

Approved: February 12, 2015

Posted: February 13, 2015



## **Town Council Meeting Minutes**

Monday, January 19, 2015, at 6:00 PM, in the Matthew Thornton Room

Vice Chairman Mahon called the meeting of the Town Council to order at 6:00 p.m. Present at the meeting were Councilor Boyd, Councilor Dwyer, Councilor Koenig, Councilor Rothhaus, Councilor Woods, Town Manager Eileen Cabanel, and Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Paul Micali. Councilor Harrington was excused.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

Vice Chairman Mahon led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Announcements**

Regular meetings of the Town Council will be held on Thursday January 22<sup>nd</sup> and February 12<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 .m. in the Matthew Thornton Room. The Public Hearing on the proposed FY16 Budget will be conducted on Thursday, February 12, 2015.

### **Public Comment** - None

### **Review of Proposed FY16 Budget**

#### **Fire**

Town Manager Cabanel noted salary and benefit information is not prepared by the department, but rather reviewed by the department. Line Item #s 01-03-8103-0 Wages - Supervisory and 01-03-8104-0 Wages - Other Full-Time represent a decrease of \$20,000, which is related to filling vacated positions at a lesser salary.

Under Line Item #01-03-8111-0 Overtime – Other what is being proposed is in-house training for Paramedics. Part of the cost is intended to cover the cost of backfilling the position during training. Regular overtime has been increased by about 2%, and the balance (approx. \$6,000) relates to the in-house Paramedic training.

Health insurance has decreased significantly. Line Item #01-03-8352-0 Education & Training identifies an \$11,000 increase (\$10,800 of that also relates to the in-house Paramedic training program).

Michael Currier, Fire Chief, expressed his gratitude for a budget process that was straightforward and included review of wants vs. needs. He stated his opinion most of the needs of the department have been identified in the proposed budget. He remarked one thing he has appreciated about the process is the Town Manager encouraging department heads to bring forward to the Council any item removed from the budget, which is believed necessary.

Chief Currier spoke of an in-house department study currently in process and the loss of 4 firefighters in the past years. It is hoped the study will provide guidance and the necessary backup documentation/facts for the future needs of the department.

Chief Currier stated one of the two items he wished to bring forward for consideration was related to wages. In the past two years he has had the luxury of putting together a great proactive, forward thinking management team. There are good people in place, and there is the need to ensure we train them in all levels of the organization. He had proposed a 5% wage increase for Assistant Chief Brian Borneman to bring his salary in line with his counterparts in both the Fire and Police Department. Salaries in these positions are in the area of \$83,000/year. There is no overtime for Fire Department Chief Office personnel. The current salary is \$76,128. A 5% increase would bring the salary to approx. \$79,934.

The second item falls under Line Item #s 01-03-8910-0 Capital Reserve Fund Purchases and 01-03-8406-0 Emergency Management, and relates to the purchase of an 18' trailer to store and transport emergency management sheltering equipment. The equipment is currently stored at the Reeds Ferry Fire Station. During an emergency, moving it is time consuming and manpower intensive. If allowed to put that cost back into the budget (\$15,000 purchase price plus an additional \$1,500 for fit-up, and about \$1,800 to put a generator on board), it would allow them the ability to move the sheltering equipment anywhere at a moment's notice with either a Fire Department vehicle, a Highway Department vehicle, or any other vehicle that could tow the trailer rather than having personnel take the stack from the station, pile it in the back of a pick-up truck, and move it to the O'Leary Adult Community Center or the Middle School to set up a shelter. He commented, if the department were able to purchase the trailer and outfit it without the generator; perhaps that could be done at another time.

Councilor Woods questioned whether the department currently has a generator of this type, and was informed there are older generators that are not designed to fit inside an enclosure. The department could probably use the generator; put it outside, wire it, and plug it in from the outside.

Councilor Koenig questioned whether the desire was to outfit the trailer with the supplies on a permanent basis, and was informed that is the intent. When asked how often the items would be pulled out of the trailer and used, and whether they would be damaged by being stored, Chief Currier stated the trailer would be stationed at Reeds Ferry. Some of the problems the department has experienced in the past related to varmints getting into the station and storage areas and chewing their way through some of the supplies. By putting them in an enclosed trailer the problem would disappear. It is temperature controlled in the station, which leads him to believe the equipment would be well kept. He noted the trailer would be included in weekly checks of the station. Personnel would open the trailer and ensure everything is in working order.

When asked how often the equipment has been deployed, Chief Currier responded they have not yet had to. One of the things he was slated to do was ensure the department has 50-person sheltering equipment ready to go. The equipment was purchased over the past two years. Councilor Koenig stated understanding there is loss of time having to get into the trailer to check the material, etc., and questioned how much time could be saved by having the equipment stored in the trailer. Chief Currier remarked the department is limited on personnel as it is, and during an emergency where a shelter has to be set up, they would already be responding to other calls. Moving the equipment from its current location to the Community Center requires the efforts of 4-5 people and approximately 2 hours of time.

Vice Chairman Mahon questioned the amount of damage that has resulted to date, and was informed it is very negligible as the equipment has only been in the area for about 6 months.

Chief Currier stated Line Item #01-03-8203-0 Operating Supplies identifies an increase (\$1,000), which is a projected cost increase for materials not being replaced by the hospital and in the number of runs. Line Item #01-03-8204-0 Uniforms, Personal Protective Clothing shows an increase of \$4,730, and is for protective equipment. The department is at a point where a lot of the equipment is starting to age, and there is the need to start increasing the budget to account for replacement. Line Item #01-03-8250-0 Vehicle Fuel has decreased by \$1,524. Line Item #01-03-8270-0 Dues & Fees has increased by \$40 to cover the cost of certifications for an additional Paramedic.

Line Item #01-03-8332-0 Maintenance-Vehicles shows an increase of \$7,800. The current spend rate looks to be greater than what was budgeted. In FY15, the budget was reduced by \$20,000, which is proposed to be put back in. That is due to vehicle and equipment repairs being outsourced more frequently. The equipment/vehicles are computer based, and the department does not have the technology available to read codes.

Line Item #01-03-8336-0 Maintenance-Other shows an increase of \$5,025 to cover the added cost of the Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA). The equipment is getting older, and additional monies have been added to cover the cost of replacement parts.

Line Item #01-03-8352-0 Education & Training has increased by \$11,000 to cover the cost of an in-house Paramedic Training Program. Assistant Chief Borneman remarked across the State there is the desire for highly trained Firefighter Paramedic. In years past, finding trained Paramedics that were also certified Firefighters was a little easier. This past year there were 24 certified Firefighter/Paramedics on the State list. Some were already employed elsewhere. The department hired two Paramedics this past year. When you cast a net, if looking for an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Basic, Advanced Emergency Medical Technician (AEMT) or a Paramedic, the pool of qualified candidates or potential good employees is greater at the lower level. As this has transpired we have looked at how to ensure we have high quality candidates that will be good long-term employees. The decision was to hire the best possible candidate we can, not box ourselves into a corner looking specifically for a Paramedic for that Advanced Life Support (ALS) skill, and then reward the employees that are here doing a good job in their EMS skills and providing quality service to the community.

