

BUDGET REVIEW COMMITTEE

JUNE 8, 2023

A meeting of the Budget Review Committee was held Tuesday, June 8, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber.

Alderman Richard A. Dowd, Chairman, presided.

Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance.

Members of Committee present: Alderman Richard A. Dowd, Chairman
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire
Alderman June M. Caron
Alderman Ernest Jette
Alderman John Sullivan

Members not in Attendance: Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly

Also in Attendance: Alderman Thomas Lopez
Kevin Rourke, Police Chief
Joseph Fay, Deputy Police Chief
Karen Smith, Business Manager
Jim Tollner, Police Commissioner
Matt Plante, Police Commissioner

ROLL CALL

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

COMMUNICATIONS - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS - None

NEW BUSINESS – ORDINANCES – None

TABLED IN COMMITTEE

R-23-118

Endorsers: Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.
Alderman Thomas Lopez
Alderwoman-at-Large Gloria Timmons
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.

INCREASING THE MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE AMOUNT IN THE SNOW REMOVAL EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND AND EXPANDING ITS USE

•Tabled at 5/24/23 meeting

MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO REMOVE FROM THE TABLE R-23-125

MOTION CARRIED

R-23-125

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
Alderman Richard A. Dowd
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

RELATIVE TO THE ADOPTION OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2024 PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF NASHUA GENERAL, ENTERPRISE, SPECIAL REVENUE AND GRANT FUNDS

<u>Dept. #</u>		<u>Revenue</u>	<u>Appropriations</u>
	<u>Public Safety</u>		
150	Police Department	101	102

Alderman O'Brien

Chief and company when you go to speak individually, can you repeat your names. That way the person transcribing this who does not recognize the voice will put you down appropriately. Appreciate it. Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

And while I'm sure your officers realize you have a loud voice, would you bring the microphone as close to you so that they can be picked up by the TV. Just kidding.

Okay, who wants to start us off?

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

Good evening. This evening we have our FY24 budget before you which includes the payroll and operational needs of the Police Department. In the past year, we've had a slower rate of hiring than we expected. The effort was there. The candidates weren't or qualified candidates I will say. We hired 14 officers in the last fiscal year and we lost 12. That lost 12 of them, nine of them were two resignations from the officer's one year of service all the way up to 13 years of service. That doesn't happen at the Nashua Police Department. We lose guys to retirement not with people want one to 13 years on. So that was a big hit last year for us. People that we did not expect to leave. It's more of a retention problem at this point and I think some of it is in doing exit interviews just so you know is the retirement bill which is a big ticket item right now. As you all know, many of them went into the private sector of those nine which is unfortunate. We're losing people out of professionals not a good thing, especially at these times.

Unfortunately, we did not have the opportunity to use the escrow funding which were provided to us and we're very grateful that you supported that at the end of last year. Our intentions, we made some changes with hiring where you approved a part time recruiting officer who was very instrumental in doing backgrounds, getting out to the colleges. It was not due to a lack of effort I can tell you that because we did put a lot of pressure on ourselves and the Professional Standards Bureau to hire people. We started even further out where we started a safety cadet program in the high school thinking long term to try to get younger individuals to be interested in the Police Department or work in that profession. So we have even looked further out not a short term fix. So we'll see that pay off hopefully in a couple years when they turned 21.

Meanwhile, the resolution in the process it's to reallocate the funds to the much needed expendable trust full time account. The budget before you includes the addition of two first year certified officers and one sergeant. As you know, the city is rapidly growing in the housing development. We have a casino that's moving from Boston Billiards down to Exit 1. There's also talk of another casino going into the Pheasant Lane Mall which we hear. Right now we have one officer that covers that area so they will definitely be overwhelmed. We'll have to reallocate our sources down there. We did an assessment a few years ago. As you remember, I spoke about before where the assessment is from the International Chiefs Association where they come up with a formula of the city the size, the calls we handle, motor vehicle stops, and they recommended that the city of our size and what we handle should have 12 additional officers. So that's why last year when the escrow came out, we asked for additional officers because our plan was to get up to full staff and keep pushing forward. So this year, we asked for two. I don't want to get to the point in the city where I'm coming to you and asking I need 10 more guys. Just a comparison, the City of Manchester who you know is a little busier than us and has a little bit more of a population and land wise, they have 260 police officers. Also just south of us Lowell, they have 250 police officers. We have 181. So we definitely have to look at that, especially the growth of our city growing with the housing development which is a good thing but we have to be prepared for it.

