

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PUBLIC SAFETY & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE BUDGET REPORT

THURSDAY, APRIL 22, 2010

Present: Ald. Ciccone (Chairman), Fuller, Johnson, Shapiro and Harney

Absent: Ald. Swiston, Freedman and Yates

Also Present: Ald. Blazar, Crossley, Danberg, Lappin, Baker, Albright, Lennon, Linsky and Gentile

City Staff: Chief Joseph LaCroix (Newton Fire Department)

Fire Department Budget

CIP

REFERRED TO FINANCE AND APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES

#376-09 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR submitting the FY11-15 Capital Improvement Program, totaling \$140,377,285 and the FY10 Supplemental Capital budget, which require Board of Aldermen approval to finance new capital projects over the next five years.

REFERRED TO FINANCE AND APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES

#121-10 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR, in accordance with Section 5-1 of the City of Newton Charter, submitting the FY'11 Municipal/School Operating Budget totaling \$340,073,328, passage of which shall be concurrent with the FY'11- FY'15 Capital Improvement Program.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF SUBMISSION: 04/20/10; LAST DATE TO PASS BUDGET 06/4/10

FIRE DEPARTMENT:

ACTION: HELD 5-0

NOTE: Chief LaCroix joined the Committee for discussion on this item and discussed his FY11 Budget Summary and Chief LaCroix's opening remarks, attached to this report.

Chief LaCroix stated he is grateful the Fire Department will not receive any lay offs in personnel this year, and the budget is level funded.

FIRE DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL & STAFFING:

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

1. The Administration Division is staffed by the Chief, the Assistant Chief of Operations, storekeeper firefighter and 3.5 Clerks.
2. The Fire Suppression Division is staffed by 164 individuals; 4 Deputy Chiefs, 9 Captains, 27 Lieutenants, and 124 Firefighters.

3. The Fire Prevention and Code Enforcement Division is staffed by a Deputy Chief, Captain and 3 Lieutenants.
4. The Signal Maintenance Division is staffed by Superintendent of Wires, Field Supervisor, and 3 Signal Maintainers.
5. The Equipment Maintenance Division is staffed by 2 Dedicated Fire apparatus repairmen.
6. The Training Division is staffed by a Captain and 2 Lieutenants.
7. The Communications Liaison Division is staffed by a Lieutenant and a part-time civilian.

FIRE DEPARTMENT FY 11' GOALS:

- Start the reconstruction of Station 7, so by the end of the year a fully functional station is completed. Bids have been awarded for this project. The temporary quarters are expected to arrive around mid-May where ladder 7 and engine 2 will be transferred to. Construction is expected to begin soon after.
- Upgrade communications and technology on ladders and engines to provide a more responsive outcome to an incident. This process will include installing mobile data terminals in all of the apparatus and tie them into the existing communication system. The department is in the process of receiving quotes from the Police Department.
- Implement a Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) and plan for the department to better serve the needs of the firefighters on the fire ground. The RIT are responsible saving firefighters. We are 80% completed with the department training. The remaining 20% need one or two modules of the five required. Equipment has been purchased and is being mounted on the three first line ladders.
- Modify a Mayday procedure for the department to insure the safety of all firefighters. Mayday calls will be made from firefighters in distress.
- Start prep work for the next station reconstruction to maintain an ease of doing business with our contractors. Will evaluate the possibility of a new station three and schedule another station in its place to be renovated.
- Publish and distribute a new Rules and Regulations book for the safety of all our firefighters and citizens. This book is now in the hands of independent council for evaluation of any conflicts with the current contract.
- To replace Engine Four with a new combination foam engine to provide a better service to the public. Truck has passed final inspection and should be driven to the City within a week.
- Replace the existing water rescue boat with a light weight cost effective unit. Must prioritize needs with limited funds to see if we can pursue this purchase this year.
- Replace the 1988 Mechanics (M-I) truck with a new cost efficient vehicle to better serve the department this is priority this year. This truck can not leave the city in its present condition.
- To provide the city with a fully manned Heavy Rescue company to support the needs of the community during demanding times of rescue incidents. This has always been a top priority of both Assistant Chief Proia and Chief LaCroix. With the financial state of the budget and the necessary manpower needed to man this apparatus Chief LaCroix does not believe he will be able to attain this important addition to the department.

