

Town of Seymour ~ Board of Finance
MINUTES
Deliberation of Police Department and Fire Marshal Budgets
Monday, February 9, 2025 at 7:00pm
Norma Drummer Room – Seymour Town Hall

Members Present: Quinn Levey, Kristyn Haniewicz, Beverly Kennedy, Richard Demko, Bettyann Peck, Mary Kruger; Robin Andrews, Alice Levey, Tracy Rappa (alternates).

Members Absent: Andy North

Others Present: Jason Vieira, Monica Dimon, Chief John Bucherati, Deputy Chief Mike Fappiano, Timm Willis, David Bitso, Cindy Dion, Jen Magri

Item #1 – Call Meeting to order

Chairman Richard Demko called the meeting to order at 7:04pm.

Item #2 – Pledge of Allegiance

Everyone saluted the Flag and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Richard Demko introduced all members (and alternates) of the Board of Finance.

Item #3 – Public Comment

Rules for PUBLIC COMMENT:

- *** Two minutes in length
- *** State name & address for the record
- *** Direct comments to the Board (not the audience)
- *** We will not respond to comments
- *** Your comments will be taken into account when we are crafting this budget.

None

Item #4 - Deliberation/Discussion of 2026/2027 Budget – Police Department

Seymour Police Budget	Account / Line	Actual 2022/2023	Actual 2023/2024	Actual 2024/2025	Operating 25/26	Proposed 25/27	% Change from operating 25-26
Salary: Chief	420-2100-535-101	125,649	129,780	134,572	140,000	143,486	2.49%
Salary: Deputy Chief	420-2100-535-102	197,351	201,822	221,058	125,000	128,113	2.48%
Salary SRO (2)	420-2100-535-104	161,442	165,463	174,932	89,742	182,343	103.18%
Salary: Clerks (2)	420-2100-535-105	105,436	108,186	114,307	82,019	84,062	2.49%
Salary: Uniformed Police	420-2100-535-110	2,740,318	2,943,415	3,200,000	3,272,122	3,418,981	2.25%
Salary: Supers	420-2100-535-112	23,192	17,114	20,000	20,000	20,000	0.00%
Salary : Crossing Guards	420-2100-535-114	29,904	31,709	32,739	43,304	46,285	6.88%
Board Secretary Fees	420-2100-535-125		0		0		
Overtime	420-2100-535-130	346,753	277,027	125,000	120,000	340,000	183.33%
Longevity	420-2100-535-290	45,722	46,105	50,186	56,598	48,240	-14.77%
Other Purchases Tech Svc.	420-2100-535-340	24,689	22,809	27,750	28,600	32,900	15.03%
Ed/Mtg/Seminars/Training	420-2100-535-350	227,390	158,668	216,554	216,554	212,248	-1.99%
Repair/Maintenance	420-2100-535-430	28,982	47,042	51,000	60,000	60,000	0.00%
Purchased Svcs Maintenance	420-2100-535-500	46,204	49,297	62,832	62,538	72,828	16.45%
Communications	420-2100-535-530		0		0		
Travel	420-2100-535-580	470	280	500	500	500	0.00%
General Supplies	420-2100-535-610	22,829	23,880	27,800	27,600	26,800	-2.90%
K-9 Supplies	420-2100-535-612	6,162	4,070	7,500	7,500	7,500	0.00%
Clothing	420-2100-535-615	66,125	71,708	67,400	68,200	67,450	-1.10%
Gasoline	420-2100-535-626	84,073	79,379	80,000	90,446	87,000	-3.81%
Machinery Equip/Supplies	420-2100-535-740	30,718	25,949	31,800	26,600	26,650	0.18%
Machinery Equip/Cars	420-2100-535-745	29,888	136,749	55,750	29,750	81,750	174.79%
Totals:		4,343,296	4,540,651	4,701,482	4,567,073	5,087,135	11.39%