The payroll accounts have been increased relative to the bargaining unit contracts and the new positions and payroll are the majority of the increase the budget change to the Police Department budget increase. We have recognized our budget to include much needed changes in self-funded without additional increases to cover the increased cost to the new larger HVAC system and therefore larger costing maintenance contract.

We have changed the method of using cell phones to meet the department's needs. We ran into a situation in a homicide

where one of our officers was using their personal phone and if you've watched across the nation over the past couple a couple of years, it's not a good thing for officers to be using their personal cell phones because they've been used in criminal cases and I don't want to put my officers in that position. So we've made a decision to put cell phones in all the police cruisers so they can use those. That officer's cell phone could be used in the homicide investigation that happened here last summer and it was very instrumental in catching the suspect. So we looked at that, look at what's going on across the country, using the case law, and the cases in court, and we decided that that was the best option for our officers. The detectives have already had cell phones that were donated to them. So we made a decision to put them in the police cruisers for the officers. They can do follow ups. If an officer goes to the person's house, the person has to call them back because they weren't there or whatever, they can call that line. We leave the number. They call right straight to the cruiser. They don't have to go back to the Police Department and come back on the street. It just makes a lot of sense.

We have covered the cost of software maintenance for Applitrack recruitment software. Our budget continues to be compromised of 90% payroll related accounts and 10% operational. Recruitment in department issue required budget increases due to turnover and associated cost, with a budget increase of less than 1%.

Our HVAC building project was completed in January. We're seeing what appear to be improved efficiencies. FY22 and '23 cannot be used as a measurement as the building was closed down in areas for a period of time throughout that time. Utilities and maintenance are priority areas of budget. If after a consistent time and utility efficiencies hold true, we have other areas for budget that we would address within our budget. Examples - automotive parts and tires as you know, has all going up; building repairs such as replacing costly garage bay doors that are rotting out, replacing carpet that have been there since I've been there. I need to replace costly evidence equipment that is continually put off just as an example.

That's all I have. If you have any questions, I'll be glad to answer them.

Chairman Dowd

Okay. Questions?

Alderman Jette

Thank you. So Chief you talked about a large number of resignations that you were not expecting. You talked about exit interviews with these officers who left and you said something about the pension that we all know about. Can you elaborate on that? What is it about the pension that would cause people to leave?

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

Sure. So what they did is they changed the retirement bill a couple of years ago. So when we all came on, the Deputy and I, you could do 20 years retire or at 45. You can't collect til you're 45. So I came on at 22. So 20 years of service, I would get 50% of my three highest years. I can start collecting that at 45. So if I came on at 22, I was also every year after 20 years, I was getting a 2.5 increase. So some of these officers that came on with the same conditions that they get hired at, the State changed the retirement and added years to the length of time that they were supposed to do. They weren't allowed to do 20 years and retired. Some got up to five years in addition. They also decreased the amount of the pension from 2.5 I think it was 2.0. So their conditions changed every time. So some guys had already done 10 years. Some guys have done seven years but 10 years or more and they decided to leave that they didn't want and there's a lot of other factors involved too but I kept hearing that complaint to me.

Again when we came through our first half of our career, we never saw people leaving with seven years on. We lost a kid recently a Detective, promising career. He had seven years on was in the Detective Bureau, graduated from West Point, definitely would have been a future leader here. Left. Went to the private sector. That never happened. So it's very disappointing. We lost some caliber guys to the federal agencies. Again, their reasoning was retirement system change because the federal system did not change.

Alderman Jette

Okay.

Chairman Dowd

Follow up Alderman Jette?

Chairman Dowd

Thank you, please. So the changes in the pension system, this is something out of our control? This is something that the State did?

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

Yes. It's not just that. Some of them that was the number one complaint. There's other factors. I'm sure you've seen them on TV. It's just at times it can be a thankless job and things have changed over the years. You know we used to have a pool of 300 - 400 people show up at our test. Again, that's one of the changes we did. We used to test a couple times a year. Right now, we're testing once a month. Every month we have a test and there's been many tests over the last six months where we've had maybe 20 people show up for the test, 15 people show up for the test, half of them don't even pass the written or physical test, and then after that if you pass the written physical, then you get an oral board. We've come out of these tests with zero candidates after the oral board. Last month, we had three people pass the written and physical test. They came in for an oral board on Monday, they all failed. So we're not lowering our standards. In the past year Fiscal Year, we've lost four or five officers who have made it all the way to the end. Something either came up in their background when we found something out. We thought they were viable candidates and at the right at the end, and this is months of investigation during the background, we lose them. We lost one that was an officer for 10 months. He just didn't cut it. We're not just going to hire anybody because we're down people. We're not going to lower our standards.