Assistant Chief Borneman stated, at a minimum, all firefighters have their basic EMT. The next level is that of AEMT. An AEMT can start IVs, etc. The top level is that of Paramedic, which requires hundreds of hours of training. A Paramedic can administer medications and provide an increased level of care during medical calls. Councilor Dwyer questioned the number of Paramedics currently on staff, and was informed there are 8.

Assistant Chief Borneman remarked in addition to not being pinned in when hiring, there is also the desire for more flexibility with regard to Paramedics on shift. Currently there are 2 on shift. If someone is out on vacation, training, etc., the shift will drop down to 1 and be backed up with the AEMTs. The desire is to increase the level of Paramedics to 3 per shift. To do that, they wish to train their own.

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Both available Paramedic programs are similar in price (\$10,800 tuition). In addition to classroom time is clinical time, etc. The New England EMS Institute (NEEMSI) out of Elliott Hospital estimates it to be a 1,200 hour program. What the department is proposing to include in the budget is monies for backfilling of positions (\$6,000), during training hours. If an individual in the training program is scheduled to work on a day when he/she is participating in an aspect of training, there would be the need to backfill the position for however many hours were needed.

Town Manager Cabanel spoke of a prior circumstance where the Town had a per diem employee who was a Paramedic. The individual, although trained, was not efficient in what he did and caused a great deal of potential problems in the field. That is another reason the department is looking to train their own; hire the best employees they can find and then train them to be Paramedics.

Councilor Woods questioned, and was informed the 1,200 hours is to train 1 Paramedic. The entire process takes two years. Councilor Dwyer questioned how many current employees may be interested in doing this over the next 3-5 years, and was informed there are at least 3 at this time.

Councilor Koenig questioned if what was being sought were funds to cover the cost of tuition and/or to cover costs of schooling while on the job. Chief Currier responded, as an example, if an employee is scheduled for a class every Tuesday and his/her shift happens to fall on a Tuesday on a particular week(s), the department would incur the cost of backfilling the position until he/she returns. When asked if the individual would be paid while in class, it was stated he/she would, if it falls during a time he/she would normally be on. The individual backfilling the position would do so on overtime. The additional cost, over a one-year period, is anticipated to be \$6,000. When asked, Chief Currier explained the budget includes the entire tuition cost (\$10,000) for the two years.

When asked what would occur should the individual decide to leave the department in the middle of that two-year program, Town Manager Cabanel stated there would be an agreement in place requiring the individual to be with the department for a certain number of years, and, if not, to reimburse the Town (could be pro-rated depending on time in the department). When asked if the individual, upon completion of Paramedic status, would be provided a salary increase, Town Manager Cabanel stated there would be a \$1,800/year stipend. When asked how that compares with what other departments pay those positions, Chief Currier responded, depending on the department, Merrimack is a little on the lower side. Town Manager Cabanel stated her previous employer paid 5% above the cost of a Master Firefighter in the wage scale. It was stated Paramedics make the same as a Master Firefighter. The only educational incentive is the stipend. Councilor Woods questioned if the cost, over a four-year period, would be approx. \$70,000, and was informed it would.

Councilor Rothhaus commented on the movement towards medical response as opposed to fire response, and remarked the proposal seems to work into that. Town Manager Cabanel stated the higher level of care that a person can receive in the first few minutes of their emergency can be a matter of life or death. This proposal is not a matter of mission creep; it is actually making our Firefighters and EMTs able to save lives. Chief Currier stated the goal behind the proposal to be to ensure the department has the best employee possible to meet that medical need. Current employees interested in the program have been employed by the Town for 5+ years, and their Firefighter knowledge and dedication to the community are apparent.

Vice Chairman Mahon questioned if the in-house department study would provide an idea of how many times that type of training would have had an impact. Town Manager Cabanel responded looking at it from an overall standard, one of the things she learned was when you see a fire truck going with an ambulance that is an advanced life support situation, which would require a Paramedic. In going through a month's worth of actual calls, it was seen at least 50% were advanced life support calls. Vice Chairman Mahon questioned the number of those calls that were short-staffed. Town Manager Cabanel stated that information would be gathered and provided.

Councilor Dwyer commented the concept of having firefighters trained in a more broad scale of Paramedics and medicine seems to be the world we are living in. He questioned the number of Paramedics believed necessary, and asked if it is there will be a day when all Master Firefighters will be semi-Paramedics. Chief Currier stated the current goal is to have 3 Paramedics on a shift. The logic behind that is if one is on vacation there are two remaining to take care of both ambulances for ALS calls. That individual is still certified as a Firefighter on the all hazards approach so they can do EMS, Fire, HAZMAT, forestry, water rescue, etc. By having 3 Paramedics to a shift it will benefit the community on those ALS calls when someone is on vacation, when there are multiple calls at the same time, etc. Assistant Chief Borneman stated the goal to be a total of 12 Paramedics. If all Master Firemen were Paramedics there would be skill degradation as they have to be practicing those skills.

Line Item #01-03-8406-0 Emergency Management shows a budget amount of \$4,880, which is the cost without the trailer and fit-up. Line Item #01-03-8506-0 Communications Equipment has increased by \$13,500 to purchase and replace mobile radios for apparatus, which are starting to fail. Instead of replacing all units the intent is to replace 2-3 a year. Grant funds continue to be sought. Line Item #01-03-8510-0 Capital Reserve Funds increased by \$60,000.

Town Manager Cabanel noted Line Item #01-03-8910-0 Capital Reserve Fund Purchases has increased by \$182,334, which appears to be the \$82,000 for SCBA in the instance grant money is not obtained. Assistant Chief Borneman stated the increase is to allow the department to begin the process of replacing SCBA. The department has applied for a grant. It will not be known until late spring whether or not the application was successful. The total project, as submitted to the Federal Government was at a cost of \$344,800. The Town's portion of that, if the grant application is successful, would be slightly over \$31,000. The budget anticipates costs if the Town would have to fund the purchase, which would have to occur in phases over a period of three years. He explained when going to a Federal program you have to meet all Federal standards. That would require more air packs than the department currently has (5). If the Town were to replace the equipment on its own, it likely would not meet that standard. To replace current equipment could be done at the \$82,000 cost for the next several years.

Chief Currier added what the Federal Government says is in order to meet the grant you have to have an SCBA for every riding position. We have 5 riding positions on some of the apparatus. We don't use them, we only use 4. We would only purchase 4, but in order to qualify for the grant, we have to put in for 5. In terms of numbers, the department currently has 39 air packs whereas the Federal Government states the need to be for 44. The individual cost is \$6,900 plus additional bottles.

Councilor Boyd questioned why it is advantageous to put the sheltering in place materials on a trailer as opposed to storing them at either the O'Leary Adult Community Center or the Middle School, Chief Currier responded they have checked in the Community Center to see if the items could be stored

there, and were told by the caretaker there is not a great deal of space, and if considering the downstairs the area is musty/damp. He does not recommend storing in the basement. They have not checked with the Middle School; however, it is believed the greatest amount of use would be at the community center. If opening a shelter at the Middle School, in most cases the Red Cross would be involved, and would be bringing their equipment in to augment what the department has. He remarked the positives to having an equipment trailer would be easy movement, storage in a safer environment, and elimination of manpower associated with moving the equipment.

Councilor Boyd requested clarification on Line Item #01-03-8406-0 Emergency Management, which identifies the cost for trailer fit-up at \$3,800. The cost stated previously was \$3,500. Chief Currier responded when working on the budget the costs were reduced to actuals noting a cost savings achieved by the Highway Department doing the wiring rather than having the work outsourced. The request would be for \$3,300.

Councilor Boyd stated his support of the in-house Paramedic training proposal. He is pleased the department is thinking strategically about the transition from fire response to first response. He spoke of Merrimack's population increasing and the demographic; oldest State in the country.

Councilor Rothhaus questioned Line Item #01-03-8322-0 Maintenance-Vehicles; specifically comments made regarding adding the \$20,000 removed previously. Chief Currier noted actual expenditures were \$93,219 and the budget was \$84,000. Town Manager Cabanel stated the difference to be \$7,800 not \$20,000.

Vice Chairman Mahon spoke of the statement made that the department does not have the proper equipment to read vehicle codes to be able to address maintenance needs in-house. He questioned whether there would be an advantage to having the diagnostic equipment in-house or if the nature of the repairs, in general, are more than what could be addressed at the Highway Department. Chief Currier stated it would not be beneficial given costs associated with yearly upgrades to the equipment and the fact repairs are of a nature that cannot be addressed by the Highway Department. Town Manager Cabanel noted the individual most familiar with the fire apparatus retired this year. The position has not been filled, and consideration is being given to the necessary number of mechanics on staff and outsourcing of work.

Councilor Boyd questioned whether the Town is locked into prices for vehicle fuel. Director Micali stated the prices listed were an estimate made at the time the budget was being created. Town Manager Cabanel remarked the operating budget of the Fire Department has decreased by \$71,000 or 1.36% from last year even with the in-house Paramedic program. One of the main reasons was the decrease in health insurance costs (\$127,654).

Councilor Koenig questioned whether Line Item #01-03-8910-0 Capital Reserve Fund Purchases, specifically; F350 Ambulance 220 was intended to be for a new ambulance to be purchased in the coming year, and was informed that is the intent. He questioned whether the F350 Ambulance 197 was purchased previously. Chief Currier stated it is due for replacement in March. It was ordered in the November/December timeframe and will be delivered in March. Director Micali stated there are three ambulances. The oldest ambulance in the fleet was replaced two years ago. There is some delay in receiving ambulances. The one that was ordered two years ago will be received in March. The budget identifies the second oldest ambulance in the fleet with the most mileage for replacement.

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Ambulances have been between 120,000 -130,000 miles when considered for replacement. Although identified in the FY16 budget, it is likely the ambulance will not be received for another 10-12 months from the time it is ordered.

The intent would be to space out the use of the newer ambulance so that purchases could be spread out 3-5 years. When asked, Chief Currier stated the department is now purchasing 450s, which have a similar cost; however, are recommended by the maintenance department due to larger brakes, etc.

### Code Enforcement

Town Manager Cabanel stated the only addition she made, which was requested by the Chief, is a part-time secretarial position.

Chief Currier stated the request to be for a part-time person (20 hours/week); Line Item #01-06-8107-0 Wages - Part-Time. The desire is to provide coverage for current staffing, which consists of a single administrative person for the Buildings and Health Department and one for Fire Department Emergency Management. During times of vacation, etc. there is a shortage that needs to be filled. If the administrative person from the Building Department takes a vacation day it is necessary to move the inspection schedule around. Someone has to be in the office at all times to address the needs of citizens coming into the department. As a result, either the building official or one of the building inspectors has to be available to do that. That situation is similar for the Fire Department. If the administrator for the department is out there is no one available to do the administrative work, answer the phone, do burning permits, set up inspections, etc.

If the administrator for the Fire Department is out on vacation and there are multiple calls, the phones may not be answered. The job responsibilities were reviewed as well as where the individuals are in their career. The Administrator for the Fire Department is probably getting close to retirement. There is no succession program in place. The intent would be to bring in a part-time person and provide training for both areas.

Councilor Dwyer asked for clarification the department is a four-person staff. Chief Currier stated there to be a part-time Health Official, a full-time Administrator, a full-time Building Inspector, and a full-time Building and Health Official. Councilor Koenig asked for clarification of the numbers cited. The request was listed as \$57,606 and the Town Manager's recommendation is for \$51,363. Chief Currier stated his request was for 24 hours/week, which was cut back to 20 hours/week. When asked if 20 hours/week would be workable, Chief Currier stated it is easier to manage 3 eight hour days. However, at this point in time, if 20 hours is what he can get, it will be used.

Councilor Woods questioned Line Item #01-06-8321-0 Maintenance-Buildings & Grounds. Chief Currier stated the figure to be an estimate for the cost of the sign for the front of the station. The current sign says Merrimack Fire Department. The desire is for it to say Merrimack Fire Department/Buildings & Health Department. When asked if the Public Works Department (PWD) could address the signage, Chief Currier stated he does not believe it would match the building and look as appropriate as it should. He would like it to match the letters that are there. When asked if the PWD was contacted to see if that is something they could accommodate, Chief Currier stated they are metal signs and Adam Jacobs, Operations Manager, has stated he does not believe they can manufacture the letters that are on there.

### Communications

Mark Doyle, Chief of Police, spoke of the process undertaken in arriving at a proposed budget, which represents an increase of approx. 27%. The lion's share of that is within the radio system upgrade identified under Line Item #01-05-8910-0 Capital Reserve Fund Purchases. Lt. Trepaney has worked with the radio vendor, Osipee Mountain Electronics, in discussing what needs to be done to bring the radio system from where it was when designed, nearly 15 years ago, to where it should be going 10-15 years into the future. The goal is to put something in place so that in the next 3-4 years a system could be built that is scalable and expandable over the next 10-15 years. Conceptually it is built, but, like anything else it costs a great deal to do.

Over the last 10-15 years the radio system has been expanded to include voting systems, repeaters, etc. as well updating pieces and parts that go along with it. Radio systems are no longer giant consoles that get installed in a communications center, they are all communications based to the extent they are all built into software programs that are operated from a computer terminal. These are the kinds of things the scalability of the systems is looking toward migrating to across the spectrum of communications.

This is done in order to ensure the department is rendering the best and highest level and quality of service to the citizenry and also maintaining an infrastructure that creates a safe environment for officers and public safety officials to work in. They dispatch not only for the Police Department but also for the Fire Department, Emergency Medical Services, Public Works Department, and on occasion even for the water department.

Other minor increases include an increase in Line Item #01-05-8111-0 Overtime – Other, to ensure the availability of those in the dispatch center to cover shifts that would otherwise go uncovered in the event people called out sick or because of the nature of the employee pool in the dispatch center, e.g., long-term employees having accrued vacation time, etc.

Line Item #01-05-8201-0 Office Supplies has been increased to reflect usage. Line Item #01-05-8260-0 Telephone has been increased by about \$3,000. To a larger extent that is not just telephone share or added cell phones, it is an actual reflection of the usage of the voter system costs when the system was enhanced and expanded. Line Item #01-05-8334-0 Maintenance-Office Equipment has increased slightly due to the agreement with the CAD RMS vendor for 24/7 maintenance support on that system. They are required to get the system back up and running, from an operational standpoint, within 4 hours of a service call.

