

Name of Committee: Override Study Committee Municipal Subcommittee

Meeting Date: March 12, 2014 Time: 7:30 a.m.

Meeting Location: Town Hall – Selectmen’s Conference Room

Members Present: Alberto Chang, Janet Gelbart, Michael Glover, Ann Connolly Tolkoﬀ

Others Present: Ann Reed (Library), Karen Livingston (Library), Andrew M. Pappastergion (DPW), Chief Paul Ford (Fire Department), Chief Daniel O’Leary (Police Department), Paul Trahan (Brookline Firefighters Local 950), Kevin Stokes (IT)

Topic: Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held March 2, 2014 were approved.

Topic: Continuation of discussion of information provided by Fire Chief Ford. □

Chief Ford reiterated his disagreement with three-person manning. He cited the fact that the NFPA standard is for four-person manning. Reducing the number of responders increases injuries to firefighters and risk to lives and property of Town residents. Structures in Brookline are very close together, increasing the chances of an active fire to spread to more than one property. Newton uses 4-person manning from January to March. The rest of the year, they have four persons per ladder and 3 persons per engine.

Ann Connolly Tolkoﬀ asked about what seems to be overkill on the emergency response to minor accidents. The Chief said firefighters are first responders because they can arrive more quickly than either police or ambulances. Response is based on the information given when the call is made. Brookline has the highest survivability rate for heart attacks and emergencies.

Alberto Chang asked if the Department could reduce staffing and rely on volunteers. The Chief replied it would not work in a community as densely populated as many areas of Brookline. Volunteers would not arrive as quickly. The ability to have the proper number of trained men arrive quickly reduces the danger.

Topic: Discussion of library hours

Janet Gelbart said it was difficult to estimate savings from reducing library hours because it depended on which sites and which hours. Ann Reed, the Assistant Director of the Library, said they have statistics on circulation per hour as a proxy for attendance, but, historically, head counts have been by month only. Daily counts have been available since January, 2014. The staff will compile that information and provide it to the Committee.

The libraries function as community centers, not just as a provider of books. Staff work in coordination with BEEP, social services, recreation, the Senior Center and the Teen Center. They provide English classes for the poorest Brookline residents. Many programs are provided by volunteers.

Janet asked about potential changes at Coolidge Corner in conjunction with development on Waldo Street. The idea was to build a two or three story building with a library on the ground floor and apartments or offices on top. It is not a feasible concept in the short term.

Alberto asked if the library could eliminate overtime by closing on Monday instead of Sunday. State blue laws prohibit requiring staff to work on Sunday without additional compensation. Staff are paid time and a half by contractual agreement. On slower days, staff are still working sorting books, re-shelving, preparing reports, etc. There are 45 full-time and 50 part-time staff. Shifts are rotated so that all staff work some Sundays.

Ann Connolly Tolkoff asked about charges for use of rooms by outside groups. Ann Reed replied the fees were recently raised to \$70 for business and \$35 for nonprofits per four-hour block of time. Users pay on the day of use. Staff will try to get a breakdown of usage for the Committee. It is also available on the library website.

Topic: Discussion of DPW reporting

Andy Pappastergion reviewed the Town's street sweeping schedule. Commercial areas are swept three to four times per week, residential streets every ten days. The number of sweepers has been reduced from five to three, with the latest reduction implemented a year ago. The Town is under a consent decree from the EPA because debris in catch basins end up in storm water discharge. Michael Glover asked for a copy of the consent order.

GPS tracking allows the department to monitor the efficiency of the trucks. Sweepers require a high level of maintenance and are replaced every five years. Maintenance costs have been reduced by slowing the speed the trucks are driven.

Sanitation contracts expire this year. The Town is considering a four-day schedule of trash pickup. Since 60% of holidays are on Monday, the amount of overtime required to reschedule Monday pickups is very high. Other considerations are privatizing curbside pickup, going to automated trucks, etc. Savings should be in the \$200K range once the new contracts are awarded. Recommendations will be made to the Selectmen at the end of April.

Brookline is one of a few Towns that has not outsourced curbside pickup. This is the highest area of injury and workmen's comp costs. There is an ongoing training program to minimize these occurrences. Privatizing would impact staff available for snow removal. It is hard to reverse if outsourcing does not work well because of the need to re-purchase equipment as well as re-hire staff. To be worthwhile, the Town would need to see savings in the \$400K-\$500K range.

The Department is also testing a new pavement management system to prioritize repairs to sidewalks. The Town has special trucks with hot boxes that allow them to fill potholes with an asphalt mix in the cold weather.

Topic: Discussion of police department reporting

Chief O'Leary discussed police details which are governed by Town bylaw and State regulation. The need for details is determined by the level of traffic, speed, configuration of the intersection, etc. Private contractors are billed by the Town if details are needed. Michael asked Ann to review the bylaws, regulations and union contract for further discussion at the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35. □