APPROVED
TOWN OF TRUMBULL BOAD OF FINANCE
MINUTES
NOVEMBER 18, 2021

CALL TO ORDER
The Chairman called the Board of Finance meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. All present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

PUBIC COMMENT
There was no one present to speak.

ATTENDANCE
The acting clerk called the roll and recorded it as follows:

PRESENT
Michael Barker
Elaine Hammers
Lanie McHugh
Paul Timpanelli
Marty Isaac
Vincent DeGennaro-Alternate
Steve Choi

ABSENT
Christine El Eris-Alternate
Marc Mascola

ALSO PRESENT:
Director of Finance Maria Pires, Daniel Schopick, Esq., Town Attorney, Town Treasurer Anthony Musto, Director of Public Works George Estrada, Chief of Police Michael Lombardo, Assistant Chief of Police Glenn Byrnes, Director of Labor Relations Thomas McCarthy, Donna Pellitteri Tax Collector

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ITERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT: None

TRASURER'S REPORT:
Mr. Musto reported the following:

- There's still not a lot of good news on the income front.
- Bank account deposits are good these days.
- There are no other investments available that are specifically appropriate for the town.
- CD rates are creeping up and is talking to Infinex to get more CDs.

TAX COLLECTOR SUSPENSE ITEMS:
Ms. Pellitteri explained this is the annual Suspense List for the 2019 Grand List, (personal property and motor vehicles), totaling $379,096.41, last year's was $463,714.96. Last year's was turned over to a collection agency in November, as of now they have collected 67%.

- The personal property on the list totals $115,000.
- There are four large items on the list, Wahlburgers and Popeyes are two. Wahlburgers is corporate owned while Popeyes was a franchise. The Franchise parent company has included

language in their agreements that they are not responsible for unpaid taxes or back rent. Capital Senior Living is still there, letters and notices have been sent with no response. Once a notice is sent from a collection agency there will probably be a response.

- The building cannot be liened, many time it is a rented building.
- The Tax Assessor did an audit in September reopening the 2019 bills which added $4,342.50 to each Target bill. That is an end of October bill that hasn't been paid yet.
  The process to collect is the same for a company as it is for personal property. The decision to collect is done by List Year. The collection agency starts their process and the people have the choice to pay the Town or the collection agency.
- The collection gets 15% on an individual claim, if they collect nothing they get nothing.
- Per tax law the town doesn't have to send a tax bill, a citizen living in a town has the responsibility to know what taxes they owe. That is statute.
- Real estate taxes, if not paid the property would be liened once a year.
- Motor vehicle taxes, if not paid the car cannot be registered. There are three-year registrations now, therefore the Town may be waiting longer for unpaid mv taxes.

The Chair noted the 67% collection rate is good based on the last few years.

- Current 2020 list, which started in 2021, collection rate is as follows:
  Real Estate 50.9% with another installment due in January
  Personal 59.9%
  Motor vehicle 73%
- Trumbull's collection rate is better than similar communities. As of June 30th the year closed with a collection rate of 98.9% and currently is at 99.1%. Trumbull has a very high collection rate.

2021-2022 TRANSFER

Moved by Mr. Timpanelli, seconded by Mr. Barker to transfer $17,425 from 01030400-522204 Services & Fees-Contractual to 01030400-522207 Special Contractual Services for landfill monitoring, MS4 permit and industrial stormwater costs.

- Mr. Estrada explained these are for annual fees/fixed expenses for permits and would not expect a need for a supplemental at the end of the year.
- MS4 is a stormwater discharge permit.
- The fees are paid to the state, to EAP and DEEP for regulated requirements.
- Ms. Pires said there may be a surplus in the account the funds are being transferred from, there usually is every year, it is the main account, therefore there may be enough to cover it at the end of the year.

VOTE: Motion CARRIED 6-0

Moved by Mr. Timpanelli, seconded by Mr. Barker to take the Chief Lombardo-Department Update out of order. VOTE: Motion CARRIED 6-0

Moved by Ms. Hammers, seconded by Mr. Timpanelli to add the Internal Auditor Position Discussion item to the agenda. VOTE: Motion CARRIED 6-0

CHIEF LOMBARDO-DEPARTMENT UPDATE:

Chief Lombardo was present and reported the following:

- The department has been within their overtime budget for quite a few years in a row.
- The department's goal is always to come within budget. Last year was difficult for everybody. The pandemic closed just about everything and were able to save a considerable amount of money in the overtime account, because people weren't going away on vacations. 70% of their overtime budget for overtime is patrol staff. The training account was not spent as it normally is because everything just stopped in March therefore very little training occurred. Money was saved in both accounts.
- This year's overtime may be over budget, currently they are short quite a few officers which affects the overtime account.
- They analyze the budget in detail all the time, all through the year.
- It has been seven years they have not had to ask for supplemental appropriation at the end of the fiscal year.
- Recruitment is very difficult now.

Mr. Barker noted as they go into the budget season, knowing some things are out their control but others are within their control explained if there is anything that they could do or advocate for, he would be very interested in a dialogue about those items that could be controlled.

Mr. Isaac questioned how competitive Trumbull is with the surrounding departments in terms of compensation and anything else that would be considered by someone who wants to be an officer in Trumbull or elsewhere.

Chief Lombardo explained:
- Salary wise Trumbull is competitive with most other towns in Fairfield, lower Fairfield County.
- The department is short 9 officers with probably a 10th in a few weeks, (all patrol division). Each one with the exception of one or two that left has said it's because we don't offer a defined benefit pension. Many of them have actually put that in your resignation letters. It's very difficult for us with a defined contribution plan to compete with that. Generally, each officer who's left the department were younger officers that that we have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to hire and train, put on the road and then 3, 4, 5 or 6 years into it they're gone to another agency. They might not even pay as much as we do, but they have at the end a pension. He suggested the town take a hard look at this.

The board would like to see the data to compare Trumbull to other departments to ensure they are doing everything that can be done to make Trumbull competitive, they may not be able to make a change but would like to see the data.

Chief Lombardo indicated:
- The recruitment issue will be there for a while not just locally but nationwide.
- There are at least 12 officers that have 25 or more years of service who could retire.
- There are 18 officers in the defined contribution plan, one of which will be leaving in a couple of weeks and has been told 3, maybe 4 others have taken the test for other departments.
- The Chief wished there was something that said they had to notify "x" number of months before they were going to leave so he could better prepare.
- Those who have left were past the two-year mark.

- The town always has enough people for patrol, they have to, but the problem is it creates overtime. There are a lot of shifts being filled with overtime now. They will never go below the minimum number of people needed, it is in the working contract.
- Some would say overtime is less expensive because there are no benefits paid, but it gets tiresome and we don't want people working 16 hours all the time. When working at minimum staffing, that is all you are providing the town with is the minimum, none of the community outreach programs, because minimum is minimum, you're providing safety to the community, which is their first and foremost goal.
- The department vets the candidates not a third party.
- They do use patrol officers for other things, but they also use detectives as well, everything is covered.

Mr. Barker voiced his concern this could be on-going issue and asked Chief Lombardo on his thoughts of what could help.

- Chief Lombardo suggested taking a closer look at whether the town wants to offer defined benefits pension. This doesn't mean they will never be short, most departments have an attrition rate. If the department was always fully staffed at 82 people, which is what they are authorized for, it would be good. But that's a really difficult goal.

Mr. Isaac questioned how other towns are fully staffed that don't have a pension plan and questioned if the was another way to treat the problem. It would be an interesting competitive overview to understand. It would be great to have the data and to help the department be staffed.

- Chief Lombardo doesn't know of any department that has a pension or a defined contribution plan that is fully staffed.
- The department is already 9%-10% over in overtime.
- Monroe has 43 sworn officers, Fairfield 108, Stratford 108, Easton might be around 14 and Shelton is 50 or 49.
- The Chief looks at what are the best for services for Trumbull. Fairfield might have more population but they have the shore, nobody else has the mall, when they are fully open they have been told the mall will see around a million people a year. That is a big draw for us to have to police. That's why they went for that grant and put an officer there eight hours a day.

The Chair noted it is important to know the importance of the demands of the department vs other departments and requested the data be analyzed and given to the board before the budget season so they can better understand and talk more. Population was also requested, Shelton may not have a mall but has retail spread all over the town. The board would like to get a sense of what the Town is compared to.