- Police Chief John Bucherati presented the Police Department Budget:
 - This Budget is based on 261 working days. Overtime & Machinery/Equipment usually take a big hit. My goal is trying not to appear before you in July asking for money.
 - Chief & Deputy Chief Salary: Contractual 2.49% increase per Union Contract
 - SRO: there looks like a large increase because last year we did not have an SRO so we put in one officer. This year we moved one officer's salary from the 110 Uniformed Police line to here. We do have some candidates and interest in SRO positions this year.
 - Clerks: Contractual increase 2.49%.
 - Uniformed Police: 2.25% increase. We are slated for 41 officers (not included in this are the 2 SRO's, Chief & Deputy Chief positions). We have 37 officers: one inspector, 3 lieutenants, 4 sergeants, 6 detectives, 14 Grade A patrolmen, 3 Grade B patrolmen, and 6 Probationary Officers. We did have a staffing shortage from July until now. We were down a total of 6 people – due to retirements and a termination. We have one recruit who is on FTO and we have a lateral officer from Bridgeport, and we have 4 that are at the Academy. We are hoping to be fully staffed by September. This line received a 2.49% increase. This is why the % shows at 2.25%; last year we estimated a 3% increase.
 - Supernumeraries: Remained the same at \$20,000.
 - Crossing Guards: we had 4 positions there. We added one position at Maple & Pearl Streets last year; we were receiving a lot of complaints; this was much needed and was requested. This is an increase of 6.88% or \$2,981.00.
 - Overtime: I used a 3-year average to come up with \$340,000. Each year, depending on the number of vacancies I have, we will spend between \$275,000 and \$350,000. That's just what it takes to fund the police department. We have contractual obligations, minimum manpower that we need to fulfill. We have to backfill on vacations and when people are at training. Last year we were cut down to \$120,000. Right now, we are about \$90,000 over. In order to fall where we should be I put in for the amount that we should have going forward. It is a big increase – 183.33%, but this is what we spend.
 - Longevity: the is paid out to Officers, per contract, who have a certain amount of time with the Department. In the next few years, this number will go up, then it will go down, and eventually it will be phased out. Decrease of 14.77%.
 - Other Purchased Technical Services: South Central Criminal Justice, Physical Agility Benefit, Physicals for New Hires, Psychological Testing, Polygraph Testing, Drug Screening, Behavioral Health Assessments, Certification tracking, Incineration for evidence. Increase of \$4,300.00.
 - Education/Meetings/Seminars/Training: we are saving money on some of these by going to online training. Decrease of \$4,306. Covers required training, education benefit out of this line. Also, \$4,000 per officer that we send to the Academy.
 - Repairs & Maintenance: left this the same.
 - Purchased Services Maintenance: Pays for *Power DMS* (for our State accreditation - maintains policies & procedures – the State checks these – we just received our Tier 3 Certification), contracts for our copy machine, *Star Chase GPS*, crime scene app, pest control, Solutions Call Reporter (911 Recorder), Vehicle Mounted License Plate Recorder, fire extinguishers, postage, elevator system contracts, fingerprint stations (2) (connected to State and FBI). Increase of \$10,290.00 due to increased costs in subscriptions.
 - Travel: Remained the same at \$500.00
 - General Supplies: Decrease of \$800.00. This is for office supplies, supplies for detective bureau, crime scene tape, fingerprint kits & dust.
 - K-9 Supplies: Remained the same at \$7,500.00 – we continue to have two K9's.
 - Clothing Allowance: Contractual item. Decrease of \$750.00.
 - Gasoline: Decrease of \$3,446.00 based on our usage and current prices. We use about 2,800 gallons per year. Relatively good lately.
 - Machinery/Equipment/Supplies: Increase of \$50.00 Covers flares, radar calibration, radio repairs (if needed), AED pads, toximeter supplies, gas canisters.