CIP

- \$60,000 for support vehicles, a W-4 Wire Division Cable Truck.
- \$30,000 for Watch Desks. Four watch desks have been purchased and installed, two remain outstanding in station #10 and station #1.

- \$450,000 for a Heavy Rescue vehicle. Chief LaCroix said he would prefer an additional pumper for engine #10. Engine 4 pumper has been replaced for \$500,000; beginning in January it will cost approximately an additional \$30,000.
- \$27,000 for Safety Equipment (communication equipment, fire alarm, public safety equipment, hoses, masks, etc. which are reviewed and if necessary, replaced yearly).

Chairman Ciccone asked if the department has accomplished their FY10 goals. Chief LaCroix answered he was able to receive six vehicles, a ladder truck and a pickup truck.

Ald. Lennon asked how the overtime account has compared to past years, the number of department vacancies and if candidates are presently attending the fire academy class. Chief LaCroix said last years overtime budget was approximately \$900,000 due to injuries to nine firefighters. The fire academy closed when the state began to cut their budget. Therefore, the attendees did not graduate until November 2009 causing the overtime account to rise. Presently there are no vacancies in the department. In the past five months the overtime account has gone down. The original overtime budget was for \$496,000 and an additional \$400,000 was approved recently. Chief LaCroix said he can only predict when a firefighter is approaching age 65 years, and then it is mandatory they retire. Ald. Lennon then asked if people have been receiving tickets for repeated false alarms. Chief LaCroix answered the Fire Prevention Bureau has been writing violations as they become necessary. The Fire Department has issued several warnings and has cited twelve individuals. The fines range from \$50. to \$10,000, but no tickets have been issued above \$500.

Ald. Danberg said she is pleased to hear the RIT will be implemented. She asked if ticketing repeat offenders for false alarms had any impact. Chief LaCroix does not believe there have been any repeat offenders and the system is working well deterring sprinkler and fire alarm companies' negative work. She then asked for the status of purchasing the necessary water rescue boat. Chief LaCroix answered estimates have been received for a rescue boat, but with this budget, he must prioritize his department's needs to see if a rescue boat can be purchased this year.

Ald. Fuller asked for clarification why the water rescue boat and the Mechanics (M-I) truck are not listed in the CIP book. Chief LaCroix answered the M-I truck is from FY10. Ald. Fuller then asked if there are sufficient funds listed for vehicle maintenance. Chief LaCroix said this year there were more incidents and he is hopeful he will have enough in this fund. She also is concerned FY11 budget for overtime account is underfunded at \$446,000, considerably lower than the past three years. Chief LaCroix agreed he will be underfunded.

Ald. Linsky asked how many firefighters are presently out and when he expects them to return. Chief LaCroix answered three members are currently out on IOD and he is not authorized to know their medical history and does not know when he can anticipate their return.

Ald. Johnson asked what constitutes Fire Department training. Chief LaCroix answered training division which conducts all training for the department through the years on all code changes, EMS and fire academy courses. She then asked about educational incentive pay. Chief LaCroix answered this pay is for college credits.

Ald. Shapiro asked if Chief LaCroix was able to provide his budget numbers to the Executive Department. Chief LaCroix said in the past he was able to provide input but this year it is a tight budget and he was not able to do so. Ald. Shapiro then asked for clarification on training expenses minus 70% and what is the Executive Department projecting to make it 70% less. He also asked for clarification on the exceptional services pay. Chief LaCroix answered it refers to a program which was instituted this year where the City buys back sick time and raises pay by 8% for a three year period. There are thirteen individuals allowed in the program.

Ald. Linsky asked if additional communication equipment will be purchased. Chief LaCroix answered he put together a grant proposal including a new tower, new building, antennas, etc. The Executive Department submitted the grant proposal through Homeland Security. Chief LaCroix said the grant request has not yet been approved. Ald. Shapiro asked if the tower will be constructed with a higher wind load capacity allowing potential revenue in the future. Chief LaCroix believes this suggestion was taken into consideration in the plans. Ald. Shapiro asked that the structural engineer provide an example of what other antennas or structures could be mounted prior to construction to know what the wind load capacity will be. Ald. Baker expressed his concerns and said the structure should be maintained as a public safety structure and not one to allow revenue to the City.

Ald. Lennon asked Chief LaCroix if he is satisfied with the ambulance company. Chief LaCroix answered, that he is very satisfied. The company has purchased property in the City and now has a sub-station, re-hab unit and decontamination unit that are dedicated to this City. Ald. Lennon then asked how the heavy rescue company will be implemented. Chief LaCroix said this has always been a top priority of both Assistant Chief Proia and himself and still in discussion but he can not foresee the department adding an additional sixteen firefighters to man this company, perhaps firefighters will have to be shifted. Ald. Lennon then asked if the Fire Department has a "wish list" for non vehicle equipment. Chief LaCroix answered all new vehicles purchased are received with necessary equipment. There is always a need for hand tools and when equipment becomes worn it is necessary that they be replaced.

FIRE DEPARTMENT QUESTIONS:

- Ald. Lennon asked Chief LaCroix to prepare a list of last year's accomplishments.
- Ald. Johnson asked that their objectives be separated indicating how the department can become more effective and efficient.
- Ald. Fuller asked why the Injured on Duty (IOD) pay is budgeted for zero.
- Ald. Linsky asked what is anticipated to be spent on preventative maintenance on newer vehicles.
- Ald. Johnson asked that a list be provided on what types of procedures firefighters are trained on.
- Ald. Johnson asked what does level funded mean and if there is any grant information.
- Ald. Albright asked Chief LaCroix if he would assign a staff person to conduct some research to discuss other alternatives on firefighters using Fire Department vehicles to go to the supermarket, perhaps they could use Peapod. She is curious on how much fuel is spent and how much pollution is created when engines are left idling.

Ald. Fuller made the motion to hold this item pending additional information. Committee members agreed 5-0.

Chairman Ciccone invited Chief LaCroix to attend the next Public Safety & Transportation Committee meeting on May 5, 2010 to answer questions asked tonight.

At approximately 9:55 pm, Committee members agreed 4-0 (Ald. Johnson not voting) to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Allan Ciccone, Jr. Chairman



Setti D. Warren
Mayor

CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS FIRE DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS

1164 Centre Street, Newton Center, MA 02459-1584
Chief: (617) 796-2210 Fire Prevention: (617) 796-2230
FAX: (617) 796-2211 EMERGENCY: 911



NEWTON, MA 02159
CITY CLERK

APR 27 PM 2:18
Joseph E. LaCroix
Chief

Opening statement of the Fire Department

I would like to thank the Executive department and everyone else that provided input to the fire budget. We did not receive any cuts in personnel this year. And our budget was level funded.

The Department is broken into the following seven sub-divisions:

1. The **Administration Division** which is staffed by the Chief, the Assistant Chief of Operations, storekeeper firefighter, 3.5 clerks.
2. The **Fire Suppression Division** assigned personnel totals 164; 4 Deputy Chiefs, 9 Captains, 27 Lieutenants, and 124 Firefighters.
3. The **Fire Prevention and Code Enforcement Division** A Deputy Chief, Captain and 3 Lieutenants staff this Division.
4. The **Signal Maintenance Division** The Superintendent of Wires, A Field Supervisor, and 3 Signal Maintainers staff this Division.
5. The **Equipment Maintenance Division** This division is staffed by a 2 Dedicated Fire apparatus repairmen.
6. The **Training Division** it is staffed by a Captain and 2 Lieutenants.
7. The **Communications Liaison Division** This division is staffed by a Lieutenant and a Civilian.