Town Manager Cabanel stated the \$200,000 identified under Line Item #01-05-8510-0 Capital Reserve Fund, is a down payment for the communications equipment, which has a total cost of over \$500,000. Being proposed is setting monies aside next year and possibly the year after.

Councilor Rothhaus requested clarification on the \$7,000 increase to Line Item #01-05-8335-0 Maintenance-Communication Equip. Chief Doyle responded the majority of that is to reflect actual usage of the maintenance agreement. The equipment that houses the records management database has an associated agreement for 24/7 support from the vendor, which becomes more costly with the age of the equipment. The server in dispatch is nearing 4 years of age. Usually by the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> year the department is ready to change it out. It is because of its age that maintenance agreements are in the \$11,000 to \$12,000/year range.



Councilor Woods questioned whether compatibility with other systems is also considered, e.g., the ability to communicate with the Fire Department, etc. Chief Doyle stated it is. He remarked the event at 9/11 really brought that issue of interoperable communications to the forefront. The move has been to ensure we are not only buying equipment, but also buying software to work that equipment that is Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) certifiable. They have designed and put together some standards that are being adopted by police departments, fire departments, and emergency service personnel all across the country so that when you buy equipment whether radios, mobile, console equipment, or software that drives it, it is all APCO certified. It is scalable to the point where you can start to work and communicate with other surrounding agencies whether coming from a neighboring town or another State. It is designed so that, at the flip of a switch, they can turn over to your frequency or we can turn over to theirs so that communications are fairly seamless. That is what this equipment is designed to do; provide us that infrastructure to be able to work seamlessly with other police departments regardless of whether they are on a VH band or UH band. There are some technological hurdles that have to be addressed because of it.

There are departments in the State right now that are on different bands, and we can't talk to them. The State is working very closely with all departments to make sure that the IP bridges and infrastructure is designed in such a way that we can have that seamless communication without missing valuable information. He remarked if having to go to a city like Nashua or Manchester where we can't now just flip that switch, there are redundancies built in place that will allow it to work on the short term while we work together to build and expand upon current infrastructures.

Councilor Koenig questioned the lifecycle on the communication equipment, and whether the Town is just now starting to save the necessary funds (\$500,000+). Chief Doyle stated what the department has seen happen over the past few years is parts and pieces of the module's design that really comprise our communication system have started to fail. It is starting to add up in the short-term. The problem is that they don't make the stuff anymore. There was an instance where the department had to have a crystal built, which took 4 months, and came at a large cost. With regard to the future purchase, Chief Doyle stated the unit is designed in such a way it will be module based.

Lt. Paul Trepaney remarked when the microwave failed in 2012 they talked with the vendor about replacement. The vendor said by replacing it, he was hoping we could get 10-15 years more out of our system, but the technologies had already become outdated.

All components would have to be addressed, e.g., going away from copper phone lines that a lot of the receivers send into the voting system now to an IP based technology, etc. The first major item to be replaced is the microwave system, which has an associated cost of \$54,000. The next stage of replacement would be the main transmitting radio components (\$324,000). That would get the bulk of the system up to specification. The system would last another 15-20- years.

Councilor Koenig remarked if talking about a 15-year lifecycle and saving for that in 2 1/2 years, what happened to the other ten years? Director Micali responded when the microwave system was replaced, the vendor's representative stated we would be able to get another 7-10 years out of the system. All of a sudden we were informed you are outdated and you have three years and need to get up to speed. If the system breaks down parts would not be available. That is the reasoning \$175,000 had to be

appropriated this year and another similar amount likely next year to get up to speed and make these purchases.

Councilor Rothhaus remarked the Town expended a large amount with the expectation it would extend the life of the system some 10-15 years, and now we are told we have three years remaining. That makes him question the vendor. Lt. Trepaney stated the microwave was replaced in 2012; however, this is a system that was put in place in 1999. It will be 16 years old this year. The repeater system came in after that to enhance our communications (in 2005). It was a salesman who had informed him, when experiencing difficulties getting the old technology replaced, that in the best case scenario the microwave would keep the existing system going for 10-15 years. Because of that, the department started examining how to tackle this going forward.

When going over the whole system, the gentleman that actually does the design system pointed out that the digital interface unit, which is an actual communication model that works with the dispatch consoles and the technology in the basement, is our single point of failure. If that were to fail, the department could replace it with the backup (digital interface unit). The problem is those are no longer made and the support for them ends in 2018, which is why the department is looking towards a complete system overhaul.

Councilor Boyd spoke of the discussion had in 2012, and his recollection Lt. Trepaney had stated the microwave was the beginning of something that needed to be addressed 3-5 years down the road. He remarked he is not surprised by the request.

Councilor Dwyer commented the term overhaul is not really accurate as what is being proposed is a replacement. The goal in two years is to have a completely new system that isn't based on anything old. Lt. Trepaney stated that to be correct.

Councilor Rothhaus commented with the need to replace this system in its entirety and the large expense the Fire Department will incur with regard to the purchase of SBCA equipment, it appears there is the need to anticipate a large impact in 10-15 years, and we should be saving for those expenses on a yearly basis. Councilor Dwyer stated agreement, and suggested \$15,000 - \$20,000 a year should be placed in a special communications account as a way to save for that expense. Councilor Woods spoke of the speed at which technology changes, and suggested the cycle could be more like 3-5 years. Councilor Boyd questioned whether grant funds are available. Lt. Trepaney stated each year there is a competitive grant; however, they are geared toward new technologies not replacement of redundant equipment.

Councilor Koenig commented during his time on the Council it seems as though there have been constant discussions of replacing expensive communication equipment and statements made about 10-15 year lifecycles, and yet every 2-3 years we come up with this big expense. He stated his hope the Town is looking at the overall cost of equipment and trying to put aside funding for the expense.

Lt. Trepaney remarked when discussing replacement with the vendor, it was stated the system does not have to be replaced all at once. There is the one-time cost, and then each component; microwave, replacing the voting system and main base station, and then the Fire Department portion.

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Chief Doyle stated one of the things discussed with the Finance Department is creating a CIP line to ensure savings moving forward. He commented the beauty of the system we're moving toward is not only that it is scalable and has a lifespan of 10 years, but it becomes more module. As the microwave breaks down, we replace the microwave module; we don't have to be concerned that the digital interface unit would go down with it, because it is all one part in parcel. He stated agreement with the approach of saving on a yearly basis so that when module pieces break down they can be replaced without a big impact on taxpayers.

### Police

Town Manager Cabanel stated she, Chief Doyle, and his staff sat down and discussed the department's desire to add three officers. She stated her understanding to be if there is a particular type of crime occurring in Town, they want to be able to have a team of people dedicated to eradicating it. Currently, doing so takes officers off the street. Reflected in her recommended budget, rather than adding three positions, is an addition to the overtime line items (\$28,000).

Chief Doyle stated the budget, as it stands, proposes an increase of approx. 2/10 of 1% over last year's budget. Line Item #01-04-8105-0 Overtime - Supervisory has a proposed increase, which is geared toward ensuring enough supervisory staff available when they are needed. One of the things they are finding with the communications staff is that their time and grade is getting to a point where they realize they have more time off and they are using it. Also proposed is an increase in Line Item #01-04-8107-0 Wages - Part-Time to put towards the crossing guards and Traffic Officer at Turkey Hill Road. The increase represents a small increase in salary (\$.50/hour). There is an increase in Line Item #01-04-8111-0 Overtime - Other (roughly \$28,000), which represents coverage for shifts and really goes toward the whole minimum/maximum manpower staffing concept where we have a minimum number of officers on at any given time to ensure the service to citizens, when needed, is available to them.

