

**TOWN OF OLD ORCHARD BEACH
TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP
April 13, 2010
TOWN HALL CHAMBERS**

A Town Council Workshop of the Old Orchard Beach Town Council was held on Tuesday, April 13, 2010 in the Town Hall Chamber. The Chair opened the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

Present:

- Chair Sharri MacDonald**
- Vice Chair Michael Tousignant**
- Councilor Laura Bolduc**
- Councilor Robin Dayton**
- Councilor Shawn O'Neill**
- Assistant Town Manager V. Louise Reid**
- Finance Director Jill Eastman**
- Fire Chief John Glass**
- Police Chief Dana Kelley**
- Deputy Police Chief Keith Babin**
- Animal Control Officer Will Watson**

Discussion this evening is on the following budget considerations:

- 20131 – Police Department**
- 20129 – New Police Station**
- 20133 – Communications**
- 20132 – Parking Enforcement**
- 20135 – Animal Control**

Due to the lack of time, the remainder of discussion will be on the next budget consideration agenda on Wednesday, April 21.

- 20138 – Fire/Rescue Department**
- 20139 – Hydrant Rental**
- 20134 – Emergency Management**
- 20137 – Lifeguards**
- 20140 – Street Lights**
- 20136 – Public Safety Complex**

Police Department

The Police Department is charged with the preservation of life and property, through the enforcement of all Federal and State laws and Municipal ordinances and regulations. An intricate part of achieving excellence in law enforcement is the adequate training of police officers, enhanced neighborhood policing and quality customer serviced. The

Administration of the Police Department consists of the Chief of Police, the Deputy Chief and the Administrative Assistant. Administration is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the financial, staffing, training and overall efficiency of the department. The patrol division, commanded by the Lieutenant, is made up of three teams each having a sergeant and a corporal. Of the eighteen sworn officers in the Department, thirteen are assigned to the Patrol Division. The criminal investigation division is comprised of a sergeant and one detective. The support services division is responsible for all functions that support the Patrol and Criminal Investigation including the Court Officer and the Animal Control Officer.

A proposed reduction of the Town's summer police force resulted in a great deal of discussion by Chief Dana Kelley who asked that those cuts be reconsidered. The Police Department had proposed a part-time staff budget of about \$193,000 for the coming year to cover summer reserve officers, one custodian, one crossing guard and one summer office employee. The Town Manager had proposed cutting summer police reserve staff and cutting this budget line by about \$39,000 and although he made these cuts reluctantly, he did recognize that it would clearly reduce services. Chief Kelley indicated that the department typically hires 35 to 40 people with about 20 of them working 40 hours weeks. If the department doesn't hire enough people there would not be enough coverage at the end of the summer and some summer patrol officers quit or go back to school. A large part of this budget pays for the training and wages of summer police officers who earn on an average of \$11.50 an hour. The summer force, which includes cruiser and bicycle patrol, is staff 24 hours a day and covers 1,650 eight hour shifts. It costs approximately \$5,000 for each recruit to be trained. The Chief presented and concise report on costs and assignments of officers. The Chief indicated that the summer police force is not limited to downtown patrols and officers like to have a presence in Ocean Park and other neighborhoods. Under the suggested cuts training and orientation for new officers would be reduced . It should be understood that out of this budget also comes the janitor, the crossing guard and also a part time office clerical help. Chair MacDonald indicated that she had heard complaints about summer officers opening people's coolers at the beach to which the Chief indicated that officers are trained not to open coolers unless there is a problem such as if someone puts a bottle of beer in the cooler and the officer has seen this. He recalled the problems from the past with drinking on the beach and this exercise is necessary and required to be sure that the State Law of no drinking on the beach is maintained. He indicated the beach was a "disaster" for years until the department started patrolling it. He also indicated that he has offered the Chamber of Commerce to meet with business owners on this issue. Resident Kim Hatch said she spent a lot of time at the beach in the summer and spoke strongly against the budget cuts. She indicated she feels a lot safer when she sees the officers in the yellow shirts. Councilor Dayton indicated that she was concerned how the Ballpark would be patrolled if events start being held there, to which the Chief replied that he would do his best. It was suggested that those putting on the events during the summer such as Ocean Park, OOB365 and other groups might have to hire their own security personnel. Councilor Michael Tousignant said there are costs such as increases in health and insurance and union contracts that the Town could not control and the budget process was challenging at best. He said there was about \$112,000 worth of costs that the Town had no control over for 20 employees. Councilor Shawn

O'Neill said he did not support cutting 10 summer patrol officers and suggested the Town cut five. Since the Council cannot vote on issues during a workshop, it was discussed and agreed that perhaps the budget would be \$154,800 for part time police department employees which would cover about 28 summer reserve officers. Councilor Dayton again indicated she did not feel this was enough for the demands of police presence.

Dispatch

The subject of possible dispatching out to another community was discussed. This had thoroughly been discussed in previous years with a possible cost savings of \$200,000. Vice Chair Tousignant indicated that this would be a consideration for another budget year. The question was asked if the equipment could be used at another location who took on our dispatching operations and the answer was it could be used. The question of long service severance was discussed and that did not seem to be an issue as it had in previous years.