GOALS

1. Start the reconstruction of Station 7, so by the end of the year a fully functional station is completed. The temporary quarters are due to arrive around mid-May. And construction to start soon after.
2. Upgrade communications and technology on Ladders and Engines to provide a more responsive outcome to an incident. This is installing mobile data terminals on all of the apparatus. We are in the process of receiving quotes.
3. Implement a Rapid Intervention Team and plan for the Department to better serve the needs of the firefighters on the fire ground. We are 80% completed with the department. The remaining 20% need one or two modules of the five required. Equipment has been purchased and is being placed on the three first line ladders.
4. Modify a Mayday procedure for the Department to insure the safety of all firefighters.
5. Start prep work for the next station reconstruction to maintain an ease of doing business with our contractors. Will evaluate the possibility of a new station three and schedule another station in its place to be renovated.

6. Publish and distribute a new Rules and Regulations book for the safety of all our firefighters and citizens. This book is now in the hands of independent council for evaluation of any conflicts with the current contract.
7. To replace Engine Four with a new combination foam Engine to provide a better service to the public. Truck has passed final inspection and should be driven to the City within a week.
8. Replace the existing water rescue boat with a light weight cost effective unit. Must prioritize needs with limited funds to see if we can pursue this purchase this year.
9. Replace the Mechanics (M-1) truck with a new cost efficient vehicle to better serve the department this is a must this year. This truck can not leave the city in its present condition.
10. To provide the city with a fully manned Heavy Rescue company to support the needs of the community during demanding times of rescue incidents. This has always been a top priority of both Assistant Chief Proia and me. But with the financial state of the budget and the necessary manpower needed to man this apparatus I don't believe we will be able to attain this important addition to the department.

I will now answer any questions that you may have.

Last Years goals

1. Start the reconstruction of Station 7. - We have completed the bid process and have awarded the contract. But we still need the temporary quarters and move the mechanics to station ten before we can start the construction.
2. Upgrade Communications and Technology on Ladders and Engines. - We have met with vendors on all of our equipment needs. We have to re-establish a server in fire headquarters and build out the necessary software. As well as establish a budget for this item.
3. Implement a Rapid Intervention Team and plan for the department. - This has been well developed during the last year. We will continue to finish up with the last few modules missed by some of the personnel. The equipment has been purchased and is in the process of being mounted on the ladder trucks.
4. Modify a Mayday procedure for the department. - This has been completed and implemented in the Department.
5. Start prep work for the next station reconstruction. - This was an ongoing work since there is a possibility that Station Three will be rebuilt with the Newton Centre Project. If this is going to happen then we will go to a different station to reconstruct. We will continue to have ongoing discussions in the near future.
6. Publish and distribute a new Rules and Regulations book. - This has been completed in draft form and sent to outside council for evaluation of any conflicts with the current contract.
7. Establish an officers training program. - This program is being developed by the training division.

Other questions from the Board

How is the ticket ordinance progressing? - We are writing out tickets as they become necessary. We have issued several warnings and have cited twelve individuals. The fines range from \$50.00 to \$10,000.00. No we have not given out any \$10,000.00 ones yet. We have given out some \$500.00 one.

How is your budget level funded? - If you go to the Classification Detail pages you will see a current year section. In this section you have four sub-sections. The section labeled Appropriation is my starting budget for that year. Any additional funds needed for a particular service is shown in the next section titled Additional Appropriation. All expenses for the coming year were the same as the section labeled Appropriation in the current year section. Salaries and Fringe Benefits will change according to contract.

Grants. - The fire department currently has received an Assistance to Firefighters Grant as well as a MDU operating Grant. The State has not funded the Fire Equipment Grant. If this becomes available we will be applying. We have applied for a grant to replace the Radio Tower. We will be applying for another Firefighters Assistance Grant in May. I have also applied for a Construction Grant for the Station Seven renovations.