Line Item #01-04-8250-0 Vehicle Fuel is up slightly. That is in anticipation of rising fuel costs. Line Item #01-04-8300-0 Travel & Meetings has a proposed increase (\$1,964). This will give the department the opportunity to provide its officers and supervisors a different level of training than they otherwise would have been able to experience. Right now they are relegated to the training offered by Police Standards & Training as well as some training put out by Primex, which is great, but the opportunities are limited in scope. The desire is to provide opportunities to seek other advanced more professional training geared towards their own individual professional development. Having an increase in this line as well as an increase in Line Item #01-04-8352-0 Education & Training (\$7,500), will provide those officers and supervisors that opportunity.

There is an increase in Line Item #01-04-8321-0 Maintenance-Building (\$27,000). This is intended to address the poor lighting in the parking lots, replace lockers in the locker room, irrigation in the front of the station and around areas currently covered by sod, and replace aging brick on the outside of the building.

Line item #01-04-8335-0 Maintenance-Communications Equipment (\$10,200) is for the purchase of two new police radar units to replace the last two from 1985. They are at a point where, due to their age, replacement parts are no longer available. The cost will also cover the purchase of two brand new 100 watt radios that would replace radios purchased back in 1998.

Line Item #01-04-8204-0 Uniforms; K9 Officer is being increased from \$1 to \$5,000 in anticipation of the reduction of donations that go toward that line every year. The department is looking at retiring Gunny over the next two years. Officer Gregg Walters is working closely with our Operations Captain, Peter Albert, to review opportunities that might exist.

Chief Doyle noted a reduction in Line Item #01-04-8503-0 Vehicles (\$22,000). The K9 vehicle was purchased last year, and has worked out extremely well. The department was able to get off the road the larger Ford Expeditions, which were not only gas guzzlers, but maintenance nightmares. Those are out of the fleet completely now.

Line Item #01-04-8504-0 Office Equipment has increased (\$14,912) for needed upgrades to vehicle tablets and computers in the building. The department has just replaced the last computer running on the Windows 98 operating system. However, a number of systems still run on Windows 2000. The department is moving toward Windows 7 to ensure all systems are upgraded to the same operating platform.

A new Line Item, #01-04-8508-0 Operating Equipment, (\$31,700) is intended to be utilized to replace department rifles and sidearms. They were purchased in 2007, and the department is looking to ensure the equipment the officers need to perform their jobs is reliable and safe.

Vice Chairman Mahon commented the K9 program has proved its worth. It should be included in the budget and the burden taken off of a volunteer organization. Councilor Dwyer commented the experience with Gunny is the first time in decades the department has had a K9 unit. He asked the Chief to elaborate on why the unit has been such a success.

Captain Albert stated his opinion including these expenses in the budget is long overdue, and spoke of contributions to the K9 unit made by taxpayers. He stated his evaluation of the unit, having overseen it for the past 2-3 years, is it has been very successful. Gunny has been successful on the patrol aspect. He provided the example of an instance where there was a large group of individuals fighting in a parking lot, and when the K9 truck rolled up with Gunny barking, it was amazing how quickly things calmed down. Gunny has helped in a number of cases of missing individuals; elderly and children. There was an instance where he helped out with an elderly woman over at Coventry Court. His assistance was valuable. There was a situation where a man was trying to steal some of the power equipment out in front of Tractor Supply. The individual fled on foot, and although Gunny showed up at the scene afterwards, Officer Walters was able to follow the track and find the evidence that was used to steal the equipment. That helped lock in a conviction. Gunny has helped in drug searches. He has helped surrounding communities when assistance was requested. The department embraces community policing, and having a K9 unit provides a great deal of support towards those efforts. Gunny is constantly performing K9 demonstrations at a variety of venues. Captain Albert commented Gunny has also been used in situations where it was found buildings had been broken into, e.g., he was sent in ahead of officers.

Councilor Boyd stated his support of the addition of the Line Item. It was noted Gunny recently went through training with Officer Walters in Boston. Several K9 units from around New England train on a monthly basis. The instructors were asked for their impression of Gunny. They gave him about 2-4

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more years of service, and will watch him during that time. He remains efficient in his building searches. He is physically well off, and very accurate with his drug searches.

Councilor Rothhaus remarked back when this first came about he understood what the K9 was capable of doing. His concern was in the overtime budget as the dog is only able to work with one person. He questioned if it is known what type of impact that may have had. Captain Albert stated he did not have the information readily available, but would provide it.

Councilor Koenig noted the budget line item is in the amount of \$5,000. He questioned what the cost would be if the budget accounted for annual ongoing expenses and/or replacement expenses. Captain Albert stated expenses to be in the range of \$4,000 - \$4,500/year. Chief Doyle stated the only bump was this year when there was the need to transfer equipment over and replace equipment for seating, etc. for Gunny.

Councilor Koenig questioned whether the Council could expect any other overhead expenses beyond overtime expenses Councilor Rothhaus alluded to, e.g., does Officer Walters work a full day independent of his work with Gunny or as a team, etc. Chief Doyle remarked he actually works 7 hours and 15-20 minutes/day. It is the additional 40 minutes a day that is geared toward K9 maintenance. He is responsible for cleaning out his car, feeding the dog, grooming the dog, and taking care of whatever it is that needs to be done at the start and end of a shift to get the k9 up and running or retired for the rest of the evening.

When asked what the cost would be of acquiring a new dog, Captain Albert stated it to be \$5,000 - \$7,000. There is a significant amount of training (12 week school). That training session is for the dog as well as the officer (paid time).

Councilor Boyd spoke of Line Item, #01-04-8508-0 Operating Equipment. He reminded his colleagues the Chief and Captain Albert were before them a few months back to discuss the opportunity they were afforded to sample updates to the Glock. He asked if that is the direction the department is heading for replacement firearms, and whether there would be a resale value for firearms being retired. Captain Albert stated five of the firearms instructors met with a representative from Glock who brought in the latest generation of the Glock. The instructors supported such a purchase noting significant improvements made. The department is proposing to change over from a 40 caliber to a 9mm, based upon statistics from the FBI that the stopping power is the same, the smaller cost of ammunition, and the fact the weapon can hold more rounds. The anticipated buyback is \$220/weapon. Overall cost is about \$450-\$500/weapon. When asked what the lifespan is for the new Glock, Captain Albert responded it depends on use; however, it is anticipated the lifespan would be 7-10 years.

With regard to Line Item# 01-04-8503-0 Vehicles; specifically the notation of the purchase of 3 new patrol vehicles, Councilor Boyd questioned whether the department would be staying with the Interceptor, Chief Doyle stated they would remain with the Interceptor SUV. Captain Albert remarked initially the department went with the Interceptor Sedan. They discovered the sedan itself is a small vehicle; smaller back seat, smaller area for the driver, etc. The SUV that has come out is the same vehicle, different body (larger). The mileage varies; SUV goes 16-22 mpg and the Sedan 18-23 mpg.