- If an officer leaves within two years of being hired and goes to another agency, the Chief can require the agency to pay 50% of all their hiring costs, training costs and so forth. They haven't had anybody come in under that threshold.
- While the schools were closed they had the SRO's do what they do in the summer, they worked patrol or took their vacation. Sometimes in the summer, they use one of them as a firearms instructor to do our weapons inspections, it has to be done every year. There are three fulltime SRO's, one at the HS, and one at each middle school. They also cover the elementary schools' 5th grades to help with the transition to middle school.

It was confirmed the Chief would provide the board with a comparative analysis between Trumbull and competitive towns as to benefits offered to policemen, pension benefits not offered and how the pension in their region starting with the first fiscal year of 2014.

- The new defined contribution plan started July 1, 2014.
- Approximately 25% of recruits leave within 5-6 years.

- The Chief does not want to become a training ground. After working in a community for 3-4 years, that has its own value, they know the community and who they are working with and that helps accomplish things faster.
- Lateral transfers from other departments do get an extra step increase for every two years at the other department. They have had one lateral in the last two years and no laterals took the last test.

Budget to Actual Expenditures FY 2022

Ms. Pires reported the following:

- Salaries are approximately 36%. Some departments are over because of vacancies. Their overtime, and part time may be over budget because they have a vacancy. Example, the Tax Assessor has a seasonal employee there that was helping out because of the vacancy. The full time salary is under budget and overtime and seasonal is over budget. Once that position is filled, a transfer will be made. Police has used 46% of overtime and has used 33.5 % of salaries, but that should be about 36%.
- Contributions is for the CCM membership, it is in the deficit because they gave a discount but we have to pay in full first and will reimburse after.
- Page 9-Public Works Building Maintenance - Service and Fees Ancillary is over by $10,000, due to extra cleaning at EMS. It needed to be done and is related to COVID. They are not quite sure if it's going to be reimbursable, that's why there is a deficit.
- Page 14-Parks - Maintenance Repair Program - account 578803 account is over by $34,000 representing emergency work at Hillcrest pool. They are doing a study now and will probably come to this board for some time down the road.
- Page 100Health Department -Overtime, is related to the flu clinics and vaccines. Some of that will be reimbursed. They hired some seasonals to help with the boosters and the vaccines that are being paid by by COVID, such as FEMA or CRF.
- Overtime is paid at 150% and benefits are approximately $20,000 per person, net their premium share. That impacts the benefits, FICA and Medicare. The internal auditor did a report on the police overtime which she could send to the board and might help the Chief as a starting point.

Revenue Report FY2022

- Last year at this time 32% was received, this year 51%. The majority of that is that is we have the $4.6 million funds on page 1. It was $5.2 million for FY2022 and another $5.2 million for next year. There is another $600,000 to use for other purposes.
- EMS transports are up

Mr Isaac requested for a future discussion he would like to understand insurance reimbursement on ambulances and if our town is an outlier compared to other towns or not. He knows people tend to have to pay ambulance stuff because it never seems to be covered. He would like to understand why and if our policies are similar to other towns in Connecticut.

- Revenues - It all depends when the permits are coming in, they are not comparable, and it is the same with the state revenue and those kinds of revenues. Some of them come all at once, some come four times a year, and a lot comes in as a chunk.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Moved by Mr. Timpanelli, seconded by Mr. Barker to approve the October 14, 2021 minutes as submitted. VOTE: Motion CARRIED 5-0-1 (ABSTENTION: Choi)

Moved by Mr. Timpanelli, seconded by Mr. Barker to approve the October 6, 2021 minutes as submitted.
VOTE: Motion CARRIED 6-0

INTERNAL AUDITOR POSITION DISCUSSION
Moved by Ms. Hammers, seconded by Mr. Timpanelli to ENTER into Executive Session to discuss the internal auditor position.
VOTE: Motion CARRIED 6-0

The Board of Finance entered into Executive Session at 8:06 p.m. with the following people present: Board of Finance members Michael Barker, Elaine Hammers, Lanie McHugh, Paul Timpanelli, Marty Isaac Vincent DeGennaro-Alternate, Steve Choi, Director of Finance Maria Pires, Daniel Schopick, Esq., Town Attorney, and Director of Labor Relations Thomas McCarthy.

Moved by Ms. Hammers, seconded by Mr. Choi to END Executive Session at 8:31 p.m.
VOTE: Motion CARRIED 6-0

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to discuss and upon motion made by Mr. Timpanelli, seconded by Ms. Hammers the Board of Finance adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Margaret D. Mastroni
Acting Clerk