- Machinery/Equipment/Cars: Referencing the car leasing program – now before the Board of Selectpersons for approval. This would have us lease our cars from Enterprise. We have been looking for a way to turnover our fleet and reduce maintenance costs. This is a forward way of managing our fleet. Right now, we are getting new vehicles when we have extra money. Our cars are at 80, 90, 100k miles. This is not sustainable. I put in for just one car. Cost of a new police car is between \$50 - \$60k, plus \$23,000 for detailing. Cost Increase of \$52,000.00 as a placeholder in case this new contract is not approved. Instead of replacing one vehicle per year, we would like to replace 4-5 per year.

DISCUSSION:

- Quinn Levey just wanted to verify that the 2.25% increase on the 110 line is contractual. Yes, it is. He also asked what Longevity is. Chief Bucherati said that it was in the contract that for those hired PRIOR to 2015, if you had less than 12 years, you get 1.85%; between 12 and 17 years, you get 2.1%; between 18 and 22 years, you get 2.6%; if you had over 23 years, you get 3.1%. Also, Quinn asked regarding the Vehicle Program, will we get any equity for the cars we are trading in? Chief said yes, we do. They will come in and assess our vehicles. The price does go up each year. We reduced the # on the fleet by 2 to start. We looked at other municipalities who have done this program: Clinton. It keeps the fleet current; we are not throwing good money after bad. Current fleet is 24 vehicles.
- Beverly Kennedy asked how much it would cost per year for the Enterprise Program. Chief Bucherati said the first year would be about \$77,000.00. We would not need a car the first year. Beverly asked if we would check out Enterprise. Jason Vieira said they are on the State Bid List.
- Alice Levey just wanted to verify that these vehicles from Enterprise would be coming in fully equipped. Chief said yes.

Discussion/Presentation of NORTHWEST CMED Proposal of 2026/2027 Budget – Police Department

- Police Chief John Bucherati presented the proposal from NORTHWEST CMED for our dispatch services:
 - Right now, we are paying a Grade A Officer to be behind the desk 24/7 to answer phones. Our officers are not certified to answer 911 calls.
 - We have been thinking about how to better fix this – get our officers trained, hire civilians, or outsource it. The latter appears to be the best option. I presented at the last two Board of Selectpersons meetings a proposal to transfer dispatch operations from the Seymour PD to Northwest. Currently if you call 911 in Seymour and you don't have a police emergency, you are asked to hold and you are transferred. We want to streamline our dispatch operations; get our cops back on the streets; move to a civilian dispatch offsite. Northwest CMED already dispatches our Fire and EMS calls. The State is offering a \$300,000 grant if we transition to Northwest. It's in the State's best interest to consolidate the PSAPs (Public Safety Answering Points) because they cost a lot of money to run. This program would come out of the Communications Budget.
 - The cost is \$27 per person (based on population). We are already paying \$121,344 for the Fire & EMS services. Adding the Police Dispatch would be an additional \$341,409. Total would be \$462,753 for all dispatching services. That would effectively be transferring all dispatch operations to them – ALONG with the liability (risk). Our alternative is to train our officers to be telecommunicators. We can do this, but it is not practical. It would cost us money to put the software on the consoles they would use, we would need to send someone for training on several systems. This would be a different job than they had. Could be a Union issue, contract issue. We need to do SOMETHING. Can't leave the situation as it is now. Long-term we need to do what's best for the Town. If we were to hire civilian dispatchers, we would need to hire about 8 people x \$60,000 salary + benefits + overtime. It would be a new contract and have someone oversee it. This would cost considerably more. There are other Regional Centers around the state.

