



TOWN OF RANDOLPH, VERMONT

Office of the Town Manager

To: The members of the Randolph Selectboard

CC: Chief Scott Clouatre, Randolph Police Department

From: Trevor M. Lashua, Town Manager

Date: March 29, 2023

Re: Revised FY24 Police District budget – for May 9, 2023 Special Election

The revised FY24 Police District budget for voters to consider in May is \$524,102, a reduction of \$247,285 from the budget voters did not pass at Town Meeting.

Level of Service

This budget does not provide a level of service comparable to the level of service experienced in the past.

Reductions are made as broadly as possible across categories, however there is no significant way to bend the cost curve without a further reduction in the number of officers – which, in turn, is a further reduction in the hours of coverage. The revised FY24 budget reduces the number of full-time officers from four to three, while adding 1,100 hours of part-time or special officer capacity to attempt to make up some of lost hours.

Until positions are filled and staffing can be tested and amended in a “live” situation, the ultimate level of coverage is simply an estimate. At this time, the estimated window for coverage is between 80 and 100 hours per week at full staff.

Revenue

The table, pulled from the revised FY24 budget, shows both the total amount and the categories of revenue:

| | | |
|---|----|---------|
| TOