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BOARD OF FINANCE MEETING – POLICE DEPARTMENT CIP

Board of Education District Office Conference Room

Wednesday, March 9th, 2022

7:00 PM

A meeting of the Board of Finance was held on this date at the Stonington District Office Meeting Room. Members present were Chairman Tim O'Brien, Michael Fauerbach, Deborah Norman, Lynn Young, David Motherway, Bob Statchen and Chris Johnson.

Chairman O'Brien called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

Budget Presentations

Police Department: Police Department Captain Todd Olson presented, reporting last year was a busy year for the department, handling 12,609 calls. Many of these calls and investigations were particularly time-consuming, with an uptick in identity thefts and other unusual crimes. Cpt. Olson noted the new Police Accountability Bill has put an administrative strain on all police departments in general. But thanks to the BOF, his department is making use of new body/cruiser cameras, along with a recently filled Police Support Specialist role to help with these challenges.

Cpt. Olson described a State unfunded mandate the department tried to implement that focused on accreditation before the PAB mandates. Cpt. Olson continued, noting with everyone being so busy, the accreditation project stalled. After some research, Cpt. Olson found many PDs have a direct Accreditation Manager overseeing compliance with the new bill – typically a full-time role for Tier 1 CALEA National Accreditation. Cpt. Olson said the State isn't yet requiring Tier 1 CALEA Accreditation, but this proposed manager would need a 50%-time commitment to get the program up and running. Thus, Stonington PD is requesting a second Captain to aid in this capacity, along with handling Emergency Management Director duties. Cpt. Olson described the current EMD's duties, but indicated as a stipend (part-time) position, he doesn't work enough hours to undertake all the time-consuming tasks related to the role. Cpt. Olson showed this role should be a salaried position, which excludes hourly officer or Lieutenant options, as the EMD will be on call to handle emergency/storm events that require a lot of over-time. In summary, the second Captain position is the first large budget item request. The Chairman called for questions, and Mr. Fauerbach noticed commentary saying, "promote a supervisor to the rank of Captain," whereas the financial overview made it seem like an added outside position. Cpt. Olson clarified the candidate would be moved to Captain position from within the department (with a suitable pay increase), with the previous lower-level position needing to be filled as well. Ms. Young asked if Lieutenants are paid for OT, and Cpt. Olson indicated they are, but the

Captain rank is a salaried position. Mr. Statchen asked if the Board of Police Commissioners supported this move unanimously, and Commissioner Chairman Bob O'Shaughnessy explained after the Commission reviewed PAB requirements, they were unsure what the committee would require of departments – but was certain future mandates would be put on the Town. Mr. O'Shaughnessy outlined a new department psychological testing mandate, detailing its cost and time-commitment challenges as an example. Mr. O'Shaughnessy elaborated, recounting the overwhelming FOIA requests Lt. Peckham handles [stemming from the PAB], as well as body cam and paperwork requests soon to come. The new Captain will aid with these challenges, and therefore is unanimously supported by the Commission.

Cpt. Olson also brought attention to the larger size of Groton's PD (compared to Stonington's) and listed Groton's department positions. In conclusion – Stonington PD is not top-heavy by any means compared to other similar departments. Mr. Motherway explained the cascading financial impact will be less than the \$118,965 budgeted for the Captain's salary, since the role is backfilled from the lower position, while also handling EMD duties – offsetting the current \$16,000 EMD stipend. First Selectman Danielle Chesebrough agreed, estimating they'll spend around \$70,000 including the offsets David addressed. Ms. Young had questions about the structuring and payment, before asking what the Captain's salary would be fully loaded. Finance Director James Sullivan estimated \$152,000 for the fully loaded Captain salary. Lynn requested Danielle to report back with the salary specifics, and Bob asked if the lower-level [newly open] position would be removed. Cpt. Olson said the lower-level role would be filled with a fresh entry-level officer. Danielle outlined the structure specifics in further detail for the Board.

Ms. Young asked if they decided who the new Police Chief was, and Mr. O'Shaughnessy replied out of nine applicants, the Selection Committee Commission narrowed it down to two candidates – Lt. Bryan Schneider and Colonel Jay DelGrosso – for a final interview on March 16th. Lynn asked where in the budget cycle would there be a new Chief, and Mr. O'Shaughnessy expected by the end of the month, pending a polygraph, a psychological exam, a physical, etc. In summary, the role won't be filled right away while they're still undertaking the selection process. The Chairman called for questions, and there were none.

Lynn requested specifics pertaining to service calls – how many calls were criminal vs. someone in need of help. Mr. Olson supplied some stats: ill or injured people – 1,723 calls, suspicious persons – 921 calls, suspicious vehicles – 900 calls, fire related – 680 calls, motor vehicle complaints – 589 calls and so on. Michael requested a chart detailing the calls, and Tim recommended the chart should be submitted to Mr. Sullivan in time for deliberations.

