

Name of Committee: Override Study Committee Municipal Subcommittee

Meeting Date: March 20, 2014 Time: 7:30 a.m.

Meeting Location: Town Hall – Room 111

Members Present: Alberto Chang, Janet Gelbart, Michael Glover, Jim Stergios, Ann Connolly Tolkoff

Others Present: Chuck Flaherty (Library), Karen Livingston (Library), Andrew M. Pappastergion (DPW), Kevin Johnson (DPW), Chief Paul Ford (Fire Department), Chief Daniel O’Leary (Police Department), Kevin Stokes (IT), Bob and Nancy O’Connor

Topic: Approval of Minutes

Approval of the minutes was deferred.

Topic: Review of legal requirements regarding police details and civilian flagging

In introducing Chief O’Leary, Ann Connolly Tolkoff stated that police details are a frequent target of efficiency studies. The Chief explained that in Brookline, details are authorized by the Chief in accordance with Town bylaws and the contract with the police union. Outside contractors reimburse the Town for any details they require at a rate of \$45 per hour plus 10% overhead. Details are billed as four-hour blocks for the first eight hours and at two-hour minimums thereafter. A sergeant is assigned to supervise all details. The salary is more than covered by the surcharge which in 2013 equaled \$182,442. The Town fully recovers all charges billed for the details and has streamlined the process so that 91% of charges are collected within 90 days.

The police coordinate with Town engineers on all internal projects. When traffic permits, the street is blocked rather than having a detail assigned. In accordance with the union contract, officers receive overtime pay at time and a half which is less than the \$45 detail rate. There is a four-hour minimum, and hourly rate thereafter. Michael Glover will review the Town bylaw to see if changes in policy could potentially reduce costs. The Chief indicated that an officer assigned to a detail is in contract with the department and can cover an incident if he is the closest to the call.

Topic: Review of visitor and circulation information provided by the library

Alberto Chang presented a review of the hourly attendance records provided by library staff. The main library is twice as busy as Coolidge Corner which is twice as busy as Putterham. There were several anomalies in the data, some related to snow days, others potentially to staff entering and leaving. The data counts people entering through the main door, but does not indicate how long they stay.

Chuck Flaherty indicated that the data may not be reliable because the software is relatively new and has not been reviewed. Because there are only two months of data

available, it is not possible to see seasonal changes, and weather played a large factor in that time frame. The impact of snow days on attendance goes beyond the day of the storm itself. Staff have to make up the time for receiving and shelving books if they have missed a regular work day due to snow.

Janet Gelbart suggested that the committee use a range of costs between the low of cutting materials to a high of closing the Putterham branch. Chuck replied that would be better than trying to be specific about the savings from reducing hours. He would rather cut materials than try to generate \$50K in savings from shaving hours.

Topic: Discussion of information technology reporting

Michael summarized the issues the committee was considering. These included training of administrative staff to reduce help desk requirements or outsourcing or reducing help desk staff. The schools require more IT support because they have more staff and more software specific to their own needs.

Kevin Stokes distributed some materials about the department's organization, budget, and performance statistics. He explained the three main tasks of IT: an end user focus (help desk), network infrastructure, and applications. The last is where new ideas provide leverage to drive the organization forward. The challenge is that the Town is evolving into a 24/7 IT operation as departments take IT support into the field. This is being managed without overtime. The department's budget has remained a fairly constant percentage of the Town's overall budget, showing a light decreasing trend.

Alberto Chang asked about the ratio of staff and assets. Kevin replied there is a staff of 11 which has remained constant. Because the staff is relatively new, it has been easy to revamp job descriptions as positions turned over. For example, the administrative assistant is now responsible for social media.

IT is increasingly visible to the public because of the increase in e-business (website, online payments, etc.). New systems and architecture have been implemented to support new apps. For example, by using mobile technology, police, fire, and DPW staff can respond more quickly. An online request or complaint leads directly to action in the field.

Michael asked if the department had a five- or ten-year plan. Kevin replied that things are constantly changing. As new systems are implemented, new uses are found. More staff become knowledge workers.

Janet asked about security for students as the School Department rolls out its new technology plan. Kevin said they train kids in e-safety, review systems regularly, and implement best practice across the Town. They also supplement Senior Center and Recreation Department IT training, but do not try to replace them.

Jim Stergios asked Kevin to clarify the governance structure for the School IT rollout. Who makes the decisions on the budget going forward? Kevin said that his role is to

help plan the costs and the infrastructure. The content is driven by the school program. Jim asked about the PARCC system, an on-line test to replace the MCAS. Kevin replied that the infrastructure is in place, but the design of PARCC is akin to Healthcare.gov so there may be problems ahead.

Topic: Review of street sweeping analysis

Andy Pappastergion provided the committee with excerpts from the EPA consent decree. Commercial areas must be swept at least three times per week, all other streets at least twice per month. He feels that any further reductions to staff and/or equipment would lead to a violation of the order. Since 1995, the department has purchased better equipment which is used more efficiently. There are fewer machines and fewer personnel, but they do a better job. The sweepers are designed to run at five to seven miles per hour. If they are driven faster, they need more maintenance. Through GPS tracking, they can tell where the machines are, whether they are idle or moving, how fast they are going, if the brooms are up or down, etc. Each shift has one working foreman and two MEO 2's. The foreman doubles as night shift supervisor and night watchman. Further cost savings, if any, are minimal. Shifting to part-time staff would create issues with the union contract and lead to minimum cost savings.

Topic: Discussion of fire department apparatus

Chief Ford was asked if he could reduce the number of fire companies. There are now two in Coolidge Corner and two in Brookline Village, consisting of one ladder and one engine company at each station. There is one engine company in each of the three remaining fire stations. The Matrix report suggested that the Quint apparatus, which can be used as either a ladder or an engine, would allow for a reduction in companies. The Chief explained that the Quint can operate as either a ladder or an engine, but can't do both at the same time. Two ladders are required to fight a large structure fire. If one ladder were replaced by a Quint, there would be only one ladder available for the entire department. Dedicated crews are more efficient than expecting one crew to alternate between both jobs. Comparable towns all have two ladders. Cutting an engine would mean increasing risk. Staffing in the department has already been reduced from 300 to 154.

OSHA requirements call for two men outside and two men inside if there is a known life hazard at a fire. NFPA standards call for a minimum of 24 firefighters, 2 chiefs, one safety officer, and one Rapid Intervention Crew. His department has a total of 28 on duty, short one chief and one safety officer. Five companies are sent to fight an active fire, along with one RIC. That leaves only one company to deal with anything else that might come up. Eliminating a company would mean there are no resources for any other emergency if there is a working fire.

The Chief said that the main problem in Brookline is the density of the buildings. The close proximity makes it hard to stop a fire from spreading. The Quint was supposed to be the be all/end all of equipment because of its flexibility. It is too large for some Brookline streets, requires a lot of maintenance and is not fuel efficient. For the most

part, Quints are being phased out. A ladder and an engine can be purchased for the same price as one Quint.

The meeting adjourned at 9:50.