

BUDGET REVIEW COMMITTEE

APRIL 15, 2019

A meeting of the Budget Review Committee was held Monday, April 15, 2019, at 7:28 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber.

Alderman Richard A. Dowd, Chairman presided.

Members of Committee present: Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire, Vice Chair
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien
Alderman-at-Large Ben Clemons
Alderman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
Alderman-at-Large David C. Tencza
Alderman Jan Schmidt

Also in Attendance: Alderman Ernest A. Jette
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman Linda Harriott-Gathright

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

COMMUNICATIONS – None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS – None

TABLED IN COMMITTEE

Chairman Dowd

If there's no objection I am going to take the agenda out of order on R-19-127.

MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO TAKE FROM THE TABLE R-19-127
MOTION CARRIED

R-19-127

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
Alderman Linda Harriott-Gathright
Alderman Richard A. Dowd
Alderman-at-Large Brandon Michael Laws
Alderman Tom Lopez
Alderman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
Alderman Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja
Alderman-at-Large David C. Tencza
Alderman Jan Schmidt
Alderman-at-Large Ben Clemons

AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND CITY TREASURER TO ISSUE BONDS NOT TO EXCEED THE AMOUNT OF TWO MILLION EIGHT HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$2,800,000) FOR POLICE DEPARTMENT HEATING, VENTILATION, AND AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEM (HVAC), AND WINDOW IMPROVEMENTS

- Tabled pending public hearing – 4/2/2019

MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE

ON THE QUESTION

Alderman Wilshire

As we saw from the PowerPoint presentation this money will be well-spent on a very tired and worn building; and probably not a very healthy building either. So I will definitely support this.

Alderman Clemons

I just echo what Alderman Wilshire just said. This looks like a very good project, it is money that should have been spent a long ago and I will be supporting this.

Alderman O'Brien

Thank you I would also like to echo my support. As a younger fire fighter I was transferred to the old Lake Street Station and my first night there I distinctly remember waking up in the middle of the night, it was a tough night with the runs, but had trouble falling asleep because the shades were actually blowing, coming right through the windows. And when you have something like this, when a municipality owns buildings, I would like to say we are supposed to keep up our infrastructure.

It was shameful living under those conditions. This Police Station is a place where we detain prisoners, it's a place where people live and work and it would be, I think it's about time to take care of the infrastructure. If we don't do it now, we are faced with many other buildings in the City that are in quite disrepair. It's about time we get ahead of the situation. Thank you.

Alderman Schmidt

Thank you. We can easily see that it is not fiscally responsible to leave it this way. I don't think we have a choice, I really think that we need to move forward on this thank you.

Alderwoman Kelly

If I could put a final point on fiscal responsibility, I think the efficiency of that building that was brought up at 14% is just abysmal and I think that this will allow us to actually recoup costs in the building that we are losing in terms of energy efficiency and I think it is a step towards the legislation we just passed in terms of energy goals in the City. So I support this.

Chairman Dowd

I think that allowing the building to get in this kind of shape with a highly qualified, certified Police force and dedicated Police force, this is like a no-brainer, we need to do this for them and give them conditions they should be working in. Ok any other comments, if not all those in favor?

MOTION CARRIED

R-18-102

Endorsers: Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire
 Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
 Alderman Richard A. Dowd
 Alderman-at-Large Brandon Michael Laws
 Alderman Jan Schmidt

APPROVING THE COST ITEMS OF A COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE NASHUA BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS AND UFPO LOCAL 645 PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES OF THE NASHUA POLICE DEPARTMENT FROM JULY 1, 2018 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2022 AND AUTHORIZING RELATED TRANSFERS

- Tabled 1/17/2019

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO TAKE FROM THE TABLE R-19-123
 MOTION CARRIED**

R-19-123

Endorser: Mayor Jim Donchess

RELATIVE TO THE ADOPTION OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2020 PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF NASHUA GENERAL, ENTERPRISE, AND SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS

- Public hearing scheduled for 5/16/2019 at 7:00 p.m. at NHS-North Auditorium

<u>Dept. #</u>		<u>Revenue</u>	<u>Appropriations</u>
150	POLICE DEPARTMENT	40	144

Chairman Dowd

Now this evening we will be doing the Police Department, Department 150. The revenues are on Page 40 and the appropriations are on Page 144. Whoever is going to come up, come up and sit around the horseshoe. Who is going to introduce the team?

Andrew Lavoie, Chief of Police

Chief Lavoie with the Police Department; as always this is Major Karen Smith, we have Deputy Chief Michael Carignan and Deputy Chief Jim Testaverde, and Chairman of the Police Commission James Tollner.

Chairman Dowd

Ok who would like to start?

Commissioner Tollner

I would like to recognize just before we begin, this will be the Chief's last budget presentation and I want to wish him luck in his future endeavors. But I also at the same time want to welcome the Deputy Chief because I'm sure he's going to have a lot of fun at this meeting and future budget meetings.

Chief Lavoie

To add Mr. Chairman, I am fully willing to take any sympathy vote you folks have for us.

Chairman Dowd

Do you want to give a general overview or go right into it?

Chief Lavoie

If I could give a general overview, as stated in the letter that I sent to the Budget Committee, our proposed 2020 Budget includes basically we level-funded virtually everything. We decreased a few things and what we have asked for increases are primarily promotions and for settled contracts and also a couple of different things for our accreditation, training conference. This year, this upcoming December will be our on-site assessment and then the following March of 2020 will be the conference. I'm not sure where it is yet, but that certainly, that is something very important our re-accreditation. They moved it to 4 years so we've added a little money; normally we only send two people to that but certainly the Chief and Deputy Chiefs will be responding to that as well as the Accreditation Manager. We've also had in there for computer storage equipment and we also had in for money for primary elections, the Holiday Stroll and the Pride Parade. I've spoken many times about all the parades we have and anything we have with primaries or anything. There is "parade budget" at our Police Department. There is no "Holiday Stroll Budget"; everything comes out of our overtime budget.

So certainly and that has been classically been underfunded close to half a million dollars for years, you know and we've been dealing with that. Certainly we've handled through attrition and many other management techniques. But we just can't handle that any longer so we actually put in money for that and we based the Holiday Stroll money on what it cost us last year. When we talk about primary visits, certainly we are talking Presidential Primary visits. And the reason we say is we don't charge for a Presidential Visit, that's a mutual aid among law enforcement agencies; that being the Secret Service. All of the other folks that will be coming and they'll come in droves being the first primary they pay for any coverage that they need, they pay. But when a sitting president comes, you know, you can imagine the security concerns for that, I mean we are talking every, if they go down Amherst Street to the Community College like they have in the past – I mean you are talking from the overpass literally all the way to the Community College. Every driveway, every access way, every parking lot has to have an officer securing it and in front of it. So certainly the cost of that, you know, that cost us \$18,000.00 to \$20,000.00 just that. And again we don't have that in our budget, that's all part of our overtime budget.