Alderman Jette

Thank you. So when you say that you're sure that I've seen it on TV, can you elaborate on that? I'm sorry.

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

The bad publicity.

Alderman Jette

Okay. Apparently, you're talking about some people...

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

The negativity toward the profession.

Alderman Jette

Right. Some people have a negative attitude towards the Police Department.

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

Sure.

Alderman Jette

I think - hopefully, it's a very small minority of people who think like that.

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

But it does turn people off.

Alderman Jette

I think you were copied on - we got a letter from one of the citizens who attended the police academy talking about how impressed he was with the Nashua Police Department and how much he learned about how much more the Police Department does than was apparent to him before he attended the police academy. I know you've probably seen the letter, but yeah, for the public a citizen who attended the police academy, you know, just came away very impressed with you and your department. I just thought I'd mention that. I'm sorry, that a small minority of people are discouraging our officers from continuing this as a career.

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

Yeah you just don't expect nine guys in that range to leave. I mean we put a lot of time and effort into them to training them, outfitting them, and the experience they've gained from one to 13 years is great. Those guys some of them that left is sad to see leave because they would have definitely been, you know, you can see the future leaders of the Department whether they went to the private sector or the federal agencies. It's a tough loss. We can't make that up. It takes a long time.

Alderman Jette

Thank you. I have another. You mentioned the need for more officers not only to replace the ones that have left but in addition to that because of the growth of the city, additional housing. You mentioned one of the casinos Boston Billiards moving to the old Sheraton or what's I guess it's the new Sheraton hotel and then possibly another one at the Pheasant Lane Mall. I wasn't aware – do casinos caused problems or there's a need for more officers because of casinos?

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

They can cause problems. There's going to be a larger population in the city I mean attending these casinos. So I don't want to wait till the minute before we act on it. I mean we're gonna have to allocate sources down to that area. Like I said before, we have one sector that covers that area. We're definitely gonna have to put more people down. Right now in a recent study two years ago, we're spending I think its 45 minutes on a call. These guys are spending more times on calls. So if they're on a call, how are they going to respond down there? So I could just foresee that. We need to add more police officers. Like I said before, Manchester has 260. Lowell has 250. We're at 179. The allocated two more with 181 and the budget was approved at 182 so I don't want to wait till the last minute.

Alderman Jette

Okay, thank you.

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

We are working to recruiting and hiring people. We're not sitting on our hands, you know, but it's a battle. Like I said when you go from years ago having 300 - 400 people attending tests to become police officers, now you're down to 20 to 30 people might sign up and half of that show up. That's alarming.

Chairman Dowd

All set Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

Yes, thank you.

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you very much. Chief Rourke I am going to spend a little bit more time on staffing. I mean you said it, it's 90% of your budget so I think it's important to stay on that for a little bit.

I was just comparing year over year and I know it's one or two I'm trying to come up with how we get to the number of 181 or 182. I see that you have 135 Patrolman, and you have 25 Sergeants, and then there's Captain's in there as well, correct?

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

Seven Captains.

Alderman Sullivan

Seven Captains. Okay. I don't know does that get us - that doesn't get us to 182 right does it?

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

No, we have Lieutenants too.

Alderman Sullivan

Lieutenants - got it. Okay. Missed a rank there. Okay. I did notice that - so my question is around last year you budgeted for 136 patrolmen. This year it's 135. One less but you have 25 Sergeants this year, 24 last year.

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

We moved a Patrolman. We promoted to a Sergeant. We created a position that we thought was in need for the Department - a Public Information Officer. He does that half the time and he's also in charge of overseeing our communications and dispatch personnel.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay. So that's a Public Information Officer. Okay. Could I have a follow up please?

Chairman Dowd

Follow up.

Alderman Sullivan

This year on your staffing which I didn't see last year and I think you touched on it in your opening comments that you have three first year officers budgeted?

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

Two and then that one Sergeant position that we...

Karen Smith, Business Manager

Can I comment please?

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

Yes, thank you.

Karen Smith, Business Manager

It would be in the budget related to where the current budgeted position would be moving. The Chief is referring to the two additional but our current hire would probably still be a first year officer in the budget until their anniversary and then they'd move to second. So what you're looking at is based on budget and so the answer would be three.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay. All right. I appreciate you calling that out.

Just one more?

Chairman Dowd

Follow up? Go ahead.

Alderman Sullivan

So around 135, I was trying to do the math so where are you currently right now against that 135?

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

Down 11.

Karen Smith, Business Manager

Eleven would be with the two escrowed positions. Legislation is going through to a Board of Aldermen meeting to move the escrow funding from our budget. It's not in our budget. It's an escrow. If those funds are moved to the overtime, the expendable trust fund, we would lose those positions. So the 11 that the Chief just mentioned would come down by two to nine.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay. So just a big like an overall question. I mean even if, even if we sat here and we budgeted 15 more patrolmen and women, it would be a very difficult hill to climb to fill those positions in a year.

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

15 yeah, that's why I'm only asking for two. We've hired since the calendar, since January, we've hired seven. We have three more we're hiring in a couple of weeks so we're at 10. Last year, we hired calendar year 15. We're doing pretty good. We got 10 slated already halfway through the year. I mean they're gonna get hired in July but its right after the Fiscal Year starts but I'm gonna count that the first half of the year because we've already done - all the backgrounds are done. They're ready to get hired. When we hire someone, we hire them a couple of weeks in advance or the police academy and the police academy starts at the end of July. So we would hire them two to three weeks prior to that to get the uniforms set, give them two weeks of training in our FTU unit, firearms, defensive tactics, and then we would send them to the police academy.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay. Sorry to interrupt.

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

Oh no, I'm done.

Alderman Sullivan

I was gonna say so even though you've budgeted 135 if you were to get to that level, you don't – you have the hierarchy. You have the leadership team in place and by that I mean Sergeants, Lieutenants, Captains, etc. to manage that team of 135, correct?

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

Yes.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay. All right.

Alderman Wilshire

Thank you. I was reading through your book. It's very helpful to get this ahead and to be able to read it all but I was especially interested in the mental health training for your officers and if someone could speak to that. I think that's huge.

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

Well the Deputy here a couple of years ago when we were working midnights and I was working second shift found a school Mental Health First Aid which was throughout the country but not so much up here. He found a grant and we sent all of our officers through it. We sent two officers to the school to get trained so they could train everybody else. So all the new officers that are coming in are still getting trained. One of those officers left so the one Lieutenant who is still trained

in that - all our officers are trained in that. We have CIT which is "critical incident team" which trains mental health. All these officers are getting extra training. I want to say we have probably anywhere from 40 to 55 officers that are trained in that now. That's just a guesstimate because we keep sending them through the schools. Those officers can go out there firsthand and help these people get services that they need. They actually just implemented it in the police academy so every officer in the State will receive this advanced training on mental health. We are always on the forefront of that. Deputy Fay is definitely one of the guys that have led that charge from a mental health first aid and we just continue to train in that every year. We want to get all our officers trained in the CIT program but again, it's costly and it takes money. We send six officers up there. We're backfilling those spots but it is a goal. I would say we're one of the leading departments in the State definitely in the mental health training.

Alderman Wilshire

And all of the ways too. Follow up?

Chairman Dowd

Follow up.

Alderman Wilshire

Legal Bureau needs another attorney and paralegal. Is that in this budget or not in this budget?

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

It's not. You approved last budget meeting last year the one attorney. As you know, any professional out there it's tough to find people. We just hired our fourth attorney that you approved last year, last month. So that's how long it took. We did have through a hiccup in that is we didn't lose one so we were able to hire. We replaced her with a Police Prosecutor from up north who was also a police officer but also a lawyer which was a great addition to the Department when he came in. Then we just found a female attorney out of Windham that's our fourth attorney. So we have four attorneys going. It is very busy. They're changed the way they do business over in court. They've changed the procedure where right now we're seeing anywhere from, you know, 5 to 15 trials scheduled a day. So that's a lot of subpoenas, that's a lot of cases that has to get ready for court each day. That takes a toll on the Legal Division. Statewide they've just generated kind of not a task force but a group to speak about it just because you can't - its costing people a lot of money in their budgets where you're subpoenaing police officers every day. Now, there's no court in the State that can handle 15 trials in a day. If they get through two or three, that's a miracle but they just scheduling anywhere from 5 to 15 trials a day just trying to get rid of some cases. I think it's the catch up from COVID and they've changed the way they do business. So it is taxing on the Department. It's really taxing on smaller police departments who have complained about this problem now a little bit more louder than others. So it's in the works to try to rectify the problem.

Alderman Wilshire

One more?

Chairman Dowd

Follow up.

Alderman Wilshire

Yeah can you talk about Riverside the acquisition and modification of the property at Riverside?

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

Sure. We're still in the process of - we just did the first assessment. They came back with some ideas of what we need to fix. Now we need to do another assessment on it to find out how much it will cost. So we're in the process of that. Again, there are some things that the security obviously is number one, some cameras, fencing. For us, we're not looking to make it Taj Mahal. If you go down to Pine Street, you'll see that building and what we've worked in for the last couple of years. You'd be amazed. So we're not asking for the world at all. We want a safe place that is secure.

Alderman Wilshire

The Pine Street building is interesting. Thank you.

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

No problem.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions?

Alderman Caron

Thank you. You know what I'm gonna ask.

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

Sure.

Alderman Caron

And I do, too, appreciate this. I don't usually sit on Budget but this was great to have.

So my question that I've asked at every meeting is when I look at the budget, your budget, and I look at the Mayor's, it's the same. I don't see anything that shows if he reduced a line item or added to it. So did he take something out that you really wanted or put something in that you needed that we don't see within the budget?

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

No, no. We have a long list of wants that everybody does but we put forward our needs that we thought was important to the Department and the city. Increasing, you know, people in uniform is our number one priority but the problem is you've got to find them. The answer to your question is no.

Alderman Caron

No. So everything's okay.

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

Yes.

Alderman Caron

All right. Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

All set?

Alderman Caron

Yes, thank you.

Alderman Jette

Thank you. So Alderman Sullivan one of your answers to one of his questions kind of triggered a question in my mind. So when you have a new recruit, you said that they spend two weeks here before they go to the police academy? Can you can you tell us - so when you hire a new person who hasn't worked at another police department so this is a brand new person, how much training to do they get? Can you take me through how much - what do they get here, then the police academy, and then after they finish the police academy, how much more are they riding along with another officer and that type of thing? How long does it take before? Can you take me through that?

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

Sure.

Alderman Jette

Tell me how long it takes to get a new guy or new woman on the street?

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

Sure. So after their background, we swear them and hire them. Anywhere from two to three weeks, we'll hire them before and swear them in. They'll spend like I said two weeks with the Firearms Training Unit and teaching them how to shoot a firearm, defensive tactics. We might go over some policies. We try to and Deputy Fay he was the Captain of Professional Standards and we tried to get them to get out in the cruiser and do a ride along so they can see what it is like out there so when they go the academy, they might have some background there. But once they do two or three weeks, they go to the police academy for 16 weeks. Once they get out there, they'll do it. They'll get assigned two training officers. At the same time we split them up, they'll do 12 weeks with them. If they pass that, they'll be on their own out in the street but they also at some point during the first year, we get them into a procedure school where they learn about the city, policies, the nonprofits we deal with, things like that. We'll have classes for two weeks with them. They'll do their first day of mental health training in those two weeks.

Alderman Jette

So the procedure school was two weeks?

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

Two weeks, correct.

Alderman Jette

And then the mental health.

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

That's an eight hour block.

Alderman Jette

Eight hours?

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

But if they're coming out of police academy now they're already trained as CIT. They're just starting that I think their first class that's going to be trained in that is July.

Alderman Jette

Okay, thank you.

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

You're welcome.

Alderman Wilshire

Thank you. I wanted to ask about the Traffic Unit and I know you mentioned in here that you might reinstate the Traffic Unit?

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

Oh, we do have a Traffic Unit. We did that last year when I first started. So we have a two man traffic unit, we have a Sergeant that oversees it, and fields all the complaints, and gives it to the officers. We have one that is on day shift and one on second shift. If I had more people, I'd have more people on the Traffic Unit because that's the biggest complaint I get.

Alderman Wilshire

I bet it is.

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

We had a Traffic Unit and then we got rid of them. They allocated resources to different areas. When I came in as Chief, I thought it was very important to have a Traffic Unit since it's my number one complaint.

Alderman Wilshire

Thank you.

