

**TOWN OF STONINGTON**  
**BOARD OF FINANCE SPECIAL MEETING**  
**Virtual Meeting/Stonington Police Dept Meeting Room**  
**Thursday, March 11, 2021**  
**7:00 PM**

The Stonington Board of Finance held a virtual/hybrid meeting on this date at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was also streamed on Facebook live and was available via audio on a conference line. Chairman Tim O'Brien and Mr. Glen Frishman were present at the Police Department Meeting Room, Mr. Michael Fauerbach, Ms. Lynn Young, Mr. Bob Statchen, Mr. Dave Motherway and Ms. Deb Norman were remotely present.

Finance Director Jim Sullivan was present remotely. Chairman O'Brien called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

New Business:

Budget Presentations:

Stonington Police Department:

Chief Darren Stewart thanked the Board for the opportunity to present the Police Department's budget for the next fiscal year. Also in attendance were Captain Todd Olson, Sgt. Tim Marley, Sgt. Lou Diamanti, Sgt. Keith Beebe, Lt. Mike Peckham and Board of Police Commissioners Chairman Robert O'Shaughnessy. The Chief noted changes to the budget this year included impacts felt from the COVID pandemic and law changes in the State of CT that the Department will have to adhere to.

The Chief wanted to highlight the everyday work of the officers and the department staff and their support to the department. Recognizing the impact of the pandemic, the Chief thanked the officers who are out in the field saving lives, meeting with the public, and doing their duty, all while social distancing and protecting the public and themselves. The Chief noted the janitorial staff that has continually sanitized the building to further excise protection for the officers, staff and public. The Chief stated that the budget presented tonight represents what is needed for public safety in the Town as the Town continues to grow and the Department continues to evolve to adapt to any situation.

Line Item #4 - Salary of Sergeants      \$108,547

Chief Stewart informed the Board that the increase in the salary line item is to reflect the addition of a new Sergeant. The department is not requesting more personnel in the department but an advancement of an Officer to Sergeant, thus the decrease in the Officer Salary line item. The Chief notes that new changes in the laws have an impact on department administration and the heavy load of the present Sergeants would benefit from additional support.

Lieutenant Bryan Schneider presented to the Board a quick overview of why the new position is needed. Defining the heavy load of the Sergeant's, Lt. Schneider pointed out it is the Sergeant's responsibility to perform court management, affidavit review, canine unit supervision, overtime assignments, field scheduling and grant administration just to name a few of the day-to-day duties of a Sergeant. The addition of a new Sergeant would assist in a better work schedule for the present Sergeants and eliminate some of the overtime hours the department currently has.

Ms. Young inquired if the transferring officer's position would require a replacement in the immediate future. Chief Stewart said more than likely, but not due to this transferal and noted the increase in the Town population and community development. When asked if there were vacancies currently within the Department, the Chief stated there were 5 unfilled positions.

Mr. Frishman stated that in his recent conversations with Chief Stewart the Chief had stated the additional Sergeant would assist with the additional workload that is anticipated as a result of H.B. No. 6004. Chief Stewart agreed.

Mr. Fauerbach said he was aware that it would be expected that the new Sergeant would help eliminate overtime expenses yet the overtime budget line item went up and asked the Chief to elaborate. Chief Stewart stated the overage estimate is based on a variety of factors such as whether the five vacancies can be filled or whether there is a major incident or large case. The Chief noted if the vacancies can be filled that line item would see a reduction.

Mr. Statchen inquired to Chief Stewart how the newly created position of Records/Dispatch civilian supervisor would enhance the department and what was driving the need for the position. The Chief stated that the new policies and new procedures that will be implemented with the Police Accountability Act demands an effective manager to manage the dispatch center, the records department and assist with FOI requests, streaming video requests and body cam video organization.

Finance Director Jim Sullivan pointed out that Line Item #50 - Retirement Fund would be reducing by \$21,000 as he had received the final contribution rate from MERS. This would reduce the total Police Services budget increase from 4.40% to 4.06%.

Chief Stewart called attention to a new Line Item #33 - Accreditation Expense - \$15,000 to assist the department with the ongoing accreditation process. The Chief also pointed out a savings of \$15,000 in Line Item #69 - Unleaded Gasoline due to being able to lock in a competitive rate.

**Capital Improvement Requests:**

Line Item #12 - MDT Replacement      \$19,000

Lieutenant Schneider noted that the MDT (ruggedized laptops for cruisers) will need upgrading to perform with the dash cams when installed. The current MDT's are outdated and obsolete and will not run with the proposed body/cruiser cameras. The request will need to be increased to \$55,000

Line Item #16 - Body/Cruiser Cameras \$500,000

Lieutenant Schneider advised the Board that the quotation for the body/cruiser cameras has come in at \$464,186 and that is a five (5) year term for forty-five (45) body worn cameras and thirteen (13) in car videos, technical insurance, lifetime warranty on hardware, replacement of all body cameras every 2-1/2 years cloud storage for all uploaded videos.

Lieutenant Schneider informed the Board that with the addition of the dash cameras in the cruisers the need for a License Plate Reader can be eliminated from current and future CIP requests.

Lieutenant Schneider discussed the early enrollment incentive offered from the vendor offering an 8% discount if the department signs before March 31<sup>st</sup>. The Lieutenant said this would provide a discount of nearly \$40,000. Additionally, the State will offer a 30% discount. The vendor recognized this would be difficult to complete prior to the new fiscal year and added a non-appropriation clause to the purchase agreement, which was forwarded to the Town Attorney for review, who was agreeable to the terms and conditions as listed. If the funding is not available come July 1, there is no obligation to the contract.

Finance Director Sullivan weighed in stating he would like to see the ask broken down into hardware costs and service agreement separately and also mentioned the hardware costs, if paid for over five (5) years could be seen as a debt agreement. Director Sullivan and Lieutenant Schneider will further discuss the arrangement with the sales manager.

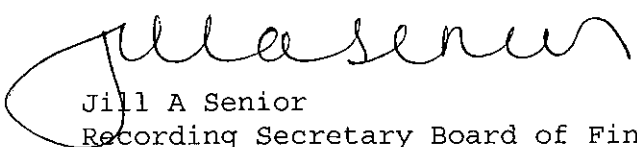
Line Item #9 - Fleet Upgrade \$180,000

Lieutenant Schneider states this is the yearly request to provide safe, clean, reliable vehicles for the officers to be in. The funds will be used to replace three (3) marked cars and one (1) unmarked car.

Chief Stewart added a final note to the evening stressing the outstanding job the extremely talented, dedicated officers do every day to make this Town better under very difficult times in the face of COVID and all the uncertainty in the world. The Chief praised the department's newest promotion to Sergeant, Theresa Hersch, who saved a woman's life while she was overseeing COVID-19 issues for the department and performing outreach work for Stonington Human Services. The Chief realized the department has a heavy ask this year while trying as always to be fiscally responsible, and thanked the Board for the continued support to the department.

With no further discussion, Mr. Frishman motioned to adjourn, Ms. Norman seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jill A Senior  
Recording Secretary Board of Finance