So in January when we submitted our budget to the Mayor, all that was included. Upon the Mayor's City IT Department Budget, the \$47,000.00 for the IT Computer Storage Equipment was part of the IT Manager's budget. Also the Mayor's Budget, when he submitted it to you, they had Holiday Stroll and Pride Parade Events included in that as well which they had not in the past. Therefore, the bottom line reduction that the Mayor gave us was \$113,410.00. So certainly, again, that's much better than we would have been approximately \$234,000.00, \$235,000.00 over the 2.25% that the Mayor was asking us to come in at. And again our budget has actually increased a percentage that is payroll and benefits are about 95% of our budget now; so we literally have no flexibility in our budget whatsoever. So anything we do, we have to manage through payroll and through overtime and everything else, all the bills, right down to buying pencils, have to be with the remaining 5% of our budget. So again, that's a very payroll heavy budget. But you know we are a tremendously large, manpower based organization. So certainly when we ask for that amount of money and the remaining \$113,000.00 plus that we've asked for, that is our opinion that's a need.

Even with the 95% of our budget being payroll, we literally fund our entire budget by attrition. And what I mean by that is over the years due to the fact that we've been so underfunded on overtime, that we literally have chosen not to be full-staffed. The one time we were full staff is literally my first month as Chief and I had to cut a half a million dollars out of the budget or we were going to run out of money. So certainly I was everybody's friend real quick in that respect. That didn't go well but that's just a fact with us. So as Chief of Police I find it ridiculous that we budget by attrition and that we make our budget each and every year, which we have done, you know we haven't come to you and asked for more money, we've made our budget. And a lot of times at the end of the year we do it by cutting services. We are a service organization, we don't provide a product; we provide a service. So oftentimes we've had to pull people off Main Street, pull bike units, bring the POP unit back to patrol, because again, everything we do is based on we need to have officers in the sectors that when you call the Police, you get the Police. That has to be a given there can be no gray area with that.

So certainly with minimum staffing, which we have to have not just because we are contractually obligated but safety wise, I can't have four officers on the street for the entire City of Nashua. Certainly we have minimum staffing requirements so we have to staff those. And when you combine training, you combine people injured, you combine sick time, vacation time and things of that sort, you incur overtime. So again, everything other than filling a sector, quite frankly is extra. And I certainly think it is something that the tax payers pay for and should expect and quite frankly we really need to find a better way to fund our department than having to not hire the full staff that we are budgeted for. Because even the staff we are budgeted for as we have said is not even a real number. If in fact we hire the full people we are budgeted for, we are going to run into a deficit which is why we are asking for \$113,000.00 plus that we've asked for because other things thankfully have been rectified in the Mayor's budget and the IT budget.

So again, you know, we think we certainly manage as best we can with what we have. But certainly it all comes down to I don't have a lot of choices to make because so much of our budget is payroll dependent. And again, minimum staffing wise, whenever I pull somebody from somewhere, it leaves a hole. So certainly all the business folks, and rightly so, want officers riding bikes on Main Street, they want officers walking on Main Street and they absolutely should have that. A Department of our size should be able to provide that with no questions asked, and we do. But unfortunately days we don't have extra bodies, if we do that, it would have to be on an overtime basis. And when we train and we do things like that, that causes holes and unfortunately the holes have to be filled. We are always trying to find a balance of who we can hire and the amount of people we can hire and meeting our budget.

In the past it hasn't been realistic, I mean we haven't put a full corp press to hire up to full staff because of the managing by attrition but we feel that this is going to change this year. We've ended up coming up with a new 2 year Certified Officer Position. We've actually done it by eliminating and kind of absorbing and projecting what we have for personnel now. So we've added \$20,000.00 to the starting salary of an officer, a 2 year Certified Officer and we've done that without adding to our budget, we've done that within our budget

So again, managing better is what we try to do, but we believe that because of that that we will in fact have a good shot to be full staff in the upcoming fiscal year. I've been asked that directly probably 4 out of the 5 budgets I've presented – if in fact I think that's a possibility. In all honesty I've told you folks straight up; I don't believe we can do that. This year I believe we can do that and I am very confident that we will do that. We have two officers that are going to be sworn in next week, so certainly we are on the right track. So these are just some of the reasons why we've asked. If you look at our itemized budget, you certainly have all of that in front of you, but we have literally level-funded or decreased items. We've decreased witness fee overtime, so you know; we are doing everything we can to manage better within what we have. But again with so much of our payroll being contingent upon contracts that are already settled, plus we have supervisors that their contract is expiring, but they have a Me Too clause so they are going to be getting at least a fixed amount as the patrol officers got. We really don't have a lot of leeway so that again explains why we've asked for the increase above what the Mayor asked us to come in at.

I think that is all the highlights I have.

Chairman Dowd

Just one other thing that people may or may not know is when you do mutual aid, like your outstanding service to help Manchester in that critical situation recently; we pick up, we – the City of Nashua – picks up that overtime tab. Those things are critically important to the safety of the State of New Hampshire. Just like if we had a situation I am sure they would do the same.

Chief Lavoie

Absolutely and if I could speak to that Mr. Chairman. That's a great point and thank you for bringing that up. Certainly you know obviously it was certainly highlighted in the news you know the tragic affairs that happened in Manchester a couple of weeks ago and again we provided them mutual aid.

That alone cost us and we were only there 4 or 5 hours, that cost us close to \$9,000.00 in overtime. That is something that is a given in law enforcement. Regardless of Nashua and Manchester being the big kids on the block, even counting Nashua and Manchester, law enforcement in New Hampshire is very small. We have to band together, we train the same, we all go to the same Police Academy. I think it is crucial for us; certainly we have agreements to render assistance to law enforcement agencies even in Massachusetts. We went to the Boston Bombing; we had our SWAT Team and Bomb Unit there. I mean the law enforcement community everywhere is a small, close knit community and everybody needs help. Manchester has come, you know, when we had the old BearCat and it broke down many times and wouldn't even start.

We had people up training, Manchester ended up coming here and handling a SWAT incident that we had here in Nashua. So we are not always the one doing it; certainly being a large department with the tremendous amount of specialty units that we have, it does fall to us to certainly assist other agencies. But again that is part of being a premier law enforcement agency, which I certainly think we are. I have been asked many times why don't we charge and things of that sort. I guess I can look at it this way; as Chief of the Nashua Police, I don't ever, ever want a law enforcement officer in a smaller Police Department to fear asking for help because his Chief is worried that they can't pay us back. And I bring up Hollis all the time and when I say that is, we back them up all the time. We stop a car on the line, they come over and they back us up. But certainly when we send officers there, if they have an alarm, they may have one officer on the overnight shift, that's it, that one officer.

And if they have an alarm at a building and they have to search the building, you know, certainly we are going to give them all the help that they need. That is not going to cost us overtime but if they have a SWAT call out or bomb call out, anything like that, I mean that's part of law enforcement and I certainly think that's our job, I'm positive that's our job. So again, I don't ever want to have that small town officer worried in trying to do something that he or she should ask for help for but they are worried about paying the bill. And I get it, it's our tax money, absolutely, but that's part of being part of law enforcement.

Chairman Dowd

Ok any questions before we get into appropriations and expenditures.

Alderman Tencza

I'm just looking at the budget book Page 144; I don't know if you have that and I think it ties into what you were talking about before.

Chairman Dowd

144 is the appropriations page.

Alderman Tencza

I'm just looking at the line item 51.330 "Overtime Coverage Costs" and it looks like, and this may be what you were talking about before. 2019 was budgeted for \$253,000.00 and so far through Fiscal Year 2019 the Department spent \$845,000.00. I think you are right to plan for the events that we know are coming up every year like the Holiday Stroll and the Pride Festival. What accounts for the increase this year with such a huge, I mean it is almost three times or more than three times what you budgeted for last year? Or was last year's budget just not realistic?