Chief Doyle added the goal with the SUVs is to cycle out the existing Interceptors. The Interceptors that are being replaced will be cycled into the administrative fleet. Those will be the cars the Detectives will be driving. That will add another 4-5 years to their lifespan.

Councilor Dwyer questioned the number of rifles in inventory, models, etc. Captain Albert stated the department currently has the Colt AR 15. There are ten Colt AR 15s and six M16s that were part of an equipment surplus program from the military several years ago. They will be replaced with the same model. When asked if the M16s have been used, Captain Albert stated they have been used for rifle training. Captain Albert stated the lifespan for the rifle is similar to that of the handgun. The difference with the rifles is better sights. The rifles the department currently has cannot have their sights upgraded (fixed iron sights).

Captain Michael Dudash provided a PowerPoint Presentation on the proposal for a Problem Oriented Policing (POP) Unit (can be viewed [here](#)), Line Item #01-04-8108-0.

As part of his presentation, Captain Dudash spoke of the number of calls to the Merrimack Premium Outlets alone in 2012, 2013, and 2014. Town Manager Cabanel questioned if the numbers cited included directed patrols. Captain Dudash stated they included directed patrols, assistance to medical calls, the Fire Department, every variety and type of presence up there. Town Manager Cabanel commented it would be more accurate to state how many calls for assistance were received. It is understood that there are directed patrols, which is a preventative measure.

Captain Dudash spoke of the types of calls the department has been receiving, current and anticipated growth, and how the department is currently managing the number and types of calls received.

A POP Unit is a team that can be very flexible and quickly address any level of issue when called upon. The team would consist of 1 Sergeant and 2 Master Patrolmen and would be highly skilled and responsive. A POP Unit could address reoccurring problems such as consistent drug activity, thefts from the same neighborhoods, organized retail theft rings or even an area in Town that needs strict motor vehicle enforcement. It was noted situations such as drug investigations can take weeks and sometimes months to investigate and require a minimum of two officers and in most cases, three.

Captain Dudash touched upon the number of calls for service in 2014 and how that broke down to number of calls per officer (35,779 calls or 941 per officer). The closest department to Merrimack in terms of demographics is Hudson (31,000 calls or 659 per officer). When looking at the population, number of officers, and ratio, Merrimack has a population of 26,278 with 38 officers or a ratio of 1.48. Hudson has a population of 24,000, with 47 officers or a ratio of 1.92.

Costs associated with salaries, benefits, and federal and state requirements, e.g., retirement, social security, etc. would be \$322,394 (2 Master Patrolmen at \$104,493 each and 1 Sergeant at \$113,408).

Captain Dudash stated for many years the department has taken officers out of patrol to assist Detectives when needed. There are times when the officers simply don't have the proper skillset to fill that role. At the same time, Detectives who are working on cases could be taken out to be put on patrol for a week or two to provide assistance. The department is at the point where that cannot continue.

Councilor Boyd asked for a comparison to be done between Merrimack and Rochester as he believes Rochester's demographics to be similar to Merrimack. He questioned if the POP Unit would have enforcement capacity to arrest, carry weapons, etc. Captain Dudash stated they would be Police

Officers. They would likely select three of the best policemen in the department to fill these positions and training such as photography would be provided as the unit would be conducting crime scene investigations. That would allow Detectives to move on to the crime and try to catch who committed it. Councilor Boyd asked for clarification the goal would be to hire internally and replace the three slots being lost with external hires. Captain Dudash stated that to be correct.

Councilor Boyd questioned whether the proposal was in response to some of the types of calls being received, e.g., mental health, Heroin overdose, and things that are behavioral in nature. Chief Doyle responded, with growth, there will be new challenges. Apartment complexes bring a host of challenges. Calls for service will increase.

Chief Doyle stated the Town of Merrimack gets great value for their public safety dollar. If you broke it down the cost of law enforcement service for every person in town is about \$22, which is on the very low end, but the value is extremely high. The desire is to keep it that way, and the only way to keep it that way is not become a reactive police department. That is the danger and failure of any police department; sitting back on their laurels and saying well we have been pretty good thus far and we don't have to do anything more than what we are doing right now. He spoke of dynamics in the community changing, and how Heroin is a regional issue. He commented you cannot arrest your way out of that, it requires forming partnerships and working as a team with not only other law enforcement agencies, but community based treatment centers, and other folks that have the inroads as to what needs to be done to address the problem. The POP Unit will be part of that solution.

Another area is traffic, which the department tries to address, but is becoming a problem where we are robbing Peter to pay Paul. We have an allocated resource out there to do the job that needs to be done; however, we want to do it right. We don't want to put a band-aid on something that could become a larger problem if we don't remain proactive in addressing it.

Chief Doyle commented there has been discussion about the mall and how many calls of service we have at the mall. The lion's share of those is directed patrols. The directed patrols since 2009 are up 185% in no short order because of the calls to service at the mall and the directed patrols we have up there. It is a success story that we don't have the level of crime that other towns have seen with the influx of mall traffic. That is because of the hard work our officers do remaining as proactive as they are. However, when they're doing that something else may be slipping by on the other end. We're on the doorstep of a lot of growth in Town; a huge amount of growth potentially not only in Town but in the region, and with growth come challenges. It is an opportunity for the Police Department to remain forward thinking and put some people in place to be able to address those specific issues that our Patrolmen don't have the time to do and our Detectives don't necessarily have the time or resources to do. The Unit would act in a way that no other police officer does right now other than what they try to do on an ad hoc basis.

Councilor Boyd questioned if informed cited regarding the Flatley project were based upon the project being similar to that in Nashua. Chief Doyle responded insofar as the actual design and layout he is unsure; however, the representative used that as a reference in saying some other developments around the area to be the reason he believed there would be an impact. Vice Chairman Mahon stated the same type of information was received from the outlets; it was supposedly three officers and 1.5 support. The department is being provided examples from other places. He remarked another issue raised was related to drug usage. The school district has had a grant in place for some time to try to deal with

some of this. Chief Doyle noted the grant has been in place for 6 years. Vice Chairman Mahon commented it does not look as though it is working.

Chief Doyle commented he hates to paint the entire region with a broad brush, but when it comes to the drug problem, we are all dealing with that. Vice Chairman Mahon remarked that is understood, but the grant was supposed to be something that would try to mitigate some of that, and it has not.

Councilor Rothhaus stated his opinion, to a degree, it is working. He believes it to be a problem that is coming into our Town like it is others, but he does not think Merrimack is doing all it can. He stated a desire to understand the age of the deaths of those who overdosed on Heroin. Captain Dudash stated the average age to be 21-31. Councilor Rothhaus remarked he has always believed in a strong Police Department. He spoke of his brother-in-law who used to be in Nashua, and who pointed out a number of years ago that the gang related crime problem, was growing substantially and coming up from the south. He stated his desire for that to never be a problem in Merrimack.

Captain Dudash noted Chief Doyle has tasked him with looking into how the department can work with everybody to see where we can do more. Chief Doyle noted included in the Annual Report are some of the things on the horizon that will be done to address the issue community-wide, e.g., televised discussion, bringing representatives from community based treatment facilities in to discuss what can be done to recognize the issue and point an individual in the direction of getting some valid, viable resources. He remarked there is a lot happening out there that the department wants to make sure we are tapping into.