Lynn recalled a discussion about the need to limit police presence for medical calls, and Mr. Olson detailed a new policy where the PD still takes serious medical calls (based on officer proximity), while other less serious medical issues are delegated to appropriate EMS departments. Lynn asked if the total call volume was increasing, and Capt. Olson referenced some year-to-year stats, with some years having a higher call volume than others.

Mr. Statchen noticed the Police Support Specialist (\$75,000, a 37,500 increase) line item was calculated as a 0% increase – asking Mr. Sullivan if this impacts the Total Police Services line-

item calculation of 4.32%. Mr. Sullivan suggested that yes, this was likely factored into that final figure.

Ms. Young asked what the Police Support Specialist does, and Cpt. Olson explained they handle FOIA requests, and manage redactions and requests associated with body cam footage – a particularly busy position. Ms. Norman asked how many body cams are in use, and Lt. Schneider stated there are three demo body cams used in a trial capacity, with the fleet-side body cam rollout likely happening in May. Mr. O'Brien asked how the trials are going, and Lt. Schneider reported that logistically speaking, the trials are going great.

The Chairman asked if there were any other operating budget items to **highlight**, and Cpt. Olson noted the Training Personnel Services budget increased by \$3,000 (**totaling** \$108,000), due to overall cost and salary increases. The Communication Specialist Overtime went up \$2,000 (totaling \$26,000). Accrued Leave Payout – A Days went up \$34,426 (**totaling** \$98,426) of which Mr. Sullivan explained the \$98,426 plus what remains in the reserve **makes up** 100% of the possible liability as of 12/31/2021 – a figure that “**waxes and wanes**” year-to-year. Lynn asked about “A Days,” to which Cpt. Olson explained **it's** accumulated staff time, accrued quarterly when staff doesn't call in, encouraging good **attendance**. Bob noticed it was a large jump, and Mr. Sullivan explained it's because not as many **individuals** called in. Cpt. Olson noted a new policy that allowed staff to **call in** if they suspected **they** had Covid-19 or felt sick, which was a remarkable success overall.

Chris Johnson asked what line item the psychological **testing** is reflected under, and Cpt. Olson referenced the Physicals line-item (\$20,000, **an** increase of \$2,000), which also includes drug testing, mental health evaluations, etc. In accordance with the new PAB requirements, eight officers per year will need to **undergo** this battery of tests, however Cpt. Olson has found a doctor to conduct on-site testing.

Michael considered the School Safety Personnel line item (\$5,000, a reduction of \$5,500) and Cpt. Olson explained they **have one** reserve officer left for patrolling schools, and schools closed during Covid-19 **decreased the need** for personnel services. Cpt. Olson indicated they will increase reserves in the **future**, though. Michael asked about the Crossing Guard budget (\$37,000) and if this will **increase** to earlier levels, with Mr. Sullivan explaining the decrease was due to **remote** learning (**when** the schools were closed).

Moving on to **the** Building Maintenance costs (\$30,000, increased by \$3,000), Cpt. Olson accounted for **repair, painting**, sprinkler, and fire detection contract increases. The Maintenance/Operation of Radios budget (\$90,000, a \$2,000 increase) also reflected a cost increase, tied to a Motorola contract. Cpt. Olson spoke to the Law Enforcement Counsel increase (\$13,926, a \$406 increase), who aids the PD with recertifications, hiring and agility testing – however many years this cost stays level. Regarding the Outfitting New Officers budget item of \$6,500, Cpt. Olson cited steep costs to outfit several new police recruits. The Telecommunications item (\$115,000, up by \$2,000) is another contracted expense that also increased. Cpt. Olson deferred to Mr. Sullivan about the Retirement Fund (\$1,020,000, an increase of \$50,000), to which James explained \$20,000 of this is for the new Captain. Mr.

Statchen asked about an increase in new retirements, and Cpt. Olson explained that a few Officers retired upon hearing of the Accountability Bill. Consumable Supplies (\$15,000, a \$3,000 increase), accounted for things such as paper, toner and office supplies, and the Telephone line item (\$650, increased by \$50) also saw a slight increase. Cpt. Olson reported the Unleaded Gasoline expense (\$90,000, up by \$30,000) was another unavoidable increase. The Chairman called for further questions, and Mr. Fauerbach was surprised to see such a notable increase in fuel costs. There was discussion among the Board with Mr. Sullivan about last year's fuel bid, and repercussions stemming from it.