Karen Smith, Business Manager Nashua Police Department

Yes our budget is not, the overtime is never funded appropriately, we are off-setting our overtime budget by the payroll account. So the budget is always going to be low, it is going to be low by a good \$600,000.00

and probably ab out \$800,000.00 this year. So it looks deceiving when you look at a budget compared to the expenses.

Chief Lavoie

And on that note that's why I just didn't mean to throw that out there like everybody knew that when I was talking about it, I apologize. When I say we are classically underfunded in our overtime, we spend almost always \$500,000.00 or \$600,000.00 more than our overtime is budgeted and that is just reality. A lot of it is because we are not fully staffed. If you are not full-staffed, certainly you've still got to fill those sectors, but now you are filling them with overtime at time and a half instead of filling them with an officer on straight time. Plus, you know, a Police Department of our size, just everybody having to have 8 hours of firearms training and defensive tactics, that takes months to do everybody because I can't do 50 people at once, because nobody is on the street. So anything we do, it is all scheduled and takes months and then you throw in any incident. I mean again what we have presented to you is and if we can talk about the overtime expendable trust fund if I can throw that in there.

But anything that happens out of the ordinary, a whodunit homicide, a homicide without an immediate suspect, I mean that's going to cost a minimum \$50,000.00 or \$60,000.00 in a week. I mean so this is just if nothing you know, if nothing happens. This is what we know we are going to spend covering sectors because of training and things of that sort. That's an everyday occurrence, especially with the size of the department we have; I mean we do patrol tactics training after we do use of force training. There's another two months of 8 or 10 officers a day training, and you know with days off and things of that sort, you may have other specialty units training, so you literally have people that are coming off the street and you have to fill the street. So you hear the overtime and it's ok, that's extra. Well I get it, but that's just reality, you have to cover the street, you have to train and you have to do everything you can to be the quality of law enforcement that the citizens expect from us, so certainly that takes time, that takes training and that takes money.

Alderman Tencza

Just a quick follow. So the overtime, because there is an overtime investigative line item as well, so for homicides that would go into that line item correct?

Chief Lavoie

Usually yes, under investigative and cover would be you are covering because somebody is out sick, somebody is in training, things of that sort and that is kind of a large amount of it.

Alderman Tencza

And that wouldn't be details where private companies are paying?

Chief Lavoie

No not at all.

Alderman Tencza

Thank you.

Alderwoman Kelly

If I could follow up on the point that was just being chatted about, if you were fully staffed, how would you see that budget line come down, do you have a general idea?

Chief Lavoie

Well yeah I mean certainly on straight time you are making much less than you are on overtime and certainly the more officers that we have that can be in a regular rotation rather than being in just completely out with overtime, having to fill in their spot.

Chairman Dowd

You might want to address that in the recent past you have had a problem finding qualified candidates to fill the positions and you changed your tactics on how you hire now. So you now have an access to a different group of individuals that are more qualified to come in and fill positions.

Chief Lavoie

Yes thank you Chairman. That's what I was talking about with the Certified Officer II rank we added. It's a pay slot and that is already Certified Police Officer so we get them, they have already been Police Officers for a couple of years so we hire them from other departments. They have already spent a couple years at; they are already certified so they don't have to go to the academy. So that saves us four months. And we talk about functional strength, because we are not just talking having the bodies, but even the bodies we do have, if they are away for four months at the academy, if they are in 10 weeks of field training, if they are on Family Medical Leave for 16 weeks because they had a baby; we are paying them but we are not able to utilize them.

So at any one time we can be down 5 or 6 officers strength-wise, but functionally we can be down 16 officers and that all effects the coverage, overtime, and things of that sort. We certainly believe by changing our testing now, we are testing monthly now and we are also actively recruiting Certified Officers, that is not only going to help us get around the sending them for four months to the academy. It's certainly going to help us get people that we already have a track record on, they are much easier to background because literally we can pull their personnel file in addition to all of our interviews.

And they have to meet the standards we require but we at least have something to go by and by starting them at a higher pay that kind of has been the deciding factor. We've already hired 3 just in the past 6 months from this and that has helped us tremendously because before we were paying them \$3,000.00 more. That's not enough to entice somebody to come and then their first year not have any vacation or anything like that and start with no seniority. So that's why we made that decision; it was a tactical and we are always trying to find better ways to recruit and certainly that was an idea that we came up with.

Ms. Smith

The Chief pretty much covered it but basically the overtime account is in the negative right now and will be offset by the payroll account but we will be zero by the end of the year. We will make sure that it balances and the difference in that pay is, like the Chief had said, \$19,000.00. But the amount that the first year officers would be coming in at the lesser amount, those officers who left at a higher rate of pay, was already budgeted. So those new officers coming it, it's budgeted money. So we are keeping the amount that we budgeted for purpose and repurposing it for the salaries that they were intended for.

Alderman Kelly

Just a quick follow-up, I wanted to know how many open positions you currently have.

Chief Lavoie

Seven, we currently have seven; we are hiring two next week.

Commissioner Tollner

And just if I could add to your question earlier, the overtime budget dollars would be reduced if we were at full complement, we just can't tell you how much. But it is a direct correlation, if you have a full staff, it is going to cut into those overtime dollars in a good way so that number would be lower.

Alderman Klee

Thank you and I guess, in some respects this has been answered and that was my question about if you had a full complement would your overtime go down. But having said that, you've got a new hiring ranking, so have already been able to hire three, etc. You also made a comment that this usually goes well over \$600,000.00 over what you usually budget for. Do you still see it going over \$600,000.00 now that you've got this new system and being able to hire. Do you think your hiring will be better and therefore maybe your overtime won't be quite as extraordinary?

Chief Lavoie

I would say definitely one effects the other. I don't three officers are going to make that amount of difference, but when we get up to the full complement of seven being down I certainly think is going to cut into that tremendously. Because again now you have somebody on straight time rather than time and a half and if that person has got to be covered four or five times, you know, that adds up very, very quickly.

Chairman Dowd

Plus you also have more people to train.

Deputy Carignan

I just wanted to add one thing to the Chief's comments, we have struggled to actively work very hard to come to full complement because we know we are budgeting through attrition. So if we are having a particularly where overtime is running high, although we would like to get to full staff, we don't work as hard as we could to do so because we are afraid we may not be able to fund it. That's been an ongoing problem as we are talking budgeting through attrition if we know we have the bodies leave, we struggle to recruit them. The recruiting process takes a long time, like six months if it's new. So that makes it really difficult for us to say "Hey let's hire full staff, we can do it". If we get close, four bodies away, this year is looking tight, let's hold off, then we may lose the candidate, they may go somewhere else. So it is really a shell game that we try to balance and play with the ultimate goal being to come in level funded.

Chief Lavoie

And on that note again I've been completely transparent every time I've been in here as much as we want to be full staff, I've had no problem going "there's no way we can do that". And that's why this year is so much different, because I think in our new testing we will. And managing by attrition you know is not a great way to do things, and certainly when I talk about we may have to cut services, I mean we quite frankly do that virtually every spring, we just don't advertise it. We project every, you know we meet daily on overtime at our morning meeting, every day, every day, we hear what overtime and what it was for in the past 24 hours. So certainly Karen as the business manager has her finger on the pulse constantly.

