Warrant Committee  
January 15, 2020  
Blute Conference Room

Present: George A. Ashur (Chair), Rosemary C. Bouzane, Jonathan Boynton, Erin G. Bradley, Kathleen A. Cassis, Brian G. Foster, Christine J. Gimber, Christopher R. Hart, Douglas B. Scibek, John E. Driscoll, Scott D. Johnson.

Absent: Brian Beaupre (Secretary), Clinton Graham, Susannah H. Hegarty, Gwendolen Long,  

Guests: John King (Chief of the Milton Police Department), Chase Berkeley (Direct of Department of Public Works).

Meeting called to order at 7:04 p.m.

1.) Chairman remarks:  
7:04 p.m. Chair Ashur commented that the preparation for Annual Town Meeting is in full swing and this evening Chief King and Mr. Berkeley will be presenting their respective budgets.

2.) Warrant Discussions:  

7:04 p.m. Scott D. Johnson enters.

a.) 7:05 p.m. Chief King addressed the Warrant Committee. Chief King explained the Milton Police Department handles just under 14,000 incidents a year. The said incidents are wide ranging for the Milton Police; traffic issues and substance abuse being the two most common serious issues. In the last year there was an increase in homelessness issues in the Milton. Chief King noted that the Police are often called on issues that are not necessarily police related, however, residents don’t know where else to turn. There is a mental health specialist and a domestic violence advocate at the Milton Police headquarters, (their salaries where paid through grants). Chief King noted that 92% of the Milton Police Department budget is made up of salaries, leaving just 8% to other expenses. Therefore, there is little that can be done to shave costs from the budget. The only way to reduce costs is to reduce staff or the number officers on the street.

There was some discussion between the Warrant Committee and Chief King regarding the Police Department deferring a new police car; and the cost of repairing older patrol cars. Chief King explained that police vehicle maintenance falls under the DPW budget. However, the MPD is deferring the new patrol car purchase again this year due to budget restraints. Chief King commented that DPW Director Chase Berkeley could speak into the cost of vehicle repair vs. purchase of a new patrol car. However, when a patrol car is being repaired that is one less patrol car on the streets. Chief King also
commented that the police department is the only departments that has cars on the streets running 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Within two years a patrol car could have well over 200,000 miles. Currently there is one car that should be put into reserve and taken out of patrol car line, however there is not a budget to replace the car.

The Warrant Committee asked about the composition regarding the police department. Chief King noted there are 56 sworn members of the department, 55 funded by the Town, one employee is funded by the School Department. 13 Officers are supervisor ranks, 2 administrator, 41 patrolmen, 7 cadets and 4 dispatchers (these dispatchers handle both police and fire calls), and a few administrative personnel.

The Warrant Committee asked Chief King about the cadet recruitment. Chief King explained there are two cadet programs: one is police cadets whom are responsible for dispatch and work around the station. The Milton Police Department runs their own exam for this, and by law cadets age out of the program by 25 years of age. Some of the cadets will become police officers dependent on: exams results, timing of open positions and other factors. The other state run civil service, if an opening in the Milton Police Department occurs then Chief King has to abide by the Civil Service laws.

The Warrant Committee asked if there were enough police officers if an event happened, such as an active shooter, would the police have enough resources to respond. Chief King felt confident that MPD is equipped and that there are procedures to get help from neighboring communities if needed.

The Warrant Committee asked about racial diversity among the MPD, and if there was anything the MPD was doing to increase the diversity. Chief King discussed again the civil service laws and noted that the MPD cannot requests candidates based on race or gender. Chief King noted the only way to circumvent the civil service list is with the cadet program, one out of three hires can be a cadet from the Milton station. However, Chief King noted that last year there was a cadet whom Milton wanted to hire and the cadet instead joined the Boston Police Department. Chief King commented this happens frequently.

The Warrant Committee asked about the recently added parking enforcement officer and if this position was helping the Town with revenue. Chief King noted that it has been approximately six months since the parking enforcement officer was hired and he is on track to at least net his salary if not exceed it.

The Warrant Committee inquired about overtime expense with the MPD. Chief King commented that fiscal year 2019 had more vacancies and expects fiscal year 2020 overtime to be reduced. The Warrant Committee asked if the overtime could be distributed to the lower salary officers. Chief King noted that the Police Union controls the overtime assignments, the Union uses a rotating list. However, Chief King did say he hires for the position that is needed, meaning he would not have a lieutenant to fill in for a patrolman.

