



## Town of Medway

### FINANCE COMMITTEE

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Monday, March 25, 2024 – 7:00 PM  
Town Hall, Sanford Hall  
155 Village Street

Present: Brian Cowan, Chair; Bruce Carbone; Chris Lagan; Will Lane.

Absent: Ellen Hillery, Clerk; Nick Fair, Michael Schrader, Jim Sullivan.

Staff Present: Michael Boynton, Town Manager; Carol Pratt, Finance Director; Rich Boucher, Director, Information Services; Medway Police Department: William Kingsbury, Chief; Lt. Jason Brennan, Lt. Peter Fasolino, and Lt. Jeffrey Watson; Medway Fire Department: Jeffrey Lynch, Chief; Michael Fasolino, Deputy Chief and Craig Vinton, Deputy Chief.

Others Present: Glenn Trindade, Select Board; Andy Rodenhiser, Chair, Planning and Economic Development Board; Gale Associates: Bree Sullivan and Colleen E. Fowler.

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#### **Call to Order**

At 7:01 PM Chairman Cowan announced that only four committee members were in attendance; therefore, a quorum was not present. The presentations on the agenda can go forward as there is no voting involved. Members Ellen Hillery, Nick Fair, Michael Schrader, and Jim Sullivan were absent.

**Public Comment:** No one.

#### **1.0 Review of FY25 Departmental Budgets:**

**Police – Chief William Kingsbury**

*The following information was reviewed: PowerPoint presentation prepared by Chief Kingsbury.*

Present: William Kingsbury, Chief; Lt. Jason Brennan, Lt. Peter Fasolino, and Lt. Jeffrey Watson.

Chief Kingsbury began a review of budget line items, noting that there will be a surplus in salaries at the end of this fiscal year due to a position being open for a period of time. Most of the detectives are on straight time. There will also be a surplus in education. He continued through the list of expenses and budget balances for this year. A number of cost areas will be in deficit by the end of the year. He then reviewed proposed increases for the coming year including:

- Technology costs have increased dramatically over the past year.
- Upgrade dispatch software which would not handle both police and fire as the current one does
- Hybrid vehicles are at a much higher cost if they can get them
- Salaries will go up for next year.

Referring to proposed fees for school bus transportation, Chairman Cowan asked if the department anticipates additional impact on police present if more students are walking and not taking busses to avoid the fee. Chief Kingsbury responded he did not believe there would be a need for increased patrol. Lt. Watson added that everything is there for students to walk to school, crosswalks, etc. Crossing guards can only stop traffic, but cannot facilitate traffic. Medway uses traffic facilitators who can move traffic around. Increased volume of traffic does not change staffing for the most part.

Discussion followed on the need for an additional School Resource Officer as there is currently only one. That officer cannot handle the volume that is generated. The high school and middle school would each like their own. School Resource Officers are certified by the state. The funding would be for March thru July as it takes a few months to get someone on board so they can go to the academy in the fall. He provided examples of occurrences that require a police presence at the schools. Responding to a question from Mr. Carbone, Chief Kingsbury stated that most towns the size of Medway have two officers but some have one for each school.

Mr. Lagan asked about an increase in calls. Chief Kingsbury responded that there are two types of calls, discretionary includes traffic enforcement and other things, non-discretionary are lower in priority. An average number of calls is around 10,000 calls in a year. The number one concern in most communities is traffic, either enforcement, education, engineering, etc. Almost all officers are crisis-trained. Lt. Watson is the first trainer for bike patrol. Lt. Watson added that training includes how to handle home situations and whether it is necessary to "put hands on" a person in crisis.

Are there things the Finance Committee should be aware of for the future? Chief Kingsbury responded that the station needs an EV charging station. Personnel-wise, there is a need for an officer trained in digital investigations. It would be nice to have two full-time traffic officers. Building-wise, there are structural deficiencies in that it is simply not large enough and does not have sufficient locker rooms for the staff. Brief discussion followed on security issues, funding the upgrades, short-term fixes and how space has become multipurpose. It was noted that the building needs more storage space for current records. There is also no interrogation room, no evidence room, no evidence lockers, etc. as the building was built 35 years ago. Staff tries to mitigate these things as much as possible. Some things are mandatory per state requirements. It is a multi-year process to accomplish some of these things. Every room in the building serves several purposes and it is crowded.

Chief Kingsbury invited committee members to tour the building any time, adding he would be happy to arrange a tour. Chairman Cowan responded that he would like to arrange something for the whole committee to come in.

At 7:32 PM Chief Kingsbury, Lt. Brennan, Lt. Fasolino, and Lt. Watson exited the meeting room.

#### Fire – Chief Jeffrey Lynch

*The following information was received: Fire Department FY25 Budget Proposal.*

Present: Jeffrey Lynch, Fire Chief; Michael Fasolino, Deputy Chief; Craig Vinton, Deputy Chief.

Chief Lynch reported that, at this time, there is a question whether the overtime line items will go over budget. Due to the open positions, current staff needs to cover the extra shifts which impacts overtime. It will be a while before the new hires will be on board following training. Continuing, he anticipates a surplus in the part-time salaries while holiday pay is on budget. He briefly reviewed other line items in the current budget as they translate to the new budget.

At this time, Mr. Boynton spoke briefly about recruitment and retention, and the state is getting involved as there are staff openings in many communities. We have good people we want to keep, but some leave for more money or for positions closer to home. Some towns are offering sign-on bonuses. Mr. Cowan asked about hiring incentives for those who stay several years. Mr. Boynton responded that it is nearly impossible to enforce. Chief Lynch agreed that the shortages are nationwide. Mr. Boynton reported that staff is often lost to private ambulance companies, and even those are having a hard time filling their positions.

Continuing, Chief Lynch reported that calls continue to increase with last year totaling just under 3,000 calls. Hiring four more people equates to one additional person per day to fill a shift. Mr. Boynton pointed out that there are a lot of responses to Medway Manor, and it is anticipated the same will apply to Willows once they came on board. With new housing facilities in the area, we anticipate call volume to continue to increase. Sometimes we cannot count on mutual aid if those communities are also dealing with 911 calls.

Brief discussion followed during which it was noted that the new ambulance has been ordered but will not be delivered until 2025. A new fire engine is planned for every three years on a staggered basis. A new "pumper" now costs around \$1.3 million and takes close to three years to build. Chief Lynch encouraged members to come in to tour the station to see things firsthand. Chairman Cowan indicated a visit with the Select Board and entire Finance Committee could work out well.

At 8:00 PM Chief Lynch, Deputy Chief Fasolino and Deputy Chief Vinton exited the meeting room.

Department of Public Works – Peter Pelletier, Director

*There were no additional materials other than the proposed FY25 Budget.*

Present: Michael Boynton, Town Manager; Peter Pelletier, Director, Department of Public Works; Gale Associates: Bree Sullivan and Colleen E. Fowler.

Mr. Boynton reported that there are a lot of things that need to be done, and a major one is to fill the Deputy Director position as we have done without one for almost a year. There is a lot of administrative and inspectional work that needs to be handled by this individual. Funding for the position will be available as of January 1.

Mr. Pelletier stated that the Department of Public Works is operating fairly smoothly, focusing on training while staying on top of sidewalk and roadway work. Two years ago our roadway evaluation ranked one of the highest in the state. This year we are working on bridges in town as recommended by the state. We are working on the design for the culvert work at the high school which includes working in and around wetland areas. The design should be ready to go out to bid for next winter. The department is looking into additional funding to help cover the construction cost. Also:

- The track and field replacement at Hanlon will be before Town Meeting in May
- Town-wide data gathering for water, sewer, wastewater and now stormwater is taking place. Specialized software programs may be necessary to help assess these systems.
- Flooding due to heavy rains has impacted trees; recently spent an entire day assessing damaged trees so they do not present a public safety issue.
- Doing lots of work in the Police and Fire Stations as well as Medway Community Farm kitchen project which includes plumbing, electrical and HVAC work.

The water treatment plant is doing testing this week before it comes online. Some additional licenses and certifications will be required. DEP inspection is anticipated for mid-April, and the plant would be operational in June or July. The department will need to start upgrading some stormwater infrastructure that will help achieve established DEP goals.

Discussion followed about narrowing some streets in conjunction with upgrading infrastructure to accommodate stormwater management. The goal is to be transparent with property owners and notify them well ahead of time that their roadway will be narrowed and their driveways will be synced up with the roadway. Narrowed street will reduce time spent on road with plowing, and reduces fuel costs. Brief discussion followed on the layout of the roadway. Mr. Rodenhiser stated that most people think their property runs to the street. A roadway could be only 20 feet wide. Narrow streets generally slows traffic, and residents find this helpful. Stormwater mitigation also helps with flooding during heavy rains.

Trash disposal costs may go up significantly over the next couple of years. That contract will be negotiated in the near future. There are a lot of private haulers, and it may be less expensive for residents to contract with the hauler of their choice. The town can look at other disposal locations in the state.

Water treatment will require additional chemicals, and there will be higher electricity costs even though it will all happen in one building instead of four separate buildings.

Sewer department is running well, though recent heavy rains are having sump pumps discharge into sewer lines. Staff will be trying to locate those and remove those connections. There are also leaks in water lines that are difficult to find.

Chairman Cowan asked about the final costs for the Hanlon Field work. Mr. Boynton responded that the bid is for \$1.79 million with an additional \$50,000 for fencing that needs to be replaced. There is also a cost of \$300,000 to replace light heads with more efficient lighting. Regarding the fill, there are a lot of conversations and options.

At this time, Mr. Pelletier introduced two individuals from Gale Associates to speak to the fill. Ms. Bree Sullivan is the Chief Civil Engineer while Ms. Colleen Fowler is a Design Engineer. Ms. Fowler reported that there will be a shock pad, crumb rubber, and full track reconstruction. The life expectancy of a field is 8-10 years, depending on frequency of use. Regarding safety of the fills, Ms. Sullivan stated that they deal with toxicologists on a regular basis, noting that there are a lot of studies around this. Playing fields involve close contact with children over a large surface area. One fill, known as PFast, is comprised of a lot of compounds, and is present in a lot of products in our daily lives; i.e., in the soil, in the air, in our blood. The PFast concern that it is water soluble, and it is the fill that is tested in Massachusetts with six different tests. She pointed out that the amounts found in water and soil tests is often more than what is found in the turf fill. It is usually not detectable in the turf and well below the average soil concentration. All manufacturers will provide testing result statements. The polymer itself contains

PFast and is not water soluble. Pfast concentrations found in natural fertilizers are actually higher than in the fill itself. Turf is not any more dangerous than anything else for playing fields.

Responding to a question from Mr. Trindade, Ms. Sullivan stated that the shock pad is part of the turf system and the turf pile is shorter, using less crumb rubber. It is beneficial that the pad is always there especially in the areas of high use where the pile may be wearing thin. The pad lasts through two turf changes with a warranty of generally 15-16 years. There is a one-time cost for two turf changes.

The old turf can be recycled into other products. It is specified that the material is not to go to a landfill.

Mr. Trindade stated that he and Mr. D’Innocenzo keep track of new studies and what is happening with turf fields. So far there is no significant information. We have tried to do everything to address resident concerns while making sure we are putting in the best possible field. Mr. Boynton reported that maintenance of a grass field is about \$30,000 per year considering the water, fertilizer, and mowing. Each grade field has to be taken out of use for a year after it is seeded to allow the grass to grow. Turf fields are available for use year-round, weather permitting. Brief discussion followed.

At 8:45 PM Mr. Trindade, Mr. Pelletier, Ms. Fowler and Mrs. Sullivan exited the meeting room.

**Information Services – Rich Boucher, Director**

*There were no additional materials other than the proposed FY25 Budget.*

Present: Rich Boucher, Director, Information Services.

Mr. Boucher briefly reviewed his departmental budget, noting it is predominantly level-funded. He explained how devices are used, emphasizing that some are used on a 1:1 basis, meaning one student to one device. He added that they are trying to figure out better ways to use devices and software more effectively among the students who need them. COVID played a large part in costs for devices so that students could use them remotely during the pandemic. Now the laptops are kept on a cart and used by many different students throughout the day. The laptops generally last 4-5 years in this environment. The increases in some line items are due to replacement of more devices than in previous budget years.

Continuing, Mr. Boucher reported his team is vigilant in handling increased cybersecurity threats. His team also provides staff training as well as assessing security risks and attending security training. It would be helpful to have another person on the Town side to help ward off the security threats. Technology has morphed into a lot more than just providing devices and how to use them. Brief discussion followed.

Mr. Boucher exited the meeting room at 8:55 PM.

**2.0 Review of PEDB-related warrant articles for Annual Town Meeting**

*The following information was received: Memorandum from Ms. Saint Andre and Mr. Rodenhiser summarizing the Warrant Articles proposed by the Planning and Economic Development Board.*

Present: Barbara Saint Andre, Director, Community and Economic Development; Andy Rodenhiser, Chair, Planning and Economic Development Board.

Ms. Saint Andre briefly reviewed the Annual Town Meeting articles submitted by the Planning and Economic Development Board, namely, Articles 18-25. Two articles necessitated minor clarification.

Article 18 involves the potential codification of the board's rules and regulations into a bylaw defining Scenic Roads in Medway. A bylaw has better potential for enforcement. The measure would apply to the removal or cutting of a tree, or tearing down or destruction of stone walls or portions thereof that are within the Town's right-of-way.

She reported that Article 24 relative to MBTA Zoning may be withdrawn as it is being reviewed due to a complaint by a resident. The relevant properties are on Summer Street and 33-39 Main Street.

At 9:12 PM Ms. Saint Andre and Mr. Rodenhiser exited the meeting room.

### **3.0 Initial Review of FY25 Municipal Budget:**

*There were no materials other than the proposed FY25 Budget.*

Present: Michael Boynton, Town Manager; Carol Pratt, Finance Director.

Mr. Boynton noted that, on the general fund side, only two new staff positions are being considered; both positions are half-time. Updates on collective bargaining have been included in the proposed budget. He added that there are not substantial differences in the FY25 budget from the FY24 budget. There will, however, be additional election costs due to the Presidential Elections (primary and regular) which include extra costs due to early voting.

Regarding salary surveys, Mr. Boynton reported that the Town does not use outside consultants. Town officials have good relationships with administrators in other communities, and try to use Town Counsel instead of hiring additional attorneys for collective bargaining.

### **4.0 Miscellaneous**

Chairman's Report, Clerk's Report and Liaison Reports were postponed. Chairman Cowan reminded members that reports for the Annual Town Meeting Booklet are due on April 8.

### **5.0 Upcoming Meetings**

The public hearing relative to Special and Annual Town Meetings will be on Wednesday, April 10 with a 7:00 PM start time. A meeting of the Finance Committee will immediately follow at which time the committee will vote its recommendations on the Warrants. The next regular meetings of the Finance Committee will be May 8 and June 12, respectively.

### **6.0 Adjourn**

**There being no further business upon which the committee could act, discussions concluded at 9:22 PM.**

*Respectfully submitted,  
Jeanette Galliardt  
Night Board Secretary*