So we always know pretty much exactly where we are at, what we need to average every week without going over or we are going to be in trouble. And you know we average about \$30,000.00 a week in overtime, I mean that's a lot of money. But if we don't do that, you know, we can't fill our sectors. So oftentimes when we are getting to the springtime and we are projecting you know because the last thing we want to do is come to you and go "We are going to be out of money next month". It's our job to manage the money so we cut back on lots of things quite regularly when it comes to the springtime. It is just nothing really super major

that we feel the need to come tell the public that. But again we are constantly reassessing, reassigning, changing the way we assign things, pulling the POP unit back for different things because we just have to. Again, it is the same number of people, and no matter how you slice that pie, I don't have any extra people.

Alderman O'Brien

Yeah Chief, one thing you didn't mention and I completely understand it coming from the Fire end if I may make a recommendation, that's why we call it shift coverage and not so much overtime because you are required to have a certain amount of officers on the street for the safety of the public, safety of the officers that are working for you. So I don't want to put out there exactly what is your number, what you feel is an adequate shift, but you have determined that, correct? And if you are down in numbers such as vacation, illnesses, injuries, you have to maintain that number of strength for the safety of the public and the safety of the force, am I correct? So you hire back with shift coverage or / overtime for that matter correct?

Chief Lavoie

Yeah absolutely we have minimum staffing for patrol officers as well as supervisors and we have minimum staffing for detectives as well and that's every day, every shift. And it changes the time of day, it changes on the day of the week as well because we use analytics and all our crime stats to kind of help us out with that. So we don't just randomly say we have to say we have to X amount of people here just because it's always been that way. We are constantly adjusting it, but absolutely, I mean again, nobody ever hired back, you know, 100 years ago when they let me be a real cop, I mean sometimes there were like 4 of us out there on 3rd shift for the entire City and nobody knew that, Thank God. But those days are ridiculous; I mean safety-wise, certainly not just for the citizens which is paramount but for my officers as well. I mean we absolutely have minimum staffing every shift and it changes and changes by day of the week.

Alderman Jette

Chief I think it is very important that the City you know have a good quality Police Force such as your force has been. We probably have the best Police Department in the State and that is something that we point to with pride. I am great supporter of that and I think it is very important, it's one of the essential parts of the City providing a safe environment. But I need your help and I know that you have a lot of pride in because we have such a good Police Department; a lot of pride in your ability to support other departments whether it is Manchester or Hollis or Merrimack or Hudson or whatever. But if you could help me explain me to my constituents, the tax payers, why they should be paying to provide services to a town whose tax payers aren't willing to support their Police Department like we are trying to support ours. Is there a training advantage that you have that these are opportunities to train your people, you know, how do we justify to the tax payers providing these support services to other towns.

And I wonder if the other towns could purchase support when they need it without having to like buy a BearCat, you know, they can't afford to buy a BearCat and they are not willing to buy a BearCat, but they can use ours when they need to. If there was some exchange, you know, some fee that they could pay, they would benefit because they don't have to have that all the time. But they could, you know, when they need it, we could provide it to them and they could help us pay for your budget by some kind of a charge. I know you are against that whole concept but I'd like to give you an opportunity to explain why that doesn't make any sense.

Chief Lavoie

Sure absolutely and believe me I get this question all the time from community groups and things of that sort. I guess I equate it to this, certainly in the Fire Service, I mean that is such a routine thing because again you are all in this together, you work together, you train together. You are neighboring communities, certainly you know that is something that happens regularly. In the Police Department and I don't want to give the picture that every single day we are in Hollis, Amherst, Manchester, that's not true at all. And probably 90% of the time we are providing a type of mutual aid, it is not costing anything extra, we are there. In other

words if a Merrimack Officer stops a car in Pennichuck Square and is asking for help, we are going to go help that officer, but that's not necessarily costing us anything other than my officer not being at that area for 10 or 20 minutes or something. And I mean that is part of law enforcement, we don't have enough officers out there for ourselves, we backed up by State Police, we get backed up, if we stop a car, I mean I don't want to get into how few officers we may have out on Amherst Street at any one time, but you know, if you are between the Amherst Street Overpass and Pennichuck Square, oftentimes your nearest backup is Amherst, Hollis or Merrimack and not Nashua in our own town. So you know certainly mutual aid is just, it's not only traditional, it is crucial for departments to be able to function.

Secondly, I think we oftentimes, well I don't think, I know, like our dive team in the past it has assisted other people. They have been able to use that as a training day. A lot of the area departments have regional SWAT teams, which they didn't have in the past. We are one of the only people with a bomb unit, it is us and State Police. Part of our training, we are required to assist other departments, that's part of us getting the equipment we got, getting the FBI training that we go. So a lot of these are contingent upon you know the State-of-the-Art Training, the State-of-the-Art Equipment. Recently the Governor was talking about ICAC, The Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, we have many detectives that assist with that. They have often wanted people full-time to that task force, we just don't have the manpower to do that.

But we are constantly assisting other Police Departments with search warrants, with on-line searches, you know, the training our officers get in I think in Alabama. We get tremendous amount of free software and all kind of product and our officers are quite skilled at that and it is incumbent upon us being a large premier law enforcement agency, to provide the assistance to other Police Departments. Because again they provide it to us and I certainly didn't meant to imply it cost us overtime every time we do it. It probably doesn't cost us overtime more than 10% or 20% of the time, if that. What does cost us overtime is if they have a long drawn out situation where they call us as a SWAT team rather than because we can get there much faster than a regional team getting put together and things of that sort. And that's just law enforcement. And I certainly understand "how do you answer the tax payers"? Well one is a lot of our grants we get, a lot of our equipment that we get is incumbent upon us helping other people.

But also, we certainly get help as well. So just because we are a larger agency, certainly doesn't mean that we don't benefit from mutual aid. Oftentimes, I mean there's been times just regular calls, we are just so busy and so tied up that literally Hudson has had to come to answer calls in Nashua. We've had to go answer calls in Hudson, that happens all the time. So I guess that's the price of doing business. And again, safety is my utmost thing and I understand what the tax payers and it is a valid question and I guess my answer is – that's the price of doing business. We certainly benefit as much as you know we give you know we certainly receive. And I just think it is just incumbent upon us if we have that technology, that ability, that we certainly have to share that.

Deputy Carignan

Chief do you mind if I add a little bit to that, I'd just like to reinforce to Alderman Jette. The Chief touched upon the training that we receive and the equipment that we receive. The Secret Service brings our entire computer forensics unit down to Alabama and certifies them at multiple different levels of investigations and then they will turn around and give each of those officers \$20,000.00 or \$30,000.00 worth of equipment and \$5,000.00 worth of software that they will provide licensing for 3 or 4 years. So you are talking a net gain for us, not including the free trainings and certifications, but they are giving us \$25,000.00/\$30,000.00 worth of equipment. That's money that we didn't take out of our budget and we don't have to use to spend on tools that benefit the people of Nashua.