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you very much. I was looking at your highlights and accomplishments for 2023 and one jumped out at me about the juvenile arrests down 20%. I just jotted down a question how did you do that?

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

That's a great question. I think there were measures put into effect of, you know, sending them into the court diversion programs earlier, getting them services earlier than making arrests. That was handed down to us the best practice to go so we started doing that and the results paid off.

Alderman Sullivan

So more just early intervention?

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

Early intervention, yeah.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay, great. Well congratulations on that success. I think that that carries through and hopefully that trend continues as you go and you build on that. Well done.

Alderman Lopez

So Chief, Representative and former Alderman Plamondon has brought up several times the suggestion that the Parking Department be moved back under the ownership of the Police Department. Can you give me your opinion, your impression of that?

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

Well that was taken off - that was before I was Chief. Chief Lavoie and, again, I was I think a Captain at that point. I had no input in that. So I don't know what was talked about why they did that. I have no idea.

Alderman Lopez

He's more interested in any movement and moving the department back to the Police Department.

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

I guess we would have to sit down and talk about it a little if we want that. Is that something that City Hall would want? I

guess we could talk about it.

Alderman Lopez

Okay. Then if I could just follow up?

Chairman Dowd

Follow up.

Alderman Lopez

The open letter that was sent to the Board regarding the Citizens Academy and the positive comments. I just wanted to echo those comments. I just completed the Citizens Academy last night. I highly recommend all of the other Board of Aldermen members attended it. This is my second time doing it. But getting a refresher on the breadth and the scope of the different departmental activities, the cross trainings of the officers, and getting to meet with the officers, and hear the kind of things that they're working on, and the kind of activities that they do I think is very, very beneficial. I would definitely encourage any members of the public to do it. I wanted to commend you and your leadership team at the Police Department for the job that you're doing.

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

Thank you very much. I'm glad you enjoyed it.

Alderman Lopez

It was great.

Chairman Dowd

Other questions?

Alderman Jette

Yeah, thank you. So a lot of people in my Ward wouldn't forgive me if I if I didn't mention this. So I represent Ward 5 so the major routes through Ward 5 are West Hollis Street and Main Dunstable Road. People often complain about the speed of vehicles and also the noise that some vehicles cause. I hear them. I don't see them so I think their motorcycles that are stopped at the traffic lights and then when they start off, they rev up at high revolutions. I'm assuming the speed is as high as well. Is there anything that your Department can do to try to send the message to those people who are causing that noise that they're subjecting themselves to penalties or some kind? Is there anything you can do about reducing the speed of the vehicles and the noise that some of them cause?

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

If there's a consistent time of day or day that you see the speeding vehicles - rush hour traffic, morning, afternoon, you can call us and we'll be trafficking out there. Again, there's one on second shift, one on first shift. If we do get complaints, we will address the complaints in that area. Call in at the time that you think it's happening. You live in a big Ward. West Hollis Street and Main Dunstable Road there's one officer out there that covers that area. If he's tied up on a call, he's not going to be doing any traffic enforcement. If they have a specific time or day, we can definitely send the trafficking out there or the sector car that covers that area, but that is a big area to cover for one guy. If they call it in, we know about it, we can address it.

Alderman Lopez

I'm not telling you anything you don't know. The problem, of course, is that when somebody hears something and calls by the time the officer responds, the vehicle has left.

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

Sure. If they're speeding at a certain time whether it's the one of the rush hours in a certain area that they see that, the

violation is happening and we can address that area.

Alderman Lopez

Okay, thank you.

Alderman O'Brien

Thank you. Two things, Mr. Chairman. First, you can stop the motorcycle and then it's your opinion. You don't have the decimeter, correct?

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

I think we have some sort of one but it's not a...

Alderman O'Brien

Yeah. Maybe you can explain to Alderman Jette because it's because it's designed to – this goes on. As a State Rep., I hear it constantly at Hampton Beach. I think you can anticipate what their issue is you know. So it's much worse. But the second thing, maybe we should get you a decimeter to help out with that.

But the other thing I just want to let you know, today we had the State budget. I did not vote for it. One of the token few but how can I be without any hypocrisy sit here in the aldermanic chamber and then say look at the raping of our pension system, which was taken out completely. It doesn't work, particularly with recruitment and retention. That's across many – teachers, police, fire. So I didn't like it so voted against it. We'll try next year.

Chairman Dowd

Everybody all set?

