

**MINUTES  
EIGHTH UTILITIES DISTRICT  
BUDGET WORKSHOP  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 2017 – 6:30 P.M.  
DON WILLIS HALL  
18 MAIN STREET  
MANCHESTER, CT 06042**

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The Board of Directors of the Eighth utilities District of Manchester, Connecticut held a budget workshop on Wednesday, March 15, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. at Don Willis Hall, 18 Main Street, Manchester, Connecticut.

Mrs. O'Marra called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

**Fire Department**

Chief Moore noted the increases in his budget for FY 2017-2018.

1. Firefighter/EMT and Dispatch overtime has been broken out to reflect the different types of overtime, i.e., Callback, Scheduled.
2. With the exception of the Acting Chief, a 2% increase has been budgeted for both employees and stipend positions. Mrs. Bowen will discuss the Chief's salary later in the meeting.
3. \$2,000 has been moved from the Contingency line to a newly-created line under Stipends. This is for the Administrative Deputy Chief who has previously received no compensation for all that he does.
4. In anticipation of rising utility costs the utilities have all been increased.
5. The line for Janitorial Services is being increased by \$500. Because the fire houses are now being maintained in-house, Chief Moore plans to use the janitorial budget to have the floors stripped and waxed twice a year.
6. The Uniform account has been increased by almost \$3,200. This is due to the hiring of a new Firefighter/EMT.

Mrs. Bowen stated that she would to increase the Acting Fire Chief's salary as it is not commensurate with salaries of area chiefs of like departments. Mrs. Bowen said that although the Fire Marshal receives a stipend, an hourly rate of \$40.95 had previously been calculated in order to compute his Extra Duty pay. Acting Chief Moore is a salaried employee, but if you calculate his hourly rate, it would be \$36.42. Mrs. Bowen stated that Chief Moore manages a department of 9 full-time employees, 1 part-time employee, and approximately 75 volunteers. Chief Moore responds to any emergency call whether during the day or night, and, because his support staff consists of volunteers who are not always available, he manages the day-to-day operations of the department. He attends the department staff meetings for the chiefs and officers which are each held on weekends, as well as, the monthly department meeting which is held in the evening. Chief Moore also attends special events, i.e., recruit graduations, awards

ceremonies, Peach Festival, Christmas tree sales that the department sponsors because he believes it is important for the volunteers to see that he supports their activities. All of these events are held over and above his 40-hour work week.

Mrs. Bowen said that she canvassed area departments to get salary figures for the Board to consider and compare.

1. Manchester Fire Rescue EMS – a Battalion Chief earns \$95,153 per year. A Battalion Chief is responsible for the firefighters/paramedics/EMTs assigned to his shift.
2. Colchester Fire Department – A Captain who does not work a 40-hour week receives a yearly salary of \$73,192.
3. Blue Hills Fire Department – The Chief earns a yearly salary of \$86,000. He also receives a bonus of \$4,000 or above every year. This equates to a salary of \$90,000 or above per year. The Blue Hills Fire Department is a combination department equivalent in number of employees and volunteers to our department. They only run about 600 calls per year in comparison to our 2,600 calls per year.

Mrs. Bowen stated that she would like to increase the Acting Chief's salary to \$93,600 per year. She stated that she had spoken to President O'Marra about this increase prior to bringing it to the Board for consideration.

Chief Moore recused himself.

President O'Marra stated that she agrees with Commissioner Bowen's recommendation. She said that it is obvious to anyone who is around that Chief Moore puts in many more hours than were anticipated when he was hired. Mrs. O'Marra stated that the increase is justified. She continued that the Eighth Utilities District is a multimillion dollar enterprise today. It is not the little organization that it once was. Therefore, we have to adjust to the fact that we need a Chief who is available both during the day and at night.

Mr. Luzusky stated that he is in total agreement with both Mrs. Bowen and President O'Marra. He said that we are getting much more than we are paying for with Chief Moore at the helm of the fire department. We have a very active fire department, and we have to adjust to that fact.

Mrs. Gionet asked if funds had been identified to pay for this increase. Mrs. O'Marra replied that because the bond for the Public Works facility had been paid off this fiscal year there were available funds for the increase.

Mr. Topping agreed that the increase was justified. He asked if the Chief was still a stipend position. Mrs. O'Marra stated that the Acting Chief was a salaried employee with no overtime. Mr. Topping said that the hourly breakdown was confusing to him. Mrs. Bowen stated that she had broken it down to an hourly wage to make it easier to compare with other positions. She assured Mr. Topping that the Acting Chief is a salaried employee. It was the consensus of the Board to approve the increase in the Acting Chief's salary to \$93,600.

There was a question regarding the part-time administrative assistant. Mrs. O'Marra stated that Christine Delrosso is currently working in this position. She is splitting her time between the Fire Department and the Tax Office. Mrs. Gionet asked how the hours are split. Mrs. O'Marra responded that Christine works full-time in the tax office the last week of June, the month of July, and she covers while Terri is out. She also works when needed during the remainder of the year.

Mr. Topping had questions on fire department stipends. He inquired about the breakdown of captains and lieutenants as they are grouped in the budget. Chief Moore stated that there are three captains and six lieutenants. These positions all receive a stipend. They also receive \$125 per shift for extra duty days/nights.