We also have the Secret Service relationships, the relationships with the different federal agencies; that we call them in a second they are up here providing all of their technical expertise and all of their equipment. So if we have a situation in Nashua that gets dangerous or gets much more involved than we are able to handle; we have relationships and we have people that we can call on a moment's notice. And that's priceless, you can't make that money back up. So for us to give back to other communities, it's a win for us. We gain far more than we give in that one.

Chairman Dowd

Three or four years ago in this very chamber at a budget meeting, an Alderman was concerned about mutual aid for the Fire Department and saying “why do we do it, we should charge them”. And right out that window, there was a fire. And we all went out there and there were six other departments here, including Lowell. That was the end of that mutual aid discussion.

Alderwoman Kelly

Just a quick question are we still going through appropriations because I have a general comment but I can hold it if you'd like me to.

Chairman Dowd

Well I will ask for general questions after we get down appropriations.

Alderwoman Kelly

Ok sure.

Chairman Dowd

I notice that we didn't go through anything on revenue so I assume everybody is happy with the revenue page?

Commissioner Tollner

I just want to make sure that the Aldermen know and the public knows that every month when we have a Police Commissioners meeting, Karen does a fantastic job. We do discuss the overtime budget, where are we in the process, why are the reasons why a certain level of the overtime may have gone up. Sometimes it is dealing with a homicide or its other issues, but we do discuss it every month. In addition to them discussing it every day.

Alderman Clemons

This may be a question of opinion or at least the answer anyway or it might be academic. Is the reason that the overtime budget is so misrepresented because of the spending cap?

Chief Lavoie

Yes in my humble opinion, I don't even remember exactly when but in the not recent past, but within the past 10 years, we got cut almost \$500,000.00, like \$450,000.00 ish. So you can date yourself, things run together, I go by Chiefs, but we got cut like \$450,000.00. When your margins are so small, that cripples your organization; that has crippled our organization for a decade. I mean we legitimately have level funded or decreased 99% of our budget, the five budgets I've presented; the three I was on as Deputy Chief prior to that. So there's 8 of them and I get it, I understand, you know, you have mandates, you have to meet the mandates. But there comes a time again, in my humble opinion, everything in your world can't go up in price and you expect not to pay for services and things of that sort.

And I understand and I think anybody would be hard-pressed to say that we don't cherish their money and I challenge anybody to be as transparent as we are. Again, we meet daily on money and the biggest thing I learned as Chief is no matter what you do, that's not your money; it is tax payer money. And I try to never forget that. Yeah so my long winded answer is absolutely. In my opinion, that lack of being able to improve, we've been treading water for a decade. And in my opinion, boy that's not really the best way to do

business. That's our reality, we get paid to deal with it and we do deal with it. And you know, my staff is off the charts professional about it. But my humble opinion, while leaving, is that has devastated the progress of our Police Department and I don't want to talk out of school for other departments.

Alderman Clemons

What would your, and again this is hypothetical, but what would happen if you were to get \$300,000.00 or so more in your overtime line? Like I guess you'd spend it on overtime I get that. But as far as the rest of the department goes, how would the Nashua Police Department look different if something like that were to happen?

Chief Lavoie

Well again any Chief is a genius with unlimited funds, I'll throw that out there. None of us have new ideas, there's a million ideas out there, we just can't pay for the ones we want to do. But you know I would think we would take novel approaches; you know when I say overtime everything is overtime that's not when you are just showing up to regular work. But I mean there is a myriad of different things and I've got so many creative people that I work with. I mean a second POP unit we could assign to just certain hot button items; we'd improve. There are dozens and dozens of things we could do and things I get asked all the time at meetings "hey can we have this? Can we have that?" It's like "I'd love to but I can't pay for it". And again I never expected in my life to show up to a meeting where that would be asked and so I certainly haven't prepared ahead of time for it, but yeah we would find novel progressive, you know, nationwide State-of-the-Art things to do with any extra money.

Because again the money we have right now is just to get by. I mean two years ago out of our \$30,000,000.00 million dollar budget, I think we returned \$10,000.00. I mean that's about as razor close as you can get with the amount of unknowns that we have. Again I was asked one time "Well why can't you budget for X amount of homicides". Well if I knew they were going to happen I would prevent them from happening and the money to solve them, it wouldn't happen. So I mean we can only project and anything when our margins are as close as they are, anything is going to throw that all to hell; such as a homicide. If we were the primary, if that Manchester incident was here and our SWAT team and our officers had to shut massive roads down and be there for 12, 14, 18 hours instead of you know the 4 or 5 we were there with our 20 something SWAT officers? I mean that would cost us at least \$100,000.00, \$150,000.00 in two days and you know we would be ruined, we'd literally be ruined for the rest of the year.

We would have to immediately start changing the way we do business, take people out of certain areas that quite frankly, you know, when the downtown people want officers walking, they want officers on bikes, they have every right to want that; that's something they should expect for what they pay for. That is a service, that as the Chief, I shouldn't have to bat an eyelid about providing that. And we normally do but what we have been providing that is when we don't have extra officers, I still put them out there, but we hire them on overtime and we have them walk and ride a bike at the same time. When we get toward the end of the budget, that has to stop because I have to make the budget. My people have to get paid and I don't want to come back here and go "I need more because I couldn't work with the budget you gave me". I don't ever want to do that.

Chairman Dowd

Just a couple quick points; I met with the Fire Department this afternoon. They have basically been level-funded for the last 12 years. And they are getting really tight trying to make do. The other thing is I think I know the answer to this because you and I have talked but the Stroll which is now one of the biggest events in New England, over 40,000 people downtown. Because of the state of what's going on in the world, you know, we have to put BPW trucks across every street and we have police officers on every corner and plain clothes walking up and down. And I know that bills like \$18,000.00 and I believe you've taken that out of the budget and do we know how that might be funded going forward?

Chief Lavoie

Yes actually we had put that in our initial request for January and it would appear that in the Mayor's budget he has actually included that in there. That is a valid point, that has always just come out of our overtime budget and again it keeps expanding as well it should. But you are absolutely right it has become a premier destination. You know as Chief of Police, I can't go "well we can get by with X amount of officers" when you watch, I mean Belgium, France? I mean how many times do you need to watch a tractor trailer or a truck drive through 50,000 people? Well we have 30,000, 40,000, 50,000 people right here and you know it never happened before is not the excuse that you want me to say if something does happen. So we decide X amount you know with four wheelers we go by, there's all kinds of mutual aid we talk about within the City. And certainly we figure here is what the manpower we need and it has continued to increase because unfortunately what has happened in the world, we've had to increase the safety. But again, we are responsible for everybody and you know unfortunately that costs a great deal. But that actually, we made that point, we've eaten it several years in a row and I spoke to the Mayor about it and he has addressed it. So that is one portion that we won't be asking for.

Alderwoman Kelly

You actually started in on a point that I was going to talk about in terms of the events. Sitting here about a year in, I've had the pleasure to work with many of you on some of the events that we've put forth for the City. I think one of the things that comes up in that is you don't always see, it's not like visible, like we are showing up with a SWAT team or we are dealing with a homicide. But there are people at every single entrance like you said and there's a lot of work that goes into that. I know that there are people in the room who have sat at our Pride Committee meetings every single time to talk about how we are going to make sure that everybody gets to enjoy it. So as a citizen you just go and you enjoy it but you don't realize how much work and what a world class group of people that we have in our department. So I just wanted to point that out and I have been so appreciative of all your support

Chief Lavoie

Well thank you very much.