Just a couple things. One - just so people know. You talked about the time it takes to get a police officer on the street from the time you hire them but that's also a cost per person. If you get a person through training and then they leave, so Karen may know the answer to how much does it cost for that trainee to get from day one to on the street roughly?

Karen Smith, Business Manager

You're looking for the cost for outfitting?

Chairman Dowd

The cost for - the total cost of getting a police officer hired and on the street. All that amount of time and training.

Karen Smith, Business Manager

I do have that. Let me just take a minute to pull up my file.

Chairman Dowd

Okay. While she's doing that, the other thing is you said you had cell phones in the cars. Are the cell phones to each individual officer or are they in the cars?

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

Nope just in the cruiser.

Chairman Dowd

So guys that are on motorcycles and the bikes do they have them?

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

No, we don't have them yet.

Chairman Dowd

Oh, okay. All right.

So the other thing was came up with parking enforcement. I believe that was your question right Alderman Lopez?

Alderman Lopez

Yes.

Chairman Dowd

So if parking went back to the Police Department that would require more people.

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

Yes.

Chairman Dowd

More time and police officers get paid a lot more than I'm sure our parking enforcement will get paid right now. So that's an additional cost to the budget.

Commissioner Jim Tollner

If the Committee would allow, I can explain to the people about the parking enforcement because I actually was in those meetings. So it was a number of years ago and City Hall came to the Chief and myself and said that they were interested in taking over parking enforcement for a number of reasons. The first reason was there was some conversation that more revenue could be generated by the opportunity to apply more for enforcement into those people that were illegally parking. So that was the first reason why. So we agreed. So you have the parking enforcement officers who are not actually police officers but they're actually working for City Hall but those vehicles and that personnel were able to go into the Police Department at any given time.

The other concern that was brought up was the pressure that it had put on dispatch. So if the Police Department was responsible for parking enforcement, some of those calls would have gone to dispatch where under this agreement between the Police Commission and City Hall was that they were going to move those parking enforcement officers to City Hall. If the public had any inquiry or issue with the parking ticket, they were able to call one central location. So the public would have a very quick opportunity to address any of the concerns that they would have with the parking ticket and then those individuals and those cars would be the responsibility of City Hall.

So given those situations, we were also interested in it because it did free up the opportunity for officers to concentrate on more important things. So at that time, we looked at as a win/win. As far as we're concerned, I think it has worked out. So Chief Lavoie, Chief Carignan, and Chief Rourke, I think, would agree that it's probably a better solution overall for the for the Police Department. So if there's an issue with parking enforcement, then I think it's a good opportunity for us to relook at the program that's in there now but that would be something that would be handled by City Hall.

Chairman Dowd

Thank you. By the way, this book was great. There's a lot of information in there. I'm pretty sure Ms. Smith generated that book and thank you for that. It's really good information. It also goes to show just how much work and how much crime is taken off the street by our Police Department without all the fanfare you see on the nightly news. You guys do a very efficient, very effective job of keeping Nashua safe, including mentioning in there that we were voted the second safest city in the United States. That's pretty important and several times the best city to live in, in the country. So that's very important and a large part of that goes to our municipal employees but especially Police Department.

Another thing I wanted to mention is that, I don't know if you can validate or not, but I know that the Boston Billiards which is going to move to the hotel but it's gonna be months away, their security force, most of them, are ex-police officers. Some of them from Nashua. So they keep pretty good control inside the building assuming any issues they have is when

somebody leaves the building. I'm pretty sure they're very tight on making sure that people aren't in a position where they can't drive. In fact I know on occasion they have called somebody to come pick them up and take them home. So can't validate for the other casino that's being addressed but as I understand it, that's not anything close either. The one question that has come up in those discussions is the parking lots for that building are all in Massachusetts. So who maintains what goes on in that parking lot? Do have an agreement with Tyngsboro or does Tyngsboro have to come up and are they going to need more officers because now you're going to keep something open to four in the morning instead of 10 o'clock at night. So I imagine they're impacted as well and that'll come up as it goes through the process. I don't know if you want to address - I don't know whether you know the security force at Billiards?

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

They do a good job there. It's a former officer that used to work here is the manager and I know they have a Merrimack police officer that works on his team. The officer is Dan Archambault. Delaware North is the company and one of their head guys is a former police officer from Memphis. So they're very pro police. They seem like they have pretty good strict policies. They've already changed the ways down there. None of those people had training before. Dan's now in charge of training all the security officers so they do a really good job. I know that his team is going to have to grow when they move down to Exit 1 for sure.

