

Town of Belmont
Public Safety Subcommittee of Warrant Committee
Minutes of Meeting
April 6, 2023 – 8:30 a.m. (via ZOOM)

Present: Lynn Peterson Read, Conor McEachern, Tom Caputo

In accordance with the duly posted Notice of the Subcommittee, Lynn Read called the meeting via the ZOOM platform to order at or around 8:30 a.m. on March 30, 2023. Ms. Helgen was absent.

The primary purpose of the meeting was to meet with the Police Chief, James MacIsaac, and members of his staff to discuss the activities of the Police Department for the previous year and to discuss the budget request for the Police Department for Fiscal Year 2024.

In addition to Chief MacIsaac, Assistant Chief Mark Hurley attended the meeting by Zoom.

Chief MacIsaac provided the meeting with an overview of activities and staffing challenges faced by the Police Department during the past year. Vacancies and the inability fill them in a timely way from the Civil Service lists, as well as long-term leaves of absence have resulted in forced overtime and double shifts as a regular occurrence. The budget for Overtime in FY23 has been exceeded by 36% so far. The Department has recently added three officers, including a lateral transfer from Boston, but anticipates 2 retirements and a total of four vacancies for FY24.

The Chief also discussed the contracted Social Worker funded through a grant from the state Department of Mental Health. The Social Worker helps de-escalate calls with people in crisis and helps divert these incidents from hospital emergency rooms and arrests that would consume Patrol Officer time. The Social Worker does a high volume of evaluations and has had a positive impact on the Department and on Town residents.

Members of the Subcommittee had several questions of the Chief and Assistant Chief in areas including Department accreditation, the positive impact of the renovated Headquarters, and trends in the numbers of calls for service. Also discussed were the Department's substantial IT needs, including more integration with Town IT services and staffing.

There being no further business to come before the meeting on Motion by Member Conor McEachern and seconded by Tom Caputo, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:19 a.m.

The above minutes were approved at the open meeting held on April 12, 2023.

Lynn Peterson Read
Member of Public Safety Subcommittee