DISCUSSION:

- Quinn Levey just wanted to verify that the State is giving us \$300,000 for the transition. Chief said yes. Also, Quinn wanted to verify that with the Police Dispatch added, the total amount for Northwest CMED would be \$462,409. Chief confirmed this as well. If we were to agree to this, go live date would be in about a year – March 2027 (we need to run the communication lines and set everything up). The cost impact next year would be \$206,696 – pro-rated amount. Quinn also asked – the 3 officers doing dispatch – do they get OT? Chief Bucherati said yes. They currently count toward the 5-man minimum. We would like to send these officers back out on the road. Maybe join a task force? Traffic Unit? We were just able to purchase brand new rifles for the department due to someone currently being on a task force (with asset forfeiture money). Quinn also asked what would change with people coming to the Police Station? Chief said that is called a Dark Station. Dispatch is not able to be open to the public nor can they answer or help someone who walks in. It is not really going to change. There will be a phone and video monitor. We will redo the camera and have a security door that we can buzz them in from Waterbury. During the day, there are lots of staff in the Police Station. After hours, there are shift managers or someone filling out a report.
- Beverly Kennedy asked if we know of any other local towns doing this? Chief Bucherati said no, because it isn't always cost effective to consolidate. The State has a formula for figuring out if it's best.
- Bettyann Peck said that the biggest benefit is for the citizens. Is it possible to get a comparison of the different options showing that this is the best option (most cost saving). Chief Bucherati said yes, we could put something together.
- Kristyn Haniewicz wanted to verify that the \$300,000 grant from the State was for the cost of moving dispatch to the Northwest office. We would pay up front, and the State would reimburse us.
- Mary Kruger asked about our liability if someone doesn't show up or there are issues with the call - Chief Bucherati said that the liability is entirely on Northwest. And Mary asked about the response time.. Chief said that it should go down. We would get there quicker.
- Tracy Rappa asked what the \$121,340 contract is based on. The Chief said that the \$121,340 is based on 17,139 x \$7.03 (\$0.40 for EMS and \$6.67 for Fire) . The 17,139 x \$27 is for the whole package \$462,753.
- Alice Levey asked if we can see the data for response times. Chief Bucherati said yes.
- Robin Andrews asked how much training the officers currently handling the 911 dispatch have. Chief said not much. Mostly just training from other officers who have had experience with it. When did you determine that these officers would need further training? Chief Bucherati said pretty much from when he got here. Over the years I have come forward with asking for many things to modernize the Department. This was brought up last year. We have had to discipline officers with respect to dispatch. It is time to address this issue of Dispatch.
- Richard Demko asked: timewise, when do we expect the Board of Selectpersons to respond/approve this proposal? Chief Bucherati said that at the last meeting, they agreed to a non-binding Letter of Intent from Northwest.
- Bettyann Peck asked where this proposal is in the Salaries lines. Chief said that it comes out of the Communications Management budget. Bettyann Peck asked how does a disciplinary action get put into a police officer's record if he is rude or voice is too loud. Chief Bucherati said they would do a Department Review or Internal Investigation and the disciplinary procedures are spelled out in the contract.
- Quinn Levey asked if we have had instances where Seymour would be liable for something. Chief said yes. A handful of times.
- David Bitso said that Northwest is located at St.Mary's Hospital in Waterbury – an excellent location – have backup generators in case we lose power. Chief Bucherati said that they currently dispatch Waterbury and Middlebury Police Department.

Deliberation/Discussion of 2026/2027 Budget – Fire Marshal
Timm Willis, Fire Marshal presented the Fire Marshal's Budget:

FMO 2026-2027 Budget					
Item	Description	Current Budget	Request	% change	Increase
101	Salary (Fire Marshal)	85,340	87,687	2.75%	2,347
110	Salary (Deputy and Inspector)	124,753	127,436	2.15%	2,683
120	Part-time	11,000	26,023	136.66%	15,023
130	Overtime	6,000	6,000	0.00%	0
350	Education	2,700	2,700	0.00%	0
430	Repairs/Maintenance	3,600	3,600	0.00%	0
530	Communications	0	0	0.00%	0
540	Fire Prevention	1,000	1,000	0.00%	0
610	General Supplies	1,500	1,500	0.00%	0
615	Clothing	2,700	2,700	0.00%	0
626	Fuel	8,250	8,250	0.00%	0
640	Books/Periodicals	2,400	2,400	0.00%	0
740	Equipment	1,500	1,500	0.00%	0
Total		250,744	270,796	7.99%	20,053
411	Hydrants	\$525,961	\$36,817	7.00%	\$562,778