Alderman Jette

So if I read this correctly Chief on Page 147, it looks to me like the bottom line is that the Mayor is proposing approximately \$200,000.00 less than what you requested so that's – you've requested \$31,830,112.00 and the Mayor is proposing about \$200,000.00 less than that. Is that or more accurately \$180,000.00.

Chief Lavoie

Yes.

Alderman Jette

So is that close enough or what's the difference between – where's the \$180,000.00 is it here and there or is it there one thing that's different between your request and the Mayor's request?

Chief Lavoie

Well it depends on the breakdown.

Ms. Smith

The \$180 is the Mayor's reduction and then we were able to take out \$20,000.00 because funding has been put into other department's budgets for the Holiday Stroll and Pride instead of taking it out of our budget. So

we are trying to make up for that \$180 reduction in other areas. So that would be \$20,000.00 and then the computer that we had put in for for a server for roughly \$47,000.00 we were initially asking for that, but it was already put in the IT budget for a program that they are doing. So we are looking at ways of getting that \$180,000.00 for a more comfortable number. So we were able to get that down to \$113,000.00. So right now we are looking at \$113,000.00 budget reduction instead of the \$180.

Chief Lavoie

And that's what I was addressing at the start, it had started, we were about \$253,000.00 apart but the Mayor has added a couple of things and you know again you know you could look at it both ways, you could say well it's only \$113,000.00 but my argument to you is yeah, it's only \$113,000.00 more we certainly need that money. And again you break down \$113,000.00 to shifts. Because everything we are talking about is an overtime shift, you know that is multiple, multiple, multiple shifts for officers covering and again everything is important because again it is the same number of bodies. We really, everything we ask for is what we believe we absolutely need and again that's just "need" is the key word. There's virtually nothing we want in here in the budget itself.

Alderman Jette

So in plain language, are you saying you need \$113,000.00 more than what the Mayor is proposing.

Chief Lavoie

That's exactly what we are saying.

Alderman O'Brien

Chief can we trip over to 54 property services and it is my extreme hope as what the committee to the full board recommendation with the HVAC system and looking at line 54.243 I see in 2019, you budgeted \$33,900.00 for HVAC maintenance. Now if this passes the full board, which I hope it does again, could that cost become lower?

Deputy Carignan

Thank you Alderman for the question. I would anticipate that cost will come lower but it probably won't in the next Fiscal Year. We have to do the designs, do the sketches, we have to put it back out to bid to have a company come in and do the work. So we are looking at a year plus to do this project and it is a big one. So I would anticipate the savings being in subsequent budgets, but not this one.

Chairman Dowd

It's just like the middle school project, it took a year for drawings.

Alderman O'Brien

Right and I thank you that's a fair answer. I am just looking across to the other emergency services. I know they have multiple buildings in there at \$23,000.00 for all their buildings, but I was just kind of wondering. But it is my hope though that this money does get well spent to keep a good system, brand new system maintained, particularly for the range and everything; for the safety of the officers. So it would be money well spent. Thank you.

Deputy Carignan

We've got good experience with a 40 year old system, so a brand new system is going to be a pleasure to work with.

Chairman Dowd

Does that bond also include replacing your lockers?

Deputy Carignan

It doesn't. I should they are all broken, I'd be happy to discuss them.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions.

Ms. Smith

If I could just speak to Alderman Clemons' question on the \$300,000.00 and I don't know if the \$300,000.00 is a wish list but I just want to mention on the overtime and looking at our overtime and looking at that we are going to be over; \$100,000.00 is what we are looking for for our expendable trust fund. So I just want to bring that to your attention. Right now the current balance is around \$40,000.00. We do have one transfer that we still need to request I have a request for the last Manchester visit that was around \$8,000.00. So that account is getting low and we are looking for that to be reimbursed or another... again we did \$200,000.00 and it lasted us two years. We are down to the \$30,000.00 but we are going to need that especially if we are looking at right now a deficit of \$113,000.00 for next year. Really we would like to see both – the \$113,000.00 and then another reserve. The reserve is working fine, it doesn't have to be in the budget, it just needs to be available so that when there is a significant occurrence, that's the account that we go to.

Alderman Clemons

Yeah I just want to say that I don't know what the Committee is going to do, I don't know how we can get to these numbers, but I personally want to have the discussion with the Mayor to try to get some of these numbers back. Because it is not just your department that has this cut. And I am wondering if there could be opportunities maybe, I don't know, to do some of these transfers through the escrow process as well which as you know comes after the budget. So you know I guess to be continued but there are multiple ways that hopefully we can address this deficit.

Commissioner Tollner

I just wanted to make sure that the group understood what Karen was saying, that fund that we had because it gets us to where we need to be. It is not necessary in Police budget. But when we need it we can – for lack of a better term – tap into it sort to speak. It's like a safety net.

Ms. Smith

It's pretty much like a snow account. That's what made us think of it, Alderman Wilshire helped us with that.

Chief Lavoie

If I could just add on that too, we don't just look at it as a bank account either; I mean the entire first year it was in existence we didn't touch it. Because we didn't feel we needed it in addition to our overtime, knock on wood, it was a mellow major crime time. But then the next year we had like three homicides and I mean, and again, we can't budget for that. That just comes out of our overtime, so right then and there we are already behind the 8 ball just making our budget for the next year.

Alderman Kelly

Yeah if I could just clarify something that I had asked earlier. I know you guys don't have the answer right now but I would be interested to know if you were able to fully fund this, putting aside the ability to find the people, if you were able to be fully staffed, would that be a better investment than just giving you \$300,000.00 towards your overage budget. I am imagining it might but I don't know what it costs to hire 7 Police Officers and on what level.

Chief Lavoie

Yeah and it depends what they are hired at. You know certainly if they are not certified officers, they start at a significant amount less. But again anybody we are hiring at a set fee, I mean, overtime is time and a half every time they are there. So certainly it would make sense that the more people you have on straight time so you are not leaving those openings. And again, we are talking functionally, because they have to be all through training and everything like that, it is going to bring your overtime down because you have more people to fill those holes.

Deputy Carignan

To maybe answer your question Alderman Kelly, some of the different projects that we invest in that we consider part of our community policing; those projects would be able to go on. And they have proven themselves to be effective. A good example is the Mayor project. We use officers on straight time or we pull them off the street to provide a mirror project training to 8th graders at Elm Street Junior High hoping to get into each of the Middle Schools. That's a relationship that we build with all the Middle School students that puts the officers in the role of the kids and the kids in the role of the officers and puts them through scenarios so that they can better understand each other.

The ultimate goal being to develop that relationship where they are comfortable coming to us and we are comfortable talking to them and understanding what their issues are. So a project like that is important for us to continue and to keep funding to develop the relationships where with that overall goal of reducing crime in that there is more comfort and better conversations between the Police. There's not just the Mirror Project, we have NCCRJ, we have the Tactical First Aid Class that we provide, we have Computer Forensics classes that we provide. We have elderly safety internet classes that we provide. So there's a whole bunch of things that are important and it is things that the citizens of Nashua want. And the ability if we had the additional officers we could keep the officers on the street providing the services we do and not have to worry about always having a class planned and pulling it back. We think it is important to reach those community members

Chairman Dowd

Chief just for unification for some of the newer aldermen to address how long it takes to take somebody that passes the test as a new officer how much it costs to train them and how long it takes before they actually are on the street?

