

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

FIRE DEPARTMENT
BUDGET REPORT

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 2014

Present: Ald. Ciccone (Chair), Fuller, Yates, Lipof, Harney, Johnson, Cote and Schwartz
City Staff: Chief Howard Mintz and Lt. David MacDonald, Executive Officer, Newton Police Department; Chief Bruce Proia and Asst. Chief Paul Chagnon, Newton Fire Department and Robert Symanski, Financial Analyst

REFERRED TO FINANCE AND APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES

#403-13(2) HIS HONOR THE MAYOR submitting in accordance with Section 5-1 of the City of Newton Charter the FY15 Municipal/School Operating Budget totaling \$345,044,967 passage of which shall be concurrent with the FY15-FY19 Capital Improvement Program (#403-13). [04/14/14 @ 5:43 PM]
EFFECTIVE DATE OF SUBMISSION 04/22/14; LAST DATE TO PASS THE BUDGET 06/06/14

REFERRED TO FINANCE AND APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES

#403-13 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR submitting the FY15-FY19 Capital Improvement Plan and Long Range Projection pursuant to section 5-3 of the Newton City Charter. [10/21/13 @ 9:59 AM]

ACTION: **APPROVED 8-0, STRAW VOTE**

NOTE: Chief Proia and Asst. Chief Chagnon joined the Committee for discussion on these items and discussed their FY15 Budget Summary and opening remarks.

FIRE DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL & STAFFING

The Fire Department personnel is broken into the following six sub-divisions:

1. Emergency Management
2. Fire Suppression
3. Fire Prevention
4. Emergency Medical Services
5. Technical Rescue
6. Communications Division

FIRE DEPARTMENT FY'14 ACCOMPLISHMENTS (6)

1. Communication/Prevention Bureau – Updated and developed both internal and external capabilities. It is necessary to have efficient computers. The department worked with the City Law Department to create a social media standard operating procedure (SOP) public information system and a twitter account to allow relevant information be released to the media when an incident is occurring. The department replaced computers at most of the stations; some computers at Head Quarters still need to be replaced. The department is working with IT on a replacement plan to complete the replacements. Radios were complete in fall 2013.
2. Emergency Medical Services – Improved EMS capability. The department obtained State approval to use Station #4 as an emergency medical training site.
3. Technical Rescue – 22 Fire personnel completed a 7-week technical rescue-training program on sophisticated rescue capabilities and equipment. Technical Rescue team was efficiently trained in specialized rescues with the ability to handle every situation.
4. Fire Suppression Division – Temporary Station 10 will be in place by fiscal year end to improve facilities and policies.
5. Communications Division – Purchased a completely narrowband radio system.
6. Internal Communications - Purchased and trained all personnel on a new staffing software program

FIRE DEPARTMENT FY'15 GOALS (5)

1. Communication/Prevention Bureau - Computerize all records; computerize all fire inspections and create pre-fire plans using the Firehouse software on the MDT's; publish all Fire Prevention requirements on the Fire Department web site; certify all fire prevention officers as Fire Inspector 1 and advanced arson investigation.
2. Emergency Medical Services Bureau - Create a better balance for medical emergency response by utilizing Ladder Companies; add 48 hours of continuing education for Department EMT's.
3. Technical Rescue - Train additional personnel to Technical Rescue, both Technician and Operational level.
4. Fire Suppression Division - Certify all new firefighter hires to the Firefighter 1 & 2 Standard.
5. Communications Division - Install a new satellite receiver on top of Station 2 to enhance radio communications; replace/repair two additional fire alarm circuits: Fire HQ - Beacon Street, and Centre Street- Walnut Street to Beacon Street.

FIRE DEPARTMENT BUDGET

Chief Proia explained the following significant line item changes or line item additions in the budget:

Fire Administration - \$3,785 increase
Fire Alarm Service – \$9,805 decrease
Fire Station Maintenance - \$14,028 increase
Fire Vehicle Maintenance - \$30,970 decrease
Communication Expenses - \$1,796 increase
Fire Training - \$49,094 increase
Emergency Operations Center - new \$7,000 line.
Consultants – new \$2,000 line.
In-State Conferences - \$940 increase
Printing – new \$300 line
Electrical Supplies - \$10,000 decrease
Electricity - \$10,000 increase
Natural Gas - \$4,900 decrease
Water and Sewer - \$11,400 increase
Heating Oil - \$4,371 decrease
Propane – new \$3,000 line.
Cleaning/Custodial Supplies - \$2,500 decrease for seven buildings.
Motor Vehicles R-M - \$17,500 decrease
Gasoline - \$3,000 decrease
Tires and Tire Supplies - \$5,000 decrease
Vehicle Repairs and Parts - \$5,000 decrease
Public Safety Supplies - now zero dollars
Departmental Equipment \$4,274 decrease
Telestaff Software - \$410 decrease
Firehouse Software – new \$6,480 line
EOC Supplies – new \$6,000 line
Refreshment/Meals – new \$1,000 line

CIP (3)

Chief Proia stated the CIP includes the following three scheduled projects for fiscal year 2015:

Priority #2. Fire Station #3 and HQs - Renovate/replace Newton Centre Station. Station #3 needs major repairs/upgrades. Co-located w/ Fire HQs. Upgrade systems for code compliance, access and female firefighters. These replacements were included in the override approval.

