



**Finance Committee Meeting
September 25th, 2023 @ 10:30 am
VIA Conference Call & Town Hall
141 Main St, Townsend, DE 19734**

10:30 am Finance Committee Meeting

- I. Call to Order: Approximately 10:30 am.
- II. Opening Ceremonies
 - a. Roll Call: Mayor S. Lobdell, Councilman J. Bangura, Town Manager A. Tantillo, Financial Officer J. Helms, Chief of Police R. Longo, and Town Solicitor L. Hatfield.
 - b. Pledge of Allegiance: All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
 - c. Recognition of Visitors: None.
 - d. Announcements: None.
- III. Adoption of Agenda
 - a. Agenda adopted.
- IV. Discussion regarding Townsend Police Department budget adjustment items
 - a. TM Tantillo reminded the Committee, Council had discussed at several meetings the need to hire additional police officers. Noting, it has been budgeted to hire two additional police officers; one with a hire date of July 1st, 2023 and the other with a hire date of January 1st, 2024. TM Tantillo advised Chief Longo has expressed difficulty of hiring an additional police officer and has made requests in regards to hiring. TM Tantillo noted the Committee has received a sheet prepared by Chief Longo that explains the numbers.
 - b. Chief Longo explained the requests made are to cover expenses for prerequisites of academy training and a pay increase for the candidate with years of prior experience.
 - c. Chief Longo confirmed Dover's Academy is scheduled to begin on October 8th. Chief Longo explained the certified officer he would like to hire needs the training



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for comparative compliance. Noting, he had to perform this training when he transferred from New Jersey.

- d. Chief Longo confirmed he would like to hire both officers in the fall. Chief Longo requested for the first officer \$1,200 for the exams and \$3,000 for a salary increase. Chief Longo requested for the second officer \$2,955 for the academy and to begin their salary in the fall.
- e. Chief Longo clarified the first officer would be sworn in the months of October and November. Then the officer will need to go through training. Chief Longo noted that Seargent McCloskey will be a certified police instructor by the end of October and will therefore be able to train the new officer in comparative compliance. Chief Longo noted none of the applicants from Delaware were certified police officers. Mayor Lobdell noted the savings from not hiring the first officer in July. FO Helms and TM Tantillo confirmed Chief Longo's requests are feasible.
- f. FO Helms expressed concern of paying for the officers to undergo training and leaving the Town once training was completed. Chief Longo advised a new state law has been passed which prevents officers from doing such; noting officers must stay with an agency for approximately four years after graduation day. Chief Longo advised there is the possibility of other agencies recruiting out officers and paying out their dues to the Town. However, Chief's in New Castle County (NCC) have coordinated an agreement to not recruit from other agencies.
- g. Chief Longo advised the Town may have the officers sign a contract upon hire, agreeing that they will stay with the Town for five years after completing training. TS Hatfield confirmed this has been done in other agencies, however she has not seen contracts for more than three years. Chief Longo noted there is a Police Officers Due Process which provides a standard for termination. Chief Longo assured the Committee he does not believe the officers would leave, noting both have ties in Townsend.



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- h.** The Committee briefly discussed the feasibility with all the expenses of hiring both officers in the fall.
 - i.** The Committee agreed further discussions are needed to generate revenue for the Town to limit Tax increases and using cash funds.
 - j.** The Committee discussed various options on hiring two officers and how to present possible budget amendments to Council. Chief Longo will follow up the Committee with confirmations from the academy regarding the Physical . Additionally, will ensure both candidates are interested in moving forward as discussed.
- V.** Discussion regarding possible budget adjustments.
- a.** FO Helms explained the general funds revenue is increased by \$1,100 from the Town Fair Donations as requested by CM Mertz and increased the Town Fair expense by \$1,100.
 - b.** FO Helms explained the \$500 remaining from the grant received for the Town’s solar panel installation will be carried over.
 - c.** FO Helms explained the remaining balances received from grants for the Police Department will be carried over.
 - d.** FO Helms noted the budget adjustment as discussed will be added for Council’s approval. FO explained \$4,200 will be taken from the Police Department’s salary; \$1,800 will go towards training and \$2,400 will go toward the new hire’s physical and psychological exams.
- VI.** Adjourn
- a.** Meeting adjourned at approximately 12:15 pm.