Mr. Topping asked how many fire alarms the Fire Department still maintains. Chief Moore stated that there are a total of five (Headquarters; Stations 2, 3, and 4; and the Pump Station.) He explained that the stipend for the Alarms Superintendent had been reduced this year.

Mrs. Bowen said that a 2% increase had been budgeted for all employees and volunteers with the exception of the FF/EMTs and the Dispatchers who are currently in contract negotiations.

Mrs. O'Marra added that the negotiation committees and been appointed and approved by the Board. Both Unions have been notified that our committees are in place. We are now waiting to hear back from both unions on a mutually-agreeable date for the first session.

### **Fire Marshal**

Marshal Roback reported that three lines are increasing and six lines are decreasing in his proposed budget.

1. Vehicle Repairs and Maintenance is increasing by \$150. Marshal Roback stated that it is difficult to budget for this line as there is no way of knowing when or if repairs will be needed. He said that they have a 2007 Ford Escape Hybrid that runs on batteries. He believes that it would cost more than \$150 to replace the battery if necessary.
2. The Reserve for the Computer Network is a new line. This is a safeguard in case the computers need repairs.
3. Marshal Roback is proposing a 3.5% increase for wages and stipends as he feels that his staff does a great job.
4. The line for Publications and Subscriptions is being reduced by \$500.
5. Radio Equipment and Service Repair is being reduced because the radios are new.
6. Telephone is being reduced by \$400.

7. There is a substantial reduction in the Radio line because all of the FMO radios were recently replaced in order to be compatible with the Fire Department radios.
8. The Computer Maintenance line is being reduced by \$500.
9. Marshal Roback stated that he is reducing the Fire Watch budget by \$5,000 as there are no big projects scheduled to be done in the near future.

Mrs. Bowen stated that she would like to see Fire Prevention returned to the Fire Department budget. She said that she was approached by several volunteers at the Christmas tree lot. They are upset because they feel that they do all of the work for Fire Prevention, but they have to report everything back to the Fire Marshal's office. They also told Mrs. Bowen that there is never anyone from the Fire Marshal's office at any of the programs/events. The volunteers were very upset about the sign that Marshal Roback dropped off to be displayed at the tree lot. Mr. Topping said that the volunteers had complained to him about the sign too. He said that he believes part of the problem is lack of communication. Chief Moore stated that the volunteers are afraid to voice their concerns. He said that his fear is if the volunteers become too upset and frustrated, they will no longer assist with the Fire Prevention programs.

Marshal Roback stated that he was unaware that there were any problems. He asked why he was not told right away so that he could speak with Chief Moore. Mrs. Bowen replied that she was out sick for a few days after she worked at the tree lot and forgot about it when she returned to work.

Mrs. O'Marra stated that she would like to see more involvement from the Fire Marshal's office as Fire Prevention is a joint effort.

President O'Marra asked if there would be a need for fire watches during the construction at Waddell School. Marshal Roback said that he did not think so because there would not be any students or staff in the building during the project. Mrs. O'Marra voiced her concerns about who would pay for a fire watch as this is a town project and the permit fees were waived. Mr. Topping stated that in 2003-2004 the Eighth District taxpayers had to pay for a fire watch at Waddell because there were students and staff in the building, and there were no active fire alarms during the reconstruction.

Mr. Topping asked Marshal Roback what the fire inspectors' hourly rate is. Marshal Roback said that he did not have the figures with him, but he would bring them to the next budget workshop. Mr. Topping asked how many hours over the current 25 per week Marshal Roback thought he needed in order to fulfill his duties. Marshal Roback replied that he has put in for extra duty pay in the past, but there were many occasions that he donated his work and did not seek compensation. President O'Marra stated that a few years ago Marshal Roback's stipend was increased to compensate him for an additional 20 hours per month. At that time his office was short staffed, and he was working extra hours. Mr. Napoli asked why the Fire Marshal needed extra hours and compensation when he now had a fully-staffed office.

Marshal Roback explained his proposal for an addition to 18 Main Street. This would provide more room for the Fire Marshal's office, add an additional bay to the garage, and give the Administrative office more storage space. Mr. Napoli asked what the estimated cost would be for this project. Marshal Roback said that the proposal that he received was approximately \$200,000, but the proposal did not include the work that is needed to the existing garages.

Mrs. O'Marra stated that although this was a viable plan it was not the year to contemplate a project of this size. Because of the uncertainty of the state budget we are not sure what or if we will receive any revenue from the state. As of today, we cannot collect any automobile taxes which will impact our budget by approximately \$500,000. Mr. Topping agreed with President O'Marra. It would be nice, but currently, we do not have the resources to consider a project of this size. Mrs. O'Marra stated that because the bond for the Public Works facility was paid off this year we have the opportunity to keep our mill rate the same or only have a slight increase.

Chief Moore asked what the budget plan is. Mrs. O'Marra said that the operational accounts will be funded on July 1<sup>st</sup>. If we receive any funds from the state, we will fund the reserve accounts.

VOTED: Mr. Luzusky made a motion to adjourn.  
Seconded by Mr. Topping.

There being no other business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

DIRECTORS PRESENT:

Mary O'Marra, President  
Deberah Bowen  
Karen Gionet  
Leonard Luzusky  
Gerard Napoli  
John Topping  
Joseph Tyler

FRANCES McCARTER  
CLERK  
EIGHTH UTILITIES DISTRICT