Priority #3. Fire Station #10 & Wires Division (Dedham Street) - Rebuild with an added training facility for confined space project addresses aging building systems, code upgrades, access and accommodations for female firefighters. Wires Division merged at \$2.1 million. Confined training space to be added.

Priority #17. Fire Station #1 (Newton Corner) - Replace emergency generator, replace emergency electrical generator (30kW, 208Y/120V, 3-Phase, 4-Wire) and transfer switch which are at the end of their useful lives.

GRANT, GIFT & REVOLVING FUNDS (7)

Chief Proia touched on a few grants, gifts and revolving funds. He stated that in FY'15 he has requested the following:

1. Sale of Surplus Fire Equipment Revolving \$25,000. This account was created when surplus vehicles are sold.
2. NW Hospital MDU Trailer Gift \$2,000. \$2,000 is an error; this grant is \$1,500. Chief Proia believes this grant will be eliminated next fiscal year. The grant money is used to update and maintain the equipment for the decontamination tent. The decontamination tent is also used during the Boston Marathon. Each community with a hospital receives this grant.
3. Fire Safety Gifts \$5,000. These gifts are either money gifts or supplies i.e. gym equipment for the department.
4. Federal Homeland Security Emergency Operating Center Grant \$22,000. This grant is received annually to buy equipment and furniture for the department.
5. Federal Homeland Security (Beverly pass thru) Grant \$10,000. Chief Proia stated that the City's Comptroller advised the department to include this grant although the City does not anticipate receiving this grant.
6. State Regional HAZMAT Response Grant Program \$45,000.
7. State MDU Deployment Grant \$2,500. This is an annual grant.

Chair Ciccone stated that the Committee of the Whole would discuss the CIP in detail.

COMMITTEE QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND REQUESTS

Please explain the responsibilities of the Task Force and are accessory or illegal apartments more apt to have fires? Chief Proia answered that firefighters report any unusual incidents to the Fire Prevention Division. The Fire Prevention Division team involving several City departments, including Inspectional Services Department uses a unified approach to address the issues. Committee members suggested making this information more accessible.

How many apartment buildings in the City are not connected to a master box? Chief Proia did not have this information available. He stated that buildings with sprinkler systems must be tied into the Fire Department. Buildings that are over 7,500 square feet or that have four or more apartments must have sprinkler systems.

Committee members requested the amount of funding provided by the Boston Athletic Association (BAA) to the City for Fire Department coverage during the Boston Marathon.

Please describe the accomplishment of creating an Emergency Medical Services Officer and the goal to improve the EMS capability. Chief Proia answered that he is the City's EMS Director; the team was created to assist him. The City is eligible to receive reimbursement funds when an emergency is declared such as the blizzard, hurricane and the Boston Marathon tragedy. The information is obtained and documented from each department for the team to complete a cost assessment that is submitted to MEMA for reimbursement.

Please elaborate on emergency medical transports or emergency calls. Chief Proia answered that the engines attend medical calls; ladder trucks are used as backups. Ladder trucks will begin attending commercial building emergency calls. The department is in the process of reprogramming dispatch capabilities to determine if an engine or ladder will attend emergencies. Allowing the department to have higher level of training and proper equipment improves their capability. There are currently sixty licensed EMT's in the City. Recently 12 candidates attended an EMT course conducted by Cataldo Ambulance. Nine candidates passed the course and two candidates out of the nine have passed the State exam. Seven candidates still need to pass the written test.

Will the reprogramming of dispatch capabilities affect renaming the duplicate street names? Chief Proia answered no. He supports changing duplicate street names. Changing duplicate street names improves public safety.

What is standard protocol on reporting incidents to the State Fire Marshall? Chief Proia answered the department is mandated to report arson, crimes or unknown origin issues to the State Fire Marshall.

Please explain the following concerns in the budget. The budget reflects the number of personnel is at 189 full-time employees and is reflecting a 6% increase. Full-time salaries are increasing to \$418,000. The Quinn Bill education incentive adds an additional \$225,000. When expenses were original projected for full-time salaries, were the Quinn Bill and Union Contracts increases projected for this coming fiscal year.

Chief Proia answered yes, and that the Quinn Bill had increased more than anticipated. When the budget was completed three years ago and when raises were negotiated, an 8-step program was put into place. In the past, it took three years for a fire fighter to receive top pay. The new 8-step program will be put into effect this year. It will take new hires 8-years to receive top pay. The remaining fire fighters are receiving a pay raise this year but the intent overtime is to delay maximum pay to fire fighters for 8 years, this offsets the cost to fire fighters receiving raises this year. Is the Quinn Bill line item higher this year than projected a few years ago? Chief Proia answered yes.

The Fire Department is maintaining the same number of personnel and personnel costs are projected to go up 6%. Please explain this and what are the projections for the next few years and what it means for future years.

Please explain the effective fire prevention program reducing the number of fires and have cases been investigated? Chief Proia answered that twenty-two personnel completed a seven-week technical rescue-training program on sophisticated rescue capabilities and equipment. The Technical Rescue team was efficiently trained in specialized rescues with the ability to handle every situation.

Committee members requested a 'tour' of the Operations Center.

Chair Ciccone opened the discussion to members of the public who were present. There was no public comment.

Committee members thanked and commended Chief Proia and the department for his presentation and excellent continued work.

Chair Ciccone moved approval on a straw vote. Committee members agreed 8-0 to accept the Fire Department Budget and CIP, totaling \$18,646,686.

At approximately 9:30pm, the Committee adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Allan Ciccone, Jr. Chairman