*Deputy Fire Marshal = \$72,053.80, Fire Inspector = \$55,382.60, Total= \$127,436.40

** Admin. Asst. currently funded out of two accounts (FD/FMO). Simplified under 1 line item. (Still shared service).

Capital this year will be to include new vehicle that was initially anticipated for the 2024 budget. We extended it two years
Anticipated purchase of truck to replace 13 1/2 year old Explorer.

Estimated Vehicle Cost based on same purchase as SPD for Silverado	\$60,000
Norcom Outfitting with cap, tray, lights, siren	\$38,000
Lettering at Grand Concepts	\$1,500
Projected Total	\$99,500

- Timm Willis has been with the FM Office for 17 years; this is the 8th year I have presented the FM Budget.
- The Salary line items are contractual increases. (Fire Marshal, Deputy, and Inspector). 2.75% increase. Deputy & Inspector are less because one of these is a new employee and thus hired at a lower grade. Also, last year we estimated the increase at 3% but it came in at only 2.75%. So, the increase here is only 2.15%.
- Part-time Employees – we have moved the Administrative Assistant (shared position with the Fire Department) to show fully in this line item. That is why this line cost has increased. It is still a shared position. You will see the decrease in the Fire Department Budget.
- All other line items have remained the same (0% increase) except the Fire Hydrants Line.
- Fire Hydrants: has requested an increase of \$20,052,000. 7% Increase. We have two water suppliers in Town. 30% have Regional Water Authority and 70% have Aquarion. Covers pipes in the road
- CAPITAL PLAN REQUEST: This was supposed to be from the 2024/2025 Budget. I was asked by Chief Administrative Officer to request it last year, but it was not fulfilled. I am seeking \$99,500 for a new pickup truck (including outfitting).

DISCUSSION:

- Beverly Kennedy asked if Aquarion has come out and fixed the older hydrants. Last year it was brought up that many are quite old. Timm said that they do keep them all running.
- Quinn Levey asked how the water mains are in Town – are they all up to date? There was an issue on South Main Street. Timm Willis said due to a large fire in April of 2018 we recognized a large deficiency in our

water system. That water system was from 1910. We were fortunate to have corrected this issue. They are currently not adding pipes anywhere throughout the State. They identify and close loops.

- Tracy Rappa asked if this vehicle for the Fire Marshal could qualify (and be included in) for the Enterprise Leasing Program discussed for the Police Department. Jason Vieira said that we can qualify the FM vehicle. Timm Willis wasn't sure.
- Jason Vieira said that the packets for the Board of Finance Meetings are in the Town Clerk's office and copies can be picked up during normal business hours.
Also, there was a CAPITAL PLAN REQUEST for the Police Department. They would like to purchase a \$21,882 for a firearms evidence storage system upgrade. This is driven by an increase of seizures and mandated safety standards.
- Quinn Levey **asked what we are currently doing with the firearms?**
- Beverly Kennedy asked if this should be put into the regular Police budget? Is this going to be an ongoing request or a one-time (non-recurring) purchase? Jason Vieira said this is a one-time upgrade.

Item #5 – Public Comment

None

Item #6 – Correspondence

None

Item #7 – New Business

On Wednesday, 2/11/26 – We will have a presentation from Town I.T.Department, Registrar of Voters, and Community Services.

Item #8 – Adjournment

Richard Demko adjourned the meeting was adjourned at 8:08pm

Submitted by:

Monica Dimon
Recording Secretary