Chairman Dowd

Right. The other thing you were talking about hiring. I know that the departments around Nashua, and especially the State Police, are also very short of personnel, especially the State Police. I heard a number of 80 short.

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

When I talked to the Colonel a couple of weeks ago, it's 68.

Chairman Dowd

There's a lot of competition as well as, you know, having a hard time finding people that want to be police officers. They have to be really dedicated. So, again, competition but I think we do pretty well.

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

You supported our budgets and our contracts and I can tell you right now that our head is above water because of that. We've hired many certified officers in the past couple - we've hired him over the years. I'm actually worked with another department before I came here but we've hired many certified officers in the last couple of years and done very, very well. That's a tribute to working together and signing the contracts. Let's not hide anything but the salaries attract people here. Not only the Police Department as a professional police department but the bottom line is that they look at the salaries before they transfer to another police department. I'm not gonna sugarcoat that one. So we pay well and it attracts the good officers from other departments. I will tell you, we've got some really good ones in the last year.

Chairman Dowd

I've heard they also appreciate that we're certified by CALIA.

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

Sure. You guys know the Department as well as anybody.

Alderman Wilshire

She might have your answer now.

Karen Smith, Business Manager

To answer the question regarding the costs for a new hire, we have breaking it down by department issue which would include initial issue gear, pre-employment costs, and their department issued clothing, that roughly is around \$6,000. Depending on the hire whether it's a first year officer, a certified, or a certified II could range from 62 to 82. Then of course, you got all your benefits which would be your pension, Medi, FICA, health insurance. So bottom line could be

anywhere from tops of 133 or 20,000 less than that is the range. So around \$133,000.

Chairman Dowd

So it costs a lot of money to bring somebody on board.

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

And don't forget about the time and effort of doing the background, testing, the man hours that we put forth in that.

Chairman Dowd

So my last question is, I could have sworn when I read in the book that your recruiting dollars are down this year from last year. Do you think you have enough for recruiting or?

Karen Smith, Business Manager

I'm not sure which line you're talking about for recruitment.

Chairman Dowd

There's a recruiting line in there.

Karen Smith, Business Manager

Yeah, I feel comfortable with the way we prepared the budget. Yes. Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

All right. If you're comfortable, I'm comfortable. Any other last minute questions? All right. Thank you very much for coming in. Appreciate you being here and appreciate the job you're doing.

Kevin Rourke, Chief of Police

Thank you very much. Thank you.

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO TABLE R-23-125
MOTION CARRIED**

Chairman Dowd

I believe the next time we take it off the table will be the public hearing which is the 20th. The wrap up will be the 21st. If we don't finish on the 21st, the following Monday as a regular Budget meeting, we'd have to do that as a wrap up. The 27th is when we more than likely will be passing the budget for FY24.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you. It strikes me this year even though I sat through the budget process last year, I was just overcome with a lot of numbers so I didn't really pay much attention to it. This year, it strikes me that as we just heard I don't - you know some folks may disagree with me but there are things that money can't pay for and you can't allocate and appropriate in a budget. Really what it is, and just my opinion is and it's a larger discussion and I don't know who has it, but there's a larger discussion that needs to go on in society about the people that raise their hand to do these jobs - the policemen, the firemen, the teachers, trash collectors, your civic employees. To me, that's kind of my theme as I look at kind of I weave the narrative together of what's going on in the city. Yes there are dollars and cents to it but just the overall obligation of folks out there that say, yeah you know what, I'll step up and I'll do that job. I think that, that just needs to happen and maybe that's now because I'm a dad of a future army officer and I see that. I see the need for that in our society.

So that's just my thoughts. I was happy that they addressed it. You know probably a lot of folks forget but, you know, part

of the re-appropriation of the prior year escrows I was not for those two extra positions. It was interesting to me that that money didn't end up getting used this year so I was happy that they addressed that at least and understanding that recruitment is just an issue here and throughout the city and not just our city. I'm sure it's cities all over this country. So just since we're having general discussion, I thought I would bring up a general point.

Chairman Dowd

Okay. Any other comments? All right.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

REMARKS BY THE ALDERMEN - None

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO ADJOURN
MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting was declared closed at 7:57 p.m.

Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
Committee Clerk