Moving on to the Police Services CIP budget, Cpt. Olson spoke about the Fleet Upgrade – Purchase of Four New Vehicles request (\$185,000), an annual expense, up \$5,000 from last year. Cpt. Olson addressed an hourly rate increase at Strobes 'N' More – the vendor who maintains cruiser electronics and lighting systems. Mr. O'Brien asked Lt. Schneider if he predicts supply shortages [from Strobes 'N' More], and Lt. Schneider indicated he does, referencing a 25-week turnaround after an order placed last November. Mr. O'Brien asked if the vendor has secured the cruiser upfitting equipment, and Lt. Schneider confirmed Strobes 'N' More is in possession of the cruiser add-ons, and as soon as new cruisers are delivered, they'll be ready to have work done.

Cpt. Olson mentioned when the cruisers are parked during road work, they're bringing in money – typically around \$100,000 annually. Mr. Sullivan estimated it was closer \$70,000 last year, and Bob noticed the projected actual was \$60,000 and asked why this was. Cpt. Olson supposed it was due to less Town road work. There was discussion about cruiser maintenance costs correlating to road life expectations. Lt. Schneider described a scenario where cars are kept in service longer, and thus \$700-800 repairs are being done on older cruisers with an end-of-life \$2,000-4,000 trade-in value. Often, they'll use cars until they hit 120,000 miles, and then use them less often – but Lt. Schneider informed the Board they are still getting by okay.

The Technology and Communications Equipment Upgrade (\$20,000) was addressed, a reoccurring annual request covering unanticipated technology expenses. Cpt. Olson's focused on a need to update two components: the Records Management System and Computer Aided Dispatch systems, which work in concert together. Cpt. Olson explained the RMS is a public safety system provided by IMC, a software vendor. Cpt. Olson noted the RMC is becoming outdated, and other agencies have moved to an RMC provided by Nextgen Solutions. Nextgen offers many new features, including e-ticketing (opposed to hand-writing paper tickets), for example. Cpt. Olson estimated \$150,000 for the RMS upgrade, which includes data migration from the IMC system – but at this stage it's only a consideration. Mr. Motherway asked if the \$150,000 makes up the bulk of the systems update, and Cpt. Olson confirmed it does, with the last data migration project being particularly involved.

Lynn asked about efficiency aspects from these new updates, and Cpt. Olson cited a few examples – officers using laptops in cruisers or to write police reports on location. Mr. Motherway noted this recent technology isn't all about efficiency, but proper oversight, documentation and administrative management aspects. Cpt. Olson mentioned a particularly helpful benefit – with everything documented digitally, emergency departments can reference a

central, shared database. This allows Stonington PD to find a suspect's history in the Waterford PD database, for instance. Bob asked how much was in the Technology/Communications Upgrades account, and Mr. O'Brien recalled a good deal of it was spent last year on several unexpected items, but a small amount of funds remain. Mr. Johnson asked about the Computer Aided Dispatch project, with Cpt. Olson explaining that with the RMC and CAD systems working together, the CAD upgrade is included in the \$150,000 projection.

Cpt. Olson discussed the Town Wide Surveillance Cameras Program (\$15,000), noting while the cameras occasionally require maintenance, they are invaluable for not only crime-solving, but proving innocence as well. However, Cpt. Olson reported several outdoor cameras are experiencing issues. Mr. Fauerbach questioned if the \$15,000 is being held year-over-year, or if there's a list of cameras requiring upkeep/replacement. Cpt. Olson was warned by Stonington IT Manager Roger Kizer (who supports the camera system) that some cameras are at risk of failure or have lost clarity due to age. In turn, Cpt. Olson has been putting off the camera expenses, and outlined several instances where DEF (the system provider) has had to fix camera issues or replace conduit feeds, but underscored the importance of keeping this system in proper working order.

Moving on to Body/Cruiser Cameras (\$82,241), Cpt. Olson reminded the Board this is the second year of a five-year agreement. Bob asked if a grant offset these costs, to which Cpt. Olson detailed the grant process: after contacting the OPM, they recommended buying the cruiser cameras first, and OPM would provide grant funding for both the body and cruiser cameras. Mr. Sullivan explained the budgeted grant revenue will cover \$42,500 of last year's cost, which won't offset this year's \$82,241.

For the Radio Microwave Link request (\$150,000), Cpt. Olson requested State funding for this item, which should help to pay for the North Stonington tower expenses if its approved. Cpt. Olson a possibility of the State taking over RML maintenance in the future (as part of Federal grant funding), potentially saving \$50,000 in annual Motorola fees. However, Cpt. Olson discussed a need to own RML equipment/towers – as opposed to renting/leasing them – and outlined the challenges of negotiating tower connectivity, renting tower space, and other hurdles he's come across. Lynn asked how often the [current fiber] network went down last year, with Cpt. Olson reporting half a dozen times, due to glitches and accidents with the fiber network. Cpt. Olson thus stressed the need for this reliable microwave network, while continuing to use the fiber as a backup – which enhances agency radio, 911 and CSP aspects. Michael recounted this was a potentially refunded program when including the ARPA Grant, before it had gone from \$135,000 to \$150,000, to which Cpt. Olson explained estimates were initially provided from the state, until consultants addressed necessary equipment that hadn't been accounted for. The Chairman called for additional questions; there were none.

