

**MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF PUBLIC SAFETY
THURSDAY, MARCH 15, 2012
5:00 P.M. CITY HALL AUDITORIUM**

Present were: Mayor Ryan Bingham, Commissioner Angelo LaMoncia, Commissioner Douglas Benedetto, Commissioner James Potter, Commissioner Christopher Cook, City Comptroller Alice Proulx, Police Chief Michael Maniago, Fire Chief John Field, Traffic Officer Steve Pisarsky, Brian Cornell, Emergency Management Coordinator Rick Dalla Valle, Drakeville Volunteer Fire Department Chief Michael Maccalous

Also attending: Bill Lamoin of the Board of Finance

Absent: Commissioner Darlene Battle, Commissioner Richard Zaharek

Mayor Bingham called to order the Special Meeting of the Board of Public Safety at 5:05 p.m. in the City Hall Auditorium. He stated that the only item on the agenda is to review, discuss and tentatively approve budgets, as follows:

Emergency Management
Fire
Public Safety Miscellaneous
Volunteers
Police
Canine
Traffic

Mayor Bingham said that the Commissioners had an opportunity to ask questions about the budgets and tentatively approve them. He said they would reconvene at a joint meeting on March 26, 2012 at 6:30 p.m. with the City Council.

Mayor Bingham said at that point he would ask Commissioners if they were comfortable to approve the budgets and pass them along to the City Council. He said that he's asked the City Council to be prepared to vote that night as well. He said that he understood the concerns of the Board of Safety members whereby the City Council takes action without regard to input from the Board of Safety members. He said that he hoped the City Council members would review the minutes from this meeting so that the Council would be up to speed.

Mayor Bingham said that there was a City Council meeting scheduled on April 9th to review Board of Safety budgets at 6:00 p.m. if any Commissioners from the Board of Safety would like to attend.

Mayor Bingham stated that the City Council would prefer to not have to meet on April 9th if a vote could be taken at the March meeting. Mayor Bingham told the Commissioners that this was their chance to ask questions and they should feel free to do so.

Emergency Management was the first budget discussed. Mayor Bingham had no recommendations for changes. He stated that it was a completely flat budget and half of

the budget is reimbursed through grants. The total taxpayer amount funded is half of what is shown -- \$28,096.00.

Commissioner Potter asked about line items Publication and Dues and Education in Schools; he said there has been budgeted money but it hasn't been used in the last couple of years. He wondered if it was necessary to budget for them if those line items were not used.

Mr. Dalla Valle responded that he was getting publications and he wasn't sure why that was not reflected. He said that regarding Education, he had not taken any training classes yet that cost anything. Most were offered free by the State or Federal government. He said that it would be best to keep that money available.

A motion was made by Commissioner Potter to tentatively approve the Emergency Management budget; seconded by Commissioner LaMonica. Motion carried.

The next budget to be discussed was Fire. Mayor Bingham said that he had gone over the budget with the Chief and Deputy Chief. He said that Chief Field had some proposed cuts to present to the Board.

Chief Field stated that he had deducted \$28,846.17 from the Extra Help line item. He said that \$2,000.00 was deducted from Alarm Maintenance. \$1,250.00 was deducted from General Expenses which brought that line item to \$10,000.00.

Mayor Bingham said that the major increases were from contributions having to be put back into the capital line to cover what was taken out for the dispatch project. That is approximately \$20,000.00.

Mayor Bingham said that the reason the Extra Help line went down was because the two firefighter positions, taken out last year, were put back in for this year. Due to continued financial strain, Mayor Bingham suggested that those two positions be taken back out of the budget for a reduction of \$104,000.00 in the Salary/Regular Wage line. He suggested that the cuts to the Extra Help line be put back rather than funding the two new positions.

Chief Field said that he had numbers for fuel oil which had gone up quite a bit. He said that line item went up to \$63,768.48. Commissioner Cook asked why it was such an increase. Chief Field said that the increase was due to increases in fuel costs. He said that there was also consideration for diesel fuel for the new generator and natural gas for the addition to the building. These costs are additional from last year's budget.

Commissioner Cook asked if LCD (Litchfield County Dispatch) made any payments towards the fuel costs. Chief Field said that costs incurred by LCD were worked out with the City via a lease. The revenue from this lease was not seen in the Fire Department's budget.

Commissioner Cook asked if the costs of the diesel and natural gas were broken out. A brief discussion took place on these costs; Chief Field gave the Commissioners detailed information on costs and anticipated usage amounts.

Commissioner Potter asked about Stipends; he wondered why there was a 23% increase. Chief Field explained that was due to contractual obligations. Commissioner Potter asked about the 25% increase in the Acting Officer line item. Chief Field explained that due to circumstances such as long term injury leave, sick leave, being short officers, etc. it was necessary to use Acting Officers at times. He also attributed the increase to a transition period of losing officers to retirement and having to use Acting Officers until replacements were hired.

Commissioner Potter asked about Specialized Training and stated that it had gone up 11%. He wondered if this increase was really necessary. Chief Field stated that this amount include training, conferences, etc. Commissioner Potter suggested that the line item be brought back to last year's budgeted amount.

Mayor Bingham asked if there was any objection to the \$1,000.00 reduction in Specialized Training. There was none.

Commissioner Potter said that in the past year, two shifts have been running with one less man. He said that it seemed that the calls were covered. He felt that if numbers needed further reduction, he would be comfortable reducing staffing by another two positions so that all four shifts were at the same level.

Chief Field asked if what Commissioner Potter was suggesting was to eliminate a position from each shift. Commissioner Potter said that it sounded like two were already eliminated.

Mayor Bingham reiterated his suggestion that the two additional positions in the Regular Salary line item be taken out of the budget for a reduction of \$104,000.00. He suggested that the cuts to the Extra Help line be put back rather than funding the two new positions. He asked if Commissioner Potter was suggesting going beyond that.

Commissioner Potter said that it seemed like the Fire Department was managing with less positions, other than having to pay the overtime. If necessary, he would be comfortable with reducing staff further. This was discussed. Chief Field said that he thought that further reductions would adversely affect operations. His main concern was the safety of his staff. Further discussion on staffing took place.

Mayor Bingham asked if what was on the table currently was to reduce the Regular Wage line by \$104,000.00 and put back the \$28,846.00 in the Extra Help/overtime. There were no objections to this.

Further discussion took place about reducing the budget and staffing. Chief Field talked about projects that needed to be done such as the back parking lot. This was discussed as was the possibility of reductions to completing projects.

Commissioner Cook asked about the Education Assistance program. Chief Field said that Education Assistance was contractual and that reimbursements were made to personnel completing certain levels of education. He said the Education Incentive was for college degrees, which is a different line item. Stipends are given for those earning degrees.

Mayor Bingham suggested that if the Board is looking for cuts, rather than going line by line, the Board should instruct the Chief to give guidance for an additional \$52,000.00 in cuts and to recommend that an additional position be cut. The Chief could then prepare his cuts for the next meeting and they could be discussed further at that time.

Commissioner Potter said that the Board was in a catch 22 because the instructions were to present a budget that kept employees safe but also kept a zero increase. Commissioner Potter hoped that by the next meeting the Board could get more direction from the City Council on what was expected.

Mayor Bingham suggested that the budget remain as it is now, ask the Chief to look for additional cuts and go from there. He wondered if there was anything specific that the Board wanted to discuss without going through every line item.

Mayor Bingham recapped the discussion as follows:
Regular Wage line item was reduced by \$104,000.00;
Extra Help would remain at \$531,992.00;
A reduction of \$1,000.00 in Specialized Training;
Fuel Oil would reflect \$63,768.00;
Reduction of \$2,000.00 to Alarm Maintenance;
Reduction of \$1,250.00 in General Expense.

Ms. Proulx stated that with the above configuration, the total budget would now stand at \$5,001,562.00.

A motion was made to tentatively approve the Fire Department budget by Commissioner Benedetto; seconded by Commissioner Potter. Motion carried.

The next budget to be discussed was Public Safety Miscellaneous. There was no discussion. A motion to tentatively approve the Public Safety Miscellaneous budget was made by Commissioner Cook; seconded by Commissioner LaMonica. Motion carried.

The next budget discussed was Volunteers; Mayor Bingham wondered if the Board would want to vote on the budget since it was a City Council budget.

Commissioner Potter asked if the volunteer departments were used significantly more; Chief Field said yes, they were. No one present from the volunteer departments wished to speak.

The Police budget was discussed. Chief Maniago discussed cuts as recommended by the Mayor, who had asked him to cut an additional \$100,000.00 between his three budgets.

Chief Maniago went through his suggestions for reductions in the Regular Police budget to various line items totaling \$43,000.00. He went through specific information regarding various line items and why some had increases such as retirements, training, etc. Some of these increases were due to State mandates regarding training. An early warning system was discussed. He said there was \$128,000.00 in the new budget; half of that is due to lump sum payments/retirements. Chief Maniago said that there were up to 10 officers that could retire at any time. Contract negotiations were also scheduled which could impact the budget.

Commissioner Cook asked about the Education/Incentive program and wondered if it was being utilized. Chief Maniago said it was.

Commissioner Potter asked about the reduction to Special Squads. Chief Maniago said that \$5,500.00 had been cut. He wondered why it had gone up so much; Chief Maniago said that was because it had been gutted in the current budget. Further discussion ensued on this topic. Commissioner Potter suggested a further reduction of \$5,500.00. Mayor Bingham asked if there were any objections to this suggestion. Commissioner Cook asked how this cut would affect the department other than less training. Chief Maniago said that if the Board wanted this cut, the department would manage.

Commissioner Potter asked if more could be cut from the Accident Investigation Team. Chief Maniago said that it was necessary to have another Accident Reconstructionist because Office Shopey retired. Currently there is only one person in that position where there had been three. This was discussed.

Commissioner Potter asked about the large increase for New Equipment. Chief Maniago explained that this increase was for the detective division which would allow them to do computer crime investigations and cell phone investigations. Special software was needed for this. Chief Maniago said that it had already been reduced by \$5,000.00.

Commissioner Potter asked about the Telephone line item; he said it went up 45%. Chief Maniago said those costs were related to the new radio towers and the new radio system. This was discussed. Cell phone costs were discussed as was Communications Other and associated costs.

Discussion took place on the Early Warning System; Commissioner Cook wondered if manpower could take the place of the computer system. He wondered if it warranted spending \$7,500.00. Further discussion took place. Chief Maniago explained how the system worked. Mayor Bingham alerted the Board to costs not shown such as Workman's Comp and insurance that this system may help to reduce or prevent.

Mayor Bingham asked if the Board wanted more information on this program for the next meeting.

Commissioner Potter asked about Office Supplies; Chief Maniago had not made a reduction in that line item. Discussion took place. Commissioner Potter suggested reducing it to \$25,000.00. Chief Maniago said he would go over it and would let the Board know if this cut presented a big problem.

Commissioner Benedetto asked the Chief to bring some data on Special Squads to the next meeting. Special Squads training and duties were discussed.

Chief Maniago said that a retirement was expected by the IT person, currently an officer. He said that he would prefer to fill the position with a civilian rather than an officer. He said the training would be extensive. He thought that figures for this would have to be included in this budget.

A brief discussion took place about incorporating these duties through the IT department at the city. This will be looked at but Mayor Bingham recommended that the cost be kept as part of the police budget for now. This position was briefly discussed.

Mayor Bingham summarized as follows:
Reduction to Office Supplies of \$6,800.00;
Reduction of an additional \$5,500 in Special Squads;
Total reduction of \$11,000.00.

Ms. Proulx stated that the total reductions were \$55,300.00; the amount at which the current budget stands is \$8,028,013.00.

A motion to tentatively approve the Regular Police budget was made by Commissioner Potter; seconded by Commissioner Cook. Motion passed.

The next budget to be discussed was Canine/ Animal Control. Chief Maniago stated that Building Maintenance was cut by \$1,000.00 and Capital Reserve was cut by \$1,000.00.

Chief Maniago said that a major increase in this budget was due to hiring an Assistant Animal Control Officer, twenty hours a week for a total of \$18,980.00. He said the current workload is expanding and the hours have increased—getting called out on

weekends and after hours. This was discussed. \$7,800 was also included for a kennel worker and \$3,000.00 was there for a per diem employee.

Chief Maniago said that the Animal Control Officer responds to all animal calls—raccoons, bears, possums, etc, and not just dogs. Mayor Bingham was hoping to share costs with other towns should a grant go through that had been applied for.

Commissioner Cook wanted to ensure that should this new position be instated, the number of police responders to animal calls would decrease. Chief Maniago went over the number of animal related calls. The hourly wage was discussed.

Chief Maniago stated that the Education line item went up \$750.00 because the Animal Control Officers would need training.

Commissioner Cook asked about fuel costs. Chief Maniago said the figures were not available and he would check on those.

Commissioner Benedetto asked about the building. Chief Maniago went through the details on the building, dog pens etc.

The Animal Control Officer and associated duties were discussed. The possibility of providing a firearm was discussed.

Commissioner Potter asked if something in the budget could be cut; possibly Education. Chief Maniago felt that the training was too important to cut, due to the fact that the Animal Control Officer had only been in that position for seven months and a new person would be coming on board.

A motion to tentatively approve the Animal Control budget was made by Commissioner Benedetto; seconded by Commissioner Cook.

Commissioner Cook wanted to go on record that he was concerned about the safety of the Animal Control Officer but has hesitations about providing a firearm for that position.

The motion as stated above passed.

The next budget up for discussion was Traffic. Chief Maniago stated that he had cut the Regular Wages by \$26,793.00 for the part-time clerk and \$6,341.00 was cut for the increase in hours for the Traffic Maintenance employees for a total reduction of \$33,134.00.

Chief Maniago said that he reduced Street Signs by \$15,000.00. He stated that ether line items were reduced as follows:

Electric by \$2,000.00;
Supplies by \$1,000.00;
Repairs by \$1,000.00;
Capital Reserve by \$2,000.00;
CR Parking by \$1,000.00;
Totaling \$55,134.40 in reductions.

Chief Maniago suggested that the part-time position be cut but that he wanted to increase the hours of the clerks already employed to 35 hours a week from 32.5 hours per week.

Mayor Bingham said that under the City Hall Union, only three part-time positions were allowed and were already filled. This means that a part-time person would not be allowed to be hired—either a full time person or increased hours were the only options.

Commissioner Cook asked if three hours would make a difference; Chief Maniago said that it would help. This was discussed. It was thought that the goal would be to get the Traffic Officer on the road; Chief Maniago agreed. He said that it wouldn't get him out completely but would help. He said three hours is better than nothing; a full time employee would be better.

Commissioner Cook noted that if Officer Pisarsky was on the street, more money could be made by booting cars and scanning plates. Commissioner Cook asked if he was tied up most of the day with other duties. Chief Maniago went over the details of his work schedule.

Mayor Bingham said he would love to be able to have a part-time position but it was necessary to work within the confines of the union structure. Discussion took place about clerk hours relating to the Traffic Department and other areas within the department.

Mayor Bingham reiterated that what Chief Maniago was asking for was that each clerk get an additional 2.5 hours per week which would be a total of 7.5 hours per week. Overtime and clerk duties were discussed.

Mayor Bingham said that the \$26,793.00 either needed to stay out or be brought up to a full time pay. There was no option for a part-time position. Other duties of the Traffic Officer were discussed.

Commissioner Potter asked about the maintenance positions and the fact that they put out barricades for events. He wondered why they couldn't be doing other work besides putting the barricades up and then hanging around waiting to take them down. It was explained that they were not on overtime for the entire event; they would go home and then come back and take down the barricades.

Commissioner Benedetto asked the Chief to go over the schedule of the clerks. Chief

Maniago explained the rotation and the work schedule. Commissioner Benedetto said that he wanted to see the Traffic Officer doing traffic work, not collecting money.

Commissioner Potter said that he didn't think the City was in a position to be hiring any more full time help. Mayor Bingham said that the Board was trying to go in the right direction but it was a difficult time right now.

Commissioner Potter asked if there would be any union issues if the hours of the clerks were increased. Mayor Bingham said there were none.

Chief Maniago said that the year 2015 was the deadline to go around and inventory all of the street signs and make sure the reflectivity was up to Federal code. This is a huge undertaking and he said that there is a chance that the deadline may be moved due to the financial burden on cities and towns. He estimated that it could cost up to \$100,000.00 to \$200,000.00 to complete, which would include replacing signs and sign posts. He said the two maintenance personnel would have to perform that job.

The \$15,000.00 in that line item was a minimal amount that was to go towards that project and tonight it was cut. This project was discussed at length.

A motion was made to tentatively approve the Traffic budget by Commissioner Cook; seconded by Commissioner LaMonica. Motion carried.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 p.m. by Commissioner Cook; seconded by Commissioner LaMonica. Motion carried.

ATTEST: Joseph L. Quartiero, CMC

City Clerk

Respectfully Submitted,

Beth Murphy
Recording Secretary