Parking Enforcement

This is a division of the Police Department that operates seasonally and is responsible for installation and maintenance of all parking meters and pay stations. They are also responsible for enforcement of the municipalities parking regulations and the division consists of eleven seasonal employees including one supervisor. Discussion continued on the use of a parking enforcement individual be assigned to the Milliken Street parking lot this summer to make sure that the parking machines are working and control is established in the parking lot. One of the purchased parking machines does not work and having an individual to solve any issues with the other is vital to business as usual. Some discussion was also spent on suggested raising of prices for parking at Memorial Park, Milliken Street Parking Lot and the possible addition of parking meters within the Town. The Assistant Town Manager was asked to determine costs at other municipalities for meters, lots and leased parking spaces.

Animal Control

The Animal Control Officer is assigned to, and supervised by, the Police Department. All personnel related costs for this position are in the Police Department Budget and the budget is strictly for the shelter. The responsibilities of the ACO include enforcement of all animal related ordinances pertaining to the Town of Old Orchard Beach, patrol looking for stray animals, act as liaison to the planning and code department and assist the Town Clerk with dog licensing.

Several citizens were present to discuss the possible contract with one of the two local shelters. The decision to recommend having a contract was arrived at based on several factors. The number one consideration was the proper care of any animal housed in our facility. Based on the condition of the Lewiston facility and the fact that both the Kennebunk and Westbrook welfare societies are equipped and staffed on a fulltime basis,

that the animals would be better served by being placed in one of these two facilities, as opposed to ours. Currently, our police officers are responsible for watering, feeding, the release of the animals to their owners and making sure that the animals in our facility are otherwise cared for. The problem with this is that, they, (police officers) aren't always available to make regular checks on any animal housed in the facility. They may be assigned to calls or situations that do not allow them to respond to the kennel as often as they should. Our ACO only works eight hours a day, five days a week, which leaves the officers dealing with it most of the time. Again, the main concern is the welfare of the animals and the concern is that we may not always be in a position to meet that objective. The decision by the Police Department was that any animal not claimed by their owners in a timely manner are removed to a private kennel in Lisbon. The fee is \$25.00 for cats and \$75.00 for dogs. There is an additional charge of \$25.00 if they come to pick them up. Usually our ACO delivers them to the facility. The policy now requires that we keep cats for three days and dogs for seven before they are removed to Lisbon. This gives ample opportunity for owners to claim their pets. The ACO said that we should expect an increase in the number of abandoned pets that we will be dealing with. Typically in this kind of an economic climate, we can expect more abandoned animals as the owners cannot afford to feed them. This will result in a cost increase that will be placed upon the community. Another downside to not having a contract with one of the local kennels is that they will not accept any animals from Old Orchard residents who wish to place them up for adoption. Again, this results in animals being abandoned. There are also maintenance issues with the facility that will require immediate attention and could be costly. There is no septic system in the building which results in water being discharged directly onto the ground outside the facility and the cost of a septic system could cost ten thousand dollars or more. A contract with either Kennebunk or Westbrook AWS is based on a per capita formula and would cost Old Orchard Beach roughly twelve thousand dollars. The estimated savings in closing the kennel would be about four thousand dollars. The cost of sending our animals to Lisbon is unknown at this time but could be as much as five thousand dollars. Based on these estimates not including needed repairs, it doesn't appear that contracting with one of these two facilities would result in a significant increase in our animal control budget. Again, and more importantly, we need to consider the safety and comfort of the animals we house and it is strongly believed they would be better served by either Kennebunk or Westbrook. There are currently two plumbing fixtures and at least one floor drain that are connected to waste line that discharges directly onto the ground, without pre-treatment. This constitutes a violation the State of Maine Subsurface Waste Water Requirements. Council expressed appreciation to the Community Animal Committee and the Feline Committee, appreciation for their services to the community. Those attending strongly urged the Council to consider securing a contract with an outside shelter. Councilor O'Neill asked how much was spent on the Shelter so far this year and the amount if approximately \$6,500. This amount pays for electricity, water, phone, repairs as well as veterinary costs including costs to send animals to Lisbon, dog and cat food and litter. It does not cover the cost of the salary or benefits of the Animal Control Officer who also serves as a Police Officer. Will Watson, the Animal Control Officer, indicated that in 2008 budget year he handled 43 dogs, 15 cats, 1 bird and 1 python; in the 2009 budget years he handled 53 dogs, 25 cats, 1 rabbit and 1 python. These numbers are only the animals that went to the kennel; they do not take into account any animal that was

found and quickly returned to the owner or that were dead or had to be euthanized because of injury.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

**V. Louise Reid
Town Council Secretary**

I, V. Louise Reid, Secretary to the Town Council of Old Orchard Beach, do hereby certify that the foregoing document consisting of five (5) pages is a true copy of the original Minutes of the Town Council Workshop held on April 13, 2010.

V. Louise Reid