Moving on to Police Portable Radios-Batteries (\$11,760), Cpt. Olson explained the older radio batteries are struggling to keep officer radios adequately powered for double shifts, for example. After researching battery options, Cpt. Olson found Li-Ion radio batteries will last for two-three years, or 300-500 charge cycles. Mr. O'Brien asked how many batteries this would cover, and Cpt. Olson said this will replace all of them. Mr. Johnson asked if there was a need to replace

them all, to which Cpt. Olson explained with all the batteries on the same cycle, it keeps everything on the same page – without having to label or wonder about mixed in older batteries.

The Chairman called for further questions, Mr. Fauerbach requested clarification about prioritizing “A, B and C” marked CIP requests – asking if Cpt. Olson would be willing to sacrifice a police cruiser to cover the battery costs, for instance. Cpt. Olson replied that he would not, with Mr. Motherway outlining some of the priorities based on conversations with department staff. The Chairman called for final questions from the Board, and there were none.

In conclusion, Cpt. Olson expressed his gratitude for the Boards support, and thanked them for the tools they need to do their job. He continued by saying he **understands** it isn’t cheap, but this funding keeps the department in a good place while helping to attract **viable** new candidates.

Appointment Auditor for Fiscal 2021/2022: Mr. Sullivan started off noting there was huge consolidation in the market; when he was hired, there were two dozen firms that **did** municipal audits, but the majority have since merged. James described several firms he had considered for the audit: Blum, Shapiro & Company was contacted, but **missed** the proposal deadline and wanted to charge \$95,000 and thus was eliminated. The **remaining** firms were also increasing municipal market rates up in line with commercial market rates, and James explained while audits are still affordable, they won’t be for **much longer**.

There was ultimately two firms James recommended – **the Town’s** current auditing firm of five years – PKF O’Connor Davies, with the caveat James is friends with one of the firm partners. The second firm, Marcum LLP, is a recently merged firm with two offices in CT. Mr. Sullivan explained Marcum has **only** audited one CT municipality – Plainfield, CT – and it’s worth noting that Stonington has a lot more “moving parts,” compared to other comparable towns.

Mr. Sullivan detailed a **price increase** this year; last year, the 2021 Audit cost nearly \$73,000, and James was **expecting** a 10-15% bid increase for this year. O’Connor Davies quoted a year-one bid of **\$79,000**, with Marcum quoting \$75,000 year-one bid. James requested a three-year minimum guaranteed contract, with a two-year option if the Town is satisfied with the first three years. Mr. O’Brien asked for confirmation the contract was similar to what was previously done, and James **confirmed** it was. Mr. Sullivan continued, noting Marcum would cost \$15,000 less over three years, and close to \$25,000 less over five years.

Another **consideration** worth noting was out-of-scope work (unforeseen paperwork, delayed events, etc.). James explained with Marcum quoting a competitive bid, out-of-scope costs that arise during the audit could be a considerable expense. James cited a past example when the BOE needed a detailed report, and his O’Connor Davies colleague included it for free. James continued, noting these same reports could cost \$2,000 (each) using Marcum, for instance. Despite initial savings using Marcum for the audit, Mr. Sullivan showed these fees could quickly outpace the O’Connor Davis bid. Another consideration is a new GASB 87 operating lease report, of which O’Connor Davies already has experience with.

Mr. O'Brien asked how many other towns O'Connor Davies has audited, and James said they audit 28 additional CT towns. The Chairman recommended O'Connor Davies based on James' recommendation, and expressed concern over being one of the first audits for Marcum.

Mr. Statchen noted for public companies, they need to switch accountants every five years, and wanted to ensure something like this wouldn't impact the Town's Bond rating. Mr. Sullivan clarified this rule only applies to public large size companies and isn't applicable to Stonington.

Lynn asked James for his expertise as an auditor, and if it's better to have fresh eyes, or a more experienced auditor. Mr. Sullivan provided examples that showed the benefits of either instance; summarizing it as, "a sword that cuts both ways." Mr. Statchen asked if these were the only firms that followed up with James' RFP, and James affirmed this was the case, excluding a third unqualified firm. Michael voiced that while it's healthy to source new auditors, he supports O'Connor Davies, and perhaps in the next three years the Town will consider another firm.

Tim called for a motion to approve O'Conner Davis as the Auditor for Fiscal 2021/2022 and enter into a three-year agreement. Ms. Young approved the motion, the motion was seconded by Mr. Motherway. The Chairman called for further discussion and there was none. The motion was called to a vote and unanimously approved.

The Chairman called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Motherway motioned; Mr. Fauerbach seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously at 8:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Justin Eckert

Board of Finance Recording Secretary