Chief Lavoie

Sure the cost of training it depends – the last upgrade we did if you count literally basically their first year, because it almost takes them an entire year before they are on their own. I think we worked it out to it was close to \$200,000.00 I believe. As far as the training, it is months of backgrounding in addition to the training; you know the polygraphing, we have to pay for psychological testing, and literally it takes several months just to go through the process just in all the backgrounding. And you know we have detectives and we have professional standards, recruiting officer and training officer, literally going in person to interview all the people. And as always we get the best information, the truest information not from parents but from ex boyfriends and girlfriends. They give you the real info and they tell you "we didn't get along, things didn't work out but he or she would be a great cop".

That's a pretty good recommendation, so that's a legit recommendation. But that's the stuff you need to do in person. So that's just the hire of an officer and then they go through several of weeks of training at our Police Department. They get everything brand new, guns, leather gear, uniforms, they probably put 1,500 rounds through their new guns to qualify. They qualify with defensive tactics in addition to firearms and all that is certainly our firearms training officers with their time, you know, attached to this.

Then they go off to the academy, certainly we are talking non-certified, so now they are gone to the academy for four entire months and we are paying them but they are not here. And then after the academy, then depending what time of year it is, we have our own in-house several week, two or three week Nashua Police Department Procedure School. The reason we have that is certainly we all receive the same training, we are all certified by one Police Academy, but again, the average Police Department in New Hampshire is quite small; that's not Nashua, that's not Manchester. So certainly we like to give that additional in-house training to them and then they go with two separate field training officers for another 2 ½ months.

So literally that's why functional strength is so important to us, because once they are out on their own, I mean literally, it's probably 10 months to a year depending on their time span. So when you look at that investment, again, it is just that, it's an investment. And then certainly it probably takes a couple years before they are really, I don't know want to say – certainly you can count on them from the start – that's why they are certified. And anybody calling them, you don't want to be part of their learning curve. So it doesn't matter to you if they are a brand new officer or if they've been here 10 years you want them to be able to function at the highest level and that is certainly what we expect.

But we don't start getting a return for lack of a better word for probably two or three years at least before an officer is literally completely proactive, completely can handle anything. And all this time they are getting paid; so it is quite an expensive endeavor and it is certainly an investment. Then you times that by 7, 8, 9, 10 – whatever it is that you are hiring and it does add up. But again, that investment is for the next 25 years, that's how you have to look at it and that's certainly how we look at it.

Alderman Klee

I'm kind of following up with that, if you were to hire the I think you called them R2's or something?

Chief Lavoie

Certified II?

Alderman Klee

Yeah you wouldn't have all that time lag or would you?

Chief Lavoie

Well they would still go through the entire hiring process, background and everything. They would still get that additional 2 to 3 weeks, but then rather than having to go to the 4 month Police Academy, they've already been to that. So then they would be able to, we'd be saving 4 months with them. They would still go with their Field Training Officers for 2 ½ months because, again, we want to make sure they do things the way we want them done.

So basically what we are saving by a Certified Officer is 4 month of paying them to be gone as well as now we are getting somebody that's an experienced Police Officer. And even with 2 or 3 years' experience now we are that much ahead of the curve where we are getting much more of a return on our investment.

Alderman Klee

But then you wouldn't have the 2 or 3 years until they were really up to par or would you still have that?

Chief Lavoie

No I mean, certainly the type of officer we would be hiring would be top notch and on the ball no matter where they worked so we would expect them to be you know a return on our investment probably within a year rather than 2 or 3 years. And you know, the ones we recently hired, they have been, after field training, they have been outstanding. And we have hired 3 from other departments and all 3 have been absolutely what we expected if not better. We equate it to their coming here and it's kind of like Wow this awesome! If you want to be a Police Officer certainly we like to think that this is a desirable place to be because it's got the combination of a great citizenry, plenty of support from the public and the administration. But certainly enough going on that you can still be a Police Officer, so I'm a little prejudice but I think ...

Alderwoman Kelly

Actually to follow up just on what Alderman Klee was getting at. I hate to break it down to dollars and cents but I was interested in what a new officer makes and then what an R2 costs us in relation to that?

Chief Lavoie

Sure, ballpark a new officer runs certified I think we start at like \$51,000.00 ish and the Certified II I believe is \$71,000.00/\$72,000.00 ish salary-wise. And that may not sound like a big difference, but most of the smaller departments or even the larger departments, that's kind of the max that an officer is going to make at a lot of places. And they can come here and walk in at that; and certainly be eligible to go much higher. We were able to do that by taking away some of the Master Patrolman spots that we were seeing through just through retirements and things of that sort. So we were able to make that \$20,000.00 shift without asking for anything extra in our budget.

So again we are always trying to find ways to manage as best we can, but to us that has kind of been the magic elixir, because you know before we were giving them \$5,000.00 extra dollars. And you know your first year, the way you accumulate vacation, you don't get any vacation your first year so we had to change that as well. Because if you start, you've been a 2 or 3 year officer, that two weeks' vacation you get a year, quite frankly, means more to you than an extra \$5,000.00, \$10,000.00, \$15,000.00. So you know we had to again recruit better, recruit smarter, find out of the box ways to do things because we just, it's not a great time nationwide to be a Police Officer. So we do tests three times a year and get 400 or 500 people at the test; we have to do a morning test and an afternoon test. You know now when we do our quarterly or test every four months, we literally were getting you know 150 people.

So now we are doing it monthly just so we don't have to put the outlay of having 20 officers to monitor all the testing of the physical testing and all that stuff, now we do 25 or 30 at a time every month and it's just more economical for us. So we are constantly trying to manage better. We found that seems to be the key, the extra money but being eligible to earn your vacation, when you earn your vacation, actually being able to take it has really helped us a lot.

Alderman O'Brien

I just want to make the announcement, I know we are discussing the Police, but Chief I am very pleased to see that you changed the hiring practice to this. This is something, more information to my fellow board members, the Fire Service has been doing this for years. We always had Firefighter I, Firefighter II and Career; National Certifications, we've hired based on that, particularly members that come from another Fire Department. We don't rely heavy on psychological examinations, if we did then no one would become a fireman. But however, deepest respect to what you do. But the thing is we found you getting somebody that is much more qualified, they are not going to run out during part of their training and doctrinarian.

They know what is expected of them and we've had some great firemen come through that process. So I complement you on your changes. I think that's a betterment to get service for the City. Thank you.

Chief Lavoie

Thank you.

Commissioner Tollner

Mr. Chairman just before we leave, I just want to again thank the Chief and wish him the best. We had a meeting last week with the FBI and the DEA and ICAT and the Chairman of the Chiefs Association of NH; all of them came up to the Commissioner and complemented and said great things about the Chief and complemented the Nashua Police Department and thanked us for our efforts out in the surrounding communities and supporting them. And that was unaided so that's when they come over to you unaided at the end of a meeting – I know he's leaving, the Deputy has big shoes to fill. But it's a long career and he's done a great job and I want to thank him very much for that.

Chairman Dowd

You've been an outstanding Chief but you are still there til August.

Chief Lavoie

Yeah I didn't die or anything. I'm still here.

