

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 12, 2015**

ATTENDANCE: Michael Marella, Co-chair; Denese Taylor-Moye,
Lydia Martinez, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia,
Council President Thomas McCarthy, Patricia Swain (6:15 p.m.)

STAFF: Thomas Sherwood, OPM Director; Anne Kelly-Lenz, Finance Director;
Joseph Gaudett, Police Chief, James Nardozi, Assistant Police Chief

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Marella called the meeting to order at 6:09 p.m. A quorum was present.

GENERAL DISCUSSION RE: REVIEW OF THE MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT.

Ms. Kelly-Lenz said that the overtime for the Police Department was up, but the vacant positions are leveling it off.

Ms. Kelly-Lenz spoke about the recent amortizations to the State but pointed out that the recent sale of a City-owned building balanced it out.

Mr. Sherwood said that there were a number of departments who would be requesting staff because there was an increased workload. These items will be presented to the Committee in the coming months.

Council Member Swain joined the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

Council President McCarthy asked what the balance was between the Police overtime and vacant position. Ms. Kelly-Lenz said that the overtime was 2.5% and the savings from the vacant positions would be about 2.0%. Mr. Sherwood cautioned everyone that there were reasons why having this number is not necessarily a good thing.

BUDGET UPDATE: FROM CITY DEPARTMENT: POLICE DEPARTMENT.

Chief Gaudett then said that he would like to update the Committee on the staffing. The optimum staffing would be 447, but the current staffing is 377. However, there are two resignations that are pending. The new recruits have now finished their training and working independently. There will be an announcement about a test in the coming days. He reminded everyone that Civil Service controls the scheduling of the tests, not the department.

Council Member Swain asked about the recruitment efforts. Chief Gaudett then reviewed the process and explained that the goal was to have the recruits drawn from the City. Last test, there were 4,000 candidates and it takes an enormous amount of time and effort to reduce it down to a class of 30.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia had several questions about the recruitment list timeline. Chief Gaudett said that once the first name is pulled from the recruitment list, the list is good for two years. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about the candidates from Bridgeport. Chief Gaudett said that the Bridgeport residents would have 15 bonus points because this worked out well for the Fire Department. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about using national organizations. Chief Gaudett said that they had been very helpful.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about the salaries and benefits. Chief Gaudett said that those items were handled through contracts. He pointed out that if it was about money, then the recruits will follow the money. He said that overtime has been a challenge because the younger generation wants to work their hours and then go home. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that when she attends the national conferences, the comments about Bridgeport are very positive.

Council Member Taylor-Moye asked if the recruits are trained differently than in the past, such as specialized training for dealing with different cultures and incomes. Chief Gaudett said that all the officers have received sensitivity training and they take the recruits out to the various neighborhoods. It has been positively received by the officers and the residents.

Council President McCarthy pointed out that the Council Members have many contacts in the community and encouraged the police to utilize the Council Members to make the communities aware of the recruitment efforts. Chief Gaudett said that he would be happy to work with the Council Members.

Council Member Swain asked what the age range was for the officers. The average age was in the twenties. Mr. Sherwood said that now that the officers are in MERS, there is a top age for the candidates based on the years needed for retirements.

Council Member Martinez asked about the various details of outreach to the communities. Chief Gaudett said that the date of the test has not been set yet. Once it is, then it can go on the billboards, the radio and various other methods of communications. Council Member Martinez said that it would be helpful if the Chief emailed the Council Members the information so they can contact their districts. Discussion followed.

Council Member Swain asked about the cap of 32 candidates. Chief Gaudett explained that the largest class that the Police Academy can take is 32 students. He added that other municipalities often have to wait for a seat at the Academy. Assistant Chief Nardozzi also pointed out that the State Law limits the size of the class to a minimum of 10 and maximum of 40. Once that an officer graduates, they have to ride along with a seasoned officer.

Chief Gaudett said that there were seven goals, with the first one being decreasing fatal traffic accidents. The Traffic Unit recently lost a significant number of officers to retirement. Special units are populated by officers with seniority. Currently there have been 7 fatalities in the first six months of the budget year. Last year, there were four fatalities in the entire year. The Chief then listed a number of different methods that were been employed for traffic safety.

The Department has started a program called "Arrive Alive", which promotes safe driving for police officers. It is run out of the Department's Sick and Injured Management Office. There were a number of radio ads that have been run out of the Mayor's office. One Capital request will be for a driving simulator. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that it should be a shared expense. Mr. Sherwood explained that the cost would be a bond that belonged to the City as a whole.

Regarding the contract, Chief Gaudett said that the arbitration was currently on-going.

Chief Gaudett said that the Department is looking for an outside gun range. Previously, the department used an outdoor range in Monroe. However, a parcel has been identified on Asylum Street where Public Facilities are currently located. Some of the funding may come from a JAG grant.

Chief Gaudett said that there was a group of 17 officer candidates in the training process.

Another goal is to find a software vendor who will be able to interface with MUNIS for time and salaries.

Project Longevity is a program to reduce gun related homicides. Gang related shootings are down, but homicides have increased between 2013 and 2014. Council Member Martinez asked about the community participation. Chief Gaudett said that it is easier for the officer to go out to the community rather than to bring the community into a location. Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia suggested that the Council Members could work on getting the word out to the public also. She suggested that it be sent out as an email blast. Chief Gaudett made a note of this.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia asked about the ability of the department to access military surplus, such as protective clothing, ammo and additional items like cots.

Chief Gaudett said that the Department was working on updating the policy manual to insure that the policies reflect contemporary policing procedures.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services