Councilor Rothhaus spoke of the comment around the possibility of savings in overtime, and questioned whether that is truly seen as an opportunity that could be gained. Chief Doyle responded absolutely, the reason being, as a POP Unit, they will not be scheduled into the regular rotation with officers in the patrol division. When areas are identified that require backfilling or staffing, notwithstanding other assignments the team members may have, the department will be able to move those officers into those positions.

Councilor Dwyer stated he has studied this issue for some time. When looking at the Police Department budget it is \$5.6 million. That number is a bit deceiving because the Communications Department is a component that can't be denied, which is almost a million dollars. In reality, the Police Department budget is roughly \$6.5 million. Just five years ago it was \$4 million something. Five years ago we had a similar population. If we were to add the three police officers plus the communications equipment we are looking, within a very short time (2-3 years), of a budget that would be in the \$7 million range. Fire is close behind at around \$6 million. We are approaching numbers that are well over 40% of our total budget being fire and police.

That being said, those are the numbers we are dealing with. How can we enhance our Police Department, which has been on a hiring freeze basically for the last few years? With regard to the issue of drugs, Councilor Dwyer remarked some of the biggest drug pushers in America are guys in white coats with PhDs, e.g., people who had back surgery three years ago are still on OxyContin. The OxyContin pill on the street is \$60. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to understand why people from all ages have turned to Heroin. We have a pharmaceutical drug problem in America, which no town or city will fix in his lifetime.



He stated the desire to support the Police Department. He does not wish to manage a POP Unit. He believes there is the need to increase manpower; however, how that is managed is up to the Chief. He stated he would be in favor of adding an additional officer this budget season, and putting a plan in place to add 3-4 police officers so by the year 2018 we are up to a 42 or 43-man force. He spoke of the aging police force in management, and the need for successors. As that transition occurs, perhaps the direction to be taken is the addition of 1.5 positions every 12 months. When it becomes known a retirement will occur that is when another is hired.

His desire is to budget while being mindful of the taxpayers; not having to come up with \$300,000+ to hire three police officers. Of the \$5.6 million budget, \$600,000 is associated with health insurance, and retirement is \$800,000 of the cost. Those numbers continue to rise. He reiterated although he can support the idea of adding 3 police officers, trying to do that all in one budget year is a little too difficult.

Vice Chairman Mahon questioned additional costs associated with the POP Unit, e.g., equipment, vehicles, etc. Chief Doyle responded there would be nominal costs associated with clothing, etc. Existing cruisers could be utilized. Vice Chairman Mahon noted an additional maintenance expense of running those vehicles more frequently.

Vice Chairman Mahon stated concern with the description being discussed. The discussion has been around something that is very broad in scope in terms of duties and responsibilities. At the same time, the discussion has made him think this will somehow turn into some kind of an elite unit. That has the look of something like they will take themselves to be some kind of an elite unit, and over time take liberties. He stated concern with that. He remarked if they are going to be doing regular police work, then they don't have to have a name or an acronym. They can be hired to perform certain tasks.

Councilor Dwyer remarked he can buy into the manpower concerns. He can see the mall calls, approaching housing projects, etc. He can support that idea. However, the idea of a POP Unit he is unsure of. He commented perhaps he can't understand it enough or simply has more faith in the Chief in managing the 40 men and that he will put them where they are needed.

He questioned how it can be made to work in a budget framework that doesn't hurt everybody financially. He remarked this is what we are doing, budgeting. The Council has heard from the School Department about numbers coming their way. People are going to get their tax bills and see a \$300 increase. If nothing changes right now that is what is on the horizon; not from the Town, from the school side. Couple that with this type of investment, and before you know it the taxpayer will get an \$800 increase. Councilor Boyd remarked that is the price of growth. Councilor Dwyer responded maybe it is, and then the public will be able to weigh in on that. He stated his belief the situation can be approached in more of a gradual manner.

Chief Doyle responded he understands what is being stated and the concerns expressed by Vice Chairman Mahon. He remarked you are absolutely right the lot of resources we have when it comes to total manpower in the Police Department is allocated predicated upon a need and information and data that we glean from our division commanders and staff. Notwithstanding the POP Unit idea and acronym and perhaps some of the ideals that go along with having an acronym hanging over someone's head and what it might stand for, the bottom line is you are right, they are still policemen. These are folks that will be policemen, policemen in a uniform, and they will be working shift work

when they need to work shift work. What is being done right now is the putting together of Ad hoc POP units for the issues relative to the counterfeiting problem that we had at the mall or the tagging problem or the drug problem we were dealing with when we had three overdoses in one month. We take people and put them together. They are not all detectives or all patrolmen, but there might be a few that have specialized training or insight as to what those issues are. We give them the opportunity to work the problem. That becomes our POP Unit if you will.

With regard to the suggestion of phasing it in over time, the department will still be doing the exact same thing, but we will have the flexibility of having that initial officer earlier, and maybe two officers earlier than we would have otherwise had. It goes toward making sure that our manpower compliment is up to a point where we would be able to render the service that is necessary whether it is a patrol division officer at the time or whether he has been specifically assigned to work another problem in town whether criminal mischief, drug oriented issue, etc.

Councilor Koenig questioned the type of schedule being considered. Chief Doyle stated, by contract, they would be restricted to a 4 day on/2 day off work week, and they would be able to adjust their hours through a mutual agreement with the Chief or his designee pursuant to the wording of the contract. They would not be Detectives. Detective have a different work week altogether.

Councilor Koenig questioned if the idea is that the three officers would work the same hours, and was informed they would. Vice Chairman Mahon questioned where the new officers would come from noting the labor pool is very thin. Chief Doyle responded they are currently in the process of looking for two officers to fill vacant spots. The challenge in law enforcement is recruitment and retention. Chief Doyle spoke of looking to identify ways in which to find qualified people and how to retain them after incurring the cost of training. One of the things Lt. Trepaney, Captain Dudash, and Lt. Roy are working on at this time is a recruitment plan. It involves having several of our officers in the patrol division work as recruiters. They will be going around to schools, job fairs, career days, and to colleges statewide and across the border into Massachusetts to get the word out that the department is hiring, and show those folks what the opportunities are for a patrolman walking in the front door.

Councilor Woods commented he is not speaking for or against, but going back to Vice Chairman Mahon's query about the impression of being an elite group only because of his understanding of the way the force is organized. He is having trouble with the efficiency of the effort of a POP Unit. He remarked it does not seem to fit the way things are currently laid out. Captain Albert responded he did not want to get caught up in the name Problem Oriented Policing Unit or the identification as an elite unit. He stated the desire would be for the Unit to consist of a Sergeant to supervise the unit and two Patrolmen.

The individuals they would look for would be those who have known skills and the ability to do certain things such as interview/interrogate, surveillance, etc. The members of the Unit will be Policemen. The problem is to be determined. He provided the example of the department receiving numerous calls from a particular neighborhood about suspicions of an individual in the neighborhood dealing drugs. Currently they will take an officer from patrol and a detective, which restricts both of those units, and try and assign them to work on this particular investigation. Were there a POP Unit in place the Operations Commander could look to those three individuals who would become involved in beginning an investigation. They would not only be addressing issues related to drug use. It could be a quality of life issue where there is a group of individuals in a particular neighborhood who are

causing problems for residents. There could also be a situation where a particular place in Town might be selling to minors. That Unit could be used for that type of problem. They don't have to be in plain clothes all the time. If there were a particular intersection that had a number of accidents and warranted a directed patrol, these individuals could be used for that.