The Warrant Committee asked about police details and who pays that expense. Chief noted that the money comes from the company whom requests the detail and the Town receives ten percent of the fee, which goes into the general fund.
b.) 7:41 p.m. Chase Berkeley, Milton’s Director of the Department of Public Works, addressed the Warrant Committee. Mr. Berkeley noted that the DPW is comprised of several different budgets including three Enterprise Funds. Mr. Berkeley further explained he planned on discussing the budgets that relate to the tax levy and will come back at a later date to discuss the Enterprise Fund that effects water, sewer and stormwater rates. Mr. Berkeley discussed the two budgets that were presented to the Warrant Committee, one with a level budget with contractual increases in costs, and the second is a minus 3 percent decrease from FY2020 plus contractual costs. The personnel salary and wages collective barging negotiations that expired in FY19 are still ongoing. The submitted budget is a level funded wage, and there will be a set aside article to cover the results of the collective bargaining agreement once they are ratified. The DPW is 41 full time employees, one shift Monday through Friday. Besides salary and wages the budget is broken down into: DPW vehicle maintenance, snow and ice and solid waste.

Mr. Berkeley discussed the DPW general budget which includes engineering, and the Conservation Commission costs. The impact to a minus 3 percent cut would result a reduction in “payment to contractors line” which is generally used to repair roads or preventative tree trimming.

Mr. Berkeley discussed the effects of deferring a purchase of a new police car. By putting off a new car purchase, it ages the entire fleet of police cars. Additionally, that means none of the cars would be on a warranty and resulting in an additional car that needs to be repaired.

Mr. Berkeley discussed the snow and ice budget and commented that a five year average is approximately $715,000.00 annually, however line budget is only $160,000.00. Snow and ice is the only budget item the Commonwealth will allow you to defer the deficit in a year to the following year. This allows the DPW to address either the surplus or total deficit in the Spring and either reduce the DPW budget or request other departments to cover the costs.

Mr. Berkeley recapped the solid waste contract results from fiscal year 2019 to fiscal year 2020. There was a significant jump in costs as a result of the increasing cost of solid waste. However going forward it will only increase approximately 2-3 percent cost of living. The contract is through fiscal year 2022.

There were some discussions between the Warrant Committee and Mr. Berkeley on the cost of recycle market and disposal of solid waste. There was also discussion regarding the DPW vehicles and equipment.

The Warrant Committee asked if Mr. Berkeley could predict DPW needs three years out, what would those needs be. Mr. Berkeley noted that DPW large expenses come in the form of Capital requests and noted that the Traffic Mitigation Committee has come up with some new ideas that may involve traffic lights. Additionally, DPW tries to maintain roads as well as repair roads that are below acceptable quality. Mr. Berkeley explained that most roads are repaired after utility work is done on the road so that new roads are not being ripped up. Mr. Berkeley commented that the DPW was tried to explore new technology to stretch the budget, however a large portion of street repair is making sidewalks complaint with ADA regulations.
The Warrant Committee asked for a list of the equipment the Copeland Foundation gifted the DPW. Mr. Berkeley confirmed he will research and provide the Warrant Committee with that information.

c.) 7:59 p.m. Chair Ashur confirmed the next Warrant Committee meeting is January 27th. At that meeting Chair Ashur will report back to the Warrant Committee his discussion with the Select Board meeting regarding the PILOT challenges. Chair Ashur asked the Warrant Committee members thoughts about inviting the President of Milton Academy, Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital and Curry College to a Warrant Committee meeting to discuss PILOT contributions. There was discussion regarding the best approach for the Warrant Committee to get involved with the PILOT Committee and to make sure any further discussions with these non for profit institutions is productive. The Warrant Committee members asked if Town Counsel had determine if there are any legal fees that maybe applied to these non for profit institutions.

d.) 8:08 p.m. Chair Ashur noted that the next meeting Chief Grant will present the Milton Fire Department Budget and the School Building Committee will present a power point on their research.

e.) 8:10 p.m. On a motion from Kathleen A. Cassis seconded by John E. Driscoll, the minutes from January 6th, 2020 were approved unanimously.

f.) 8:11 p.m. New business. The Warrant Committee discussed a letter that a Warrant Committee member had composed (and did not send) to the Milton Times, regarding the non for profit PILOT contributions. The letter was to inform the general public the issues the PILOT Committee is facing. After some discussion it was decided that to hold off on sending the letter until Chair Ashur attends the Select Board meeting and the Warrant Committee hears back from Town Counsel.

The next Warrant Committee meeting will be Monday January 27th, 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall.

8:21 p.m. On a motion from Christopher R. Hart, seconded by John E. Driscoll, the meeting is adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lynne Hoye
Warrant Committee Clerk