a vote of 4 to 0.
There was a motion to come out of executive session by Mr. Finger, seconded by Ms. Tarkington at 1:07 P.M. the motion carried by a vote of 4 to 0.

**King Street Firehouse and the Location of GEMS Headquarters in the Western Sector of Town** - First Selectman Tesei and Fire Chief Siecienski appeared to present their views on the location of a new firehouse and also the location of deploying GEMS personnel in the northwest part of Greenwich. First Selectman Tesei started by saying that there is a need for staffing additional firefighters on King Street. He also stated that he didn't think the Round Hill location is a viable alternative to staffing and meeting the needs of the northwest part of Greenwich. He also offered that he and his staff had looked at a number of alternatives to finding another location for a firehouse that included the Audubon and a number of properties on both Riversville Road and King Street.

First Selectman Tesei asked the Committee members to individually offer their opinions to solving this problem.

Ms. Tarkington responded first by stating the problem must be addressed immediately. Ms. Tarkington offered a solution to staff Glenville with four full time staff and two people at the Round Hill Fire House.

Mr. Ramer responded by saying he would like to initially look at each of the 21 locations researched by First Selectman Tesei staff as an alternative to the King Street site before deciding on the King Street location.

Mr. Finger offered that things have changed over the last six years. He stated that he would not rush into King Street until the 21 previously mentioned alternative sites were vetted further. Mr. Finger also responded that we need a full staffing model illustrated and wants to hear from Chief Siecienski on his plan for staffing the Town’s fire departments.

Mr. Pellegrino stated we need comprehensive solutions. Mr. Pellegrino felt that looking at the 21 mentioned properties would not be fruitful but was willing to entertain reviewing their potential. Mr. Pellegrino said that he recognized the need for additional fire staffing in northwest Greenwich and the real issues need to be addressed. He also firmly stated that he won’t support 16 more firefighters without operating offsets.

Mr. Mason strongly stated that we need to get back to the process. He directed the Committee members to vote on the release of conditions and to vote either yes or no. Mr. Mason then stated if you vote no, be prepared to offer a solution. He added that the King Street Fire House is taking up space in the capital model and the current dialogue is not helping. Mr. Mason stressed making a decision on this matter.

Mr. Pellegrino then asked Chief Siecienski to offer his staffing model to the Committee. Chief Siecienski started by saying that the King Street location is very close to the New York State border and half of the radial coverage is in New York. Chief Siecienski stated that a better and preferred location would be the site at John Street and Riversville Road near the Audubon.

When asked about the availability of grant funds to increase firefighter staffing, Chief Siecienski responded that he is not in favor of applying for the grant and doesn’t feel that adding 48 grant funded positions is necessary to the needs of Greenwich. He added that his long-term goal is to have five fire stations responding to fire related emergencies.
Chief Siecienski then proceeded to provide the Committee with a variety of staffing scenarios involving the King Street and Glenville locations. He added that the Round Hill staffing suggestions were not viable and rejected them as a solution.

Mr. Tesei commended the Committee for its work on the budget this year and stated that he would direct his staff to send letters to the previously mentioned Riversville and King Street property owners to see if they want to sell their proprieties to the Town. He also requested the Committee to grant him and staff some more time to finalize a proposal to the Committee.

Mr. Pellegrino concluded by thanking everyone for coming and for all of their hard work.

The meeting adjourned at 3:08 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]
Peter Mynarski, Recording Secretary

[Signature]
Joseph L. Pellegrino, Chairman