Chairman Dowd

A couple things I wanted to mention – Nashua was voted as the Safest City in the United States. That's an extremely, extremely high complement to you and the entire force. And I just want to personally congratulate you for that. Nashua is safe because of our Police Force and a great place to live. So we don't hesitate to try and make sure you have the resources you need to do your job. The other thing is I just want to complement the officer that went into the Nashua River. I know the person ended up not surviving, but to me, you'd get a hero's award just for getting in that water in the first place, because I would never go in that water. So I think that was phenomenal that they took an action so quickly even the person was already dead. But they certainly gave their all to try and save the person.

Chief Lavoie

Well thank you very much for recognizing them and again we most certainly will. But that stuff happens every single day and I couldn't be more proud. They do a great job.

Chairman Dowd

Anything else? Thank you very much for coming in.

Chief Lavoie

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO TABLE R-19-123
MOTION CARRIED**

GENERAL DISCUSSION - NonePUBLIC COMMENT - NoneREMARKS BY THE ALDERMENAlderman O'Brien

Alderman Jette brought up a very good point about mutual aid and everything else like that; dealing with it in the Fire Service one can probably say on a daily, hourly, minute basis, that there are too many firemen sitting in the fire stations right now. And then we could have a fire and anybody could say a minute later, we don't have enough. So to compass that it has been really tried and true thing to have mutual aid; looking at it, I know with the Fire Department we do supply a lot to go to some of the other communities but we receive in return too. We are a big City we have some old structures and stuff and when we do have a fire, it's all hands on deck. And it's nice to know.

If the people want to question the validity or the cost factor, then I would take solace, or they should take solace in knowing or some form of comfort, that their lives are being protected by another out-of-town company that is back filling into that particular fire station. If they should have the second or third emergency for that night, that particular station will respond and perform their duty just as much as a Nashua company would do. So there is much, much, much great benefits to both the tax payer and the citizen and that enhances the safety of our City. And it is a program that should continue.

Alderman Clemons

Just to follow up on your comments there, you saw it in action this past fall down in Lawrence and North Andover when they had the gas explosions there. Nashua was involved with that too because, you know but you look at that and you look at a disaster like that that happened. To me, I was in awe, looking at the footage on TV with all of the fire departments and everybody that was there, ready on call. And then to know that all of those other towns were being backfilled like you said with other towns and things like that. What it showed was that New England is a pretty safe place to live. Because I'm not so sure that you would see such a response in other areas of the country on such a quick, no questions asked basis. So it does make me proud to live here and seriously if that is the perfect example of how mutual aid is supposed to work and did work, was successful and it is the reason why we need to keep it.

Alderman Tencza

I mean I question aid between the towns, mutual aid before too, and I don't think anyone disagrees that mutual aid shouldn't happen. But it almost seems like there could be some at least, part of some way of us to recoup the costs. And I know smaller towns, you know, some mutual aid doesn't have any economic detriment to us. But you know if there is almost some payment in lieu of taxes program or something that could be administered on some level so that people in Nashua and I think it's different. To Alderman O'Brien's point, I think it's different, I think the Police Department is a little different than the Fire Department. The Police Department is generally larger than Fire Departments. And I understand the benefit of mutual aid, but I think the future is in some kind of cost-sharing program. I think that is part of the county or the state that would have to get involved and I am not holding my breath for that.

Alderman O'Brien

Yeah Alderman Tencza I would certainly agree with you. It is phenomenal that has a lot of work force housing, I look at other outlying communities and they don't. We have two Veteran's Centers for people who are having a very difficult time transitioning from military status to civilian life, yet they are in Nashua and I am wonder like what is happening other type communities? Why are they here in Nashua. And I am glad Nashua has big shoulders and is able to encompass that. We are a big City and we are capable of doing that.

But it is duly noted, you know what I mean, we should be grateful for some of the things that we are capable and prepared to supply to our neighbors and stuff. Sometimes we are going to be on the short end of the stick I can assure you looking at some particular more wealthier type of communities where 2 acre lots to build on. I'm not jealous. I'm proud to be a Nashuan. I think we are better served by it.

Alderman Wilshire

Thank you. As long as I have sat on this Board mutual aid has come up. It's not new, it is something in my opinion is needed and warranted. Your house is burning down and there is a house burning down two down and there is a shooting somewhere and you know everybody is tied up and now all of a sudden you have an issue. You want somebody to show up; you don't care if they are from Hudson, Hollis, Milford, Amherst. You just want them to show up. And that's what the other towns and communities want to. I agree with the Chief, this is law enforcement, this is what we do. I mean if I need help and I call 911 and I want a Police Officer there, I want to know they are going to come, even if they come from Hudson, I don't care. So like I said, as long as I've been on this Board, mutual aid has been discussed. But I feel very passionate about the fact that we should keep it, keep doing it and always do it and at no cost to the other towns and cities because if we need them, they come here. Thank you.

Alderwoman Kelly

I didn't want the meeting to end without acknowledging the Chief, the new members didn't get to work with him a ton, but it was a pleasure and I am looking forward to working with the new Chief.

Alderman Klee

I wanted to add to what Alderman Wilshire had said, the mutual aid, it was interesting to hear them say that we provide it not just because we do it out of the goodness of our heart, but it also part of lock step with what we get as benefits. So I think when we talk to the tax payers and our constituents that is something we can say is that we are bigger and better because we give this mutual aid. It is kind of like our signature thing, we say yes, we take all these benefits and yes we will provide. So I think it's a good thing and I don't think we'd have too much difficulty explaining this to the tax payers.

Alderman Schmidt

Thank you very much. I think if we were to budget to take care of everything that happened in our City, anything that could possibly happen, I don't think we could do it. I don't think we could come up with enough money to make sure that we always have enough Police for everything, always have enough Firemen. And the other communities can't do it either; that's why we share and that's why it works. Thank you.

Alderman Dowd

Just one thing I know when I ran for the Senate and I was visiting all these small towns west of here, their Police Force ranges somewhere between 3 and 5 people. They may have 1 officer on at any one time and if they have a homicide of a couple people, they can't handle it. They get response from the State Police and they get response from the closest or larger City. Manchester does a lot of it; we do a lot of it. But it is necessary for public safety. And also, if you notice on the number of occasions where you see street activity, officers doing traffic control in the City here, especially when we were doing our paving program, a lot of them weren't Nashua Police Officers. You saw Hollis, Milford, I started seeing all these cars on Tinker Road, I'm going "what's going on" and you know so there's many different ways they help us.

Also the other thing on the Fire Department we are seeing, you know we say we have a lot of firemen, no we don't. Remember they are on 24/7. They have to cover 3 shifts and like in Ward 5, there's a single engine and some of the places that they have to go in that sector takes them 10 minutes to get there. If your house is burning, believe me 10 minutes is an awfully long time. And for the other trucks to come over, now they leave those other stations empty. When we have a big event, one of the things you don't see is all those

stations get backfilled by Hudson, Merrimack, all these others, Chelmsford, they all come in and sit in our stations until the trucks come back. Because if there is another fire? Your house is going to burn down and it's a complex, very smooth running system, based on all that goes on. And it's not always clear to people. But is essential for the public safety people, especially in Nashua.

POSSIBLE NON-PUBLIC SESSION - None

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was declared closed at 8:56 p.m.

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