With regard to the concern there would be a sense of being part of an elite group; the individuals would be trained in certain areas such as collecting evidence, photography, etc. The Sergeant, like most of the Sergeants, would already have those skills and could teach them. The officers may go to the academy to learn a few other techniques.

Councilor Woods questioned if the unit would be assigned to a problem for a period of time or until resolution is reached and then move on to another problem. He questioned whether it is correct to say they should not be conceived of as being part of a regular patrol unit shift wise.

Chief Doyle responded, conceptually, yes. It may not be that the unit stays on a particular case until solved as there are times when cases can go for years without being solved. These individuals are going to have not a case to solve or to investigate or an issue, they will have many. There will be times when they are busy with one issue and pulled off to address another. That is the beauty of ensuring there is that flexibility with the officers as it will give additional time to spend dealing with those issues on a one-on-one basis. Because now they are inherent to that unit, they would stay with that unit. We don't have to have Officer Albert investigate an issue on Monday and then, because he is off Tuesday and Wednesday, Officer Doyle comes in and has to investigate it. There is no continuity there. A POP Unit would have the continuity. They will be like that particular investigative piece that every police officer in the department has, but maintain some ownership over the issues they are dealing with. It will be up to the Sergeant who is the immediate supervisor and the Commander of the division who oversees it to manage it appropriately and ensure their caseload is manageable.

Vice Chairman Mahon commented, with that explanation, he is even more skeptical because now it sounds like all you need is 3 more officers, and you are trying to clothe it in some fancy name. Chief Doyle responded you can call it what you will, the addition of 3 extra officers would give the department the flexibility needed to do what they are already doing without the name associated with it.

Councilor Dwyer remarked it sounds as if the bottom line is there is a manpower issue that needs to be addressed. He suggested it may be the Council has had such a comfortable, professional feeling about the department that it would just assume give the department the manpower needed and have the Chief manage it the way he sees fit. Perhaps the Council simply does not feel like there needs to be a special name for that group.

Councilor Rothhaus stated he likes understanding if this in fact occurs, whether 1, 2, or 3 individuals, that they wouldn't have their sector assignment, they would be used as the Chief determines best, which he believes appropriate. He stated his appreciation of the level of detail provided by the department, and that he likes the idea the officers might be bouncing from one thing to another as opposed to getting into a cruiser and doing the daily chores.

Councilor Dwyer remarked the Council recognizes the department has been at a fixed number for quite a while. The Town has been able to maintain a steady tax rate for several years. The desire is to

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determine a means of continuing down that road when determining how to implement the increase in cost.

Town Manager Cabanel reiterated in lieu of adding positions to the budget, she added \$28,000 in overtime. She requested the Council keep that in mind if determining to make changes.

Councilor Boyd echoed the remarks made by Councilor Dwyer, and stated instead of the proposal for a POP Unit, he wished what had been requested was an additional 3 officers. He remarked back in 2010, the department had 40 full-time and 6 part-time employees. At this time, with the addition of 3 officers, the department would still be below the 2010 staffing level. He stated the desire to determine how to add manpower on the streets to accomplish the desired goals.

#### Police Detail

Director Micali stated the increase in this area of the budget is related to the new retirement rate as well as a new calculation on wages based on staffing in the department. Outside details are paid 100% by the individual/entity requesting the detail. There is offsetting revenue identified within the budget.

#### Discussion/decision - Highway Garage bond

Director Micali spoke of handouts provided the Council. The first was a summary of the debt runout as it currently stands. It is running around \$0.16 for the next several years. In 2018 the Greens Pond bond will retire, and in 2023 the drainage bond will be retired.

The second handout provided was the highway garage proposal in its current state (what was presented last year). It identified the debt runout throughout the life of the bond, which is between \$0.18 in the first year to \$0.25 for the first couple of years before the Greens Pond bond retires.

The third handout provided was related to debt runout; if the decision were to wait until FY18, the debt runout would be \$0.15 to \$0.16. That takes into account the 5% increase anticipated for building materials as well as bond interest rates (left constant at 5% for a 25-year bond).

When the Greens Pond bond retires, the annual cost of bonding would be decreased to \$0.14. If the decision were to wait until the Greens Pond bond is retired, the cost to the taxpayers would be an estimated \$659,000 more than if they were bonded at the same time. On average, over the 25-year life of the bond, it would be a \$67.00 total additional cost for a homeowner, based on a home valued at \$300,000.

Vice Chairman Mahon questioned the will of the Council regarding the question of whether or not to place the issue of bonding for the Highway Garage on the ballot at the next election. He noted Councilor Harrington, although unable to be in attendance, has consistently expressed her opposition.

Councilor Dwyer stated he is in favor of placing the bond on the ballot. However, he will not lose sleep if it is postponed. He stated his belief the threshold of the approval required is almost impossible to achieve. He is not convinced a super-majority is attainable.

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Councilor Koenig stated he was of the impression the Council had determined not to move forward this year given no changes have been made to the materials presented, etc. He stated his belief if the intent was to better help residents understand the issue/request, there was a good deal that should have been done in preparation for placing the issue on the ballot.

Vice Chairman Mahon remarked back in the October/November timeframe, the Council decided to wait until the financial impact was understood and whether or not success had been achieved with the outstanding contract. The Council was also looking for a sub-committee to be formed, and had hoped to see more involvement from other individuals to prepare the necessary information. Only one individual came forward to participate on such a committee.

Councilor Koenig noted the Town Manager brought the budget forward absent of any employee raises. He questioned whether there are any changes to the budget anticipated. Town Manager Cabanel stated all union contracts in the budget are in the last year. There was no increase built into those contracts. The only information that would be seen in terms of increases in wages would be those employees under contract that have steps such as the Police and Fire Departments. If a contract comes forward for AFSCME and the Council concurs with the cost items that would be a separate Warrant Article totaling about \$35,000 net.

Councilor asked for clarification nothing has been proposed or suggested for non-union employees. Town Manager Cabanel stated she has not as she not believe that her place.

Councilor Rothhaus remarked he believes it is important; however, if it is simply put on the ballot without the necessary effort, and because of the necessity for a super-majority vote, it would probably fail. He would rather do the necessary work to give it the best chance to pass. He stated his opinion next year would be a better opportunity to put the item on the ballot.

**MOTION made by Councilor Dwyer and seconded by Councilor Rothhaus to present the Highway Garage proposal to the voters during the 2015-2016 election. MOTION FAILED 1-5-0**  
*Councilors Boyd, Koenig, Rothhaus, Woods, and Mahon voted in Opposition.*

#### Discussion - Next Steps in the Budget Process

Director Micali noted the Council would begin deliberations on the FY16 budget beginning with its meeting on Monday, January 26, 2015. He requested Councilors seeking additional information contact the Town Manager.

**MOTION made by Councilor Koenig and seconded by Councilor Boyd to adjourn the meeting. MOTION CARRIED 6-0-0**

*The January 19, 2015 meeting of the Town Council was adjourned at 9:37 p.m.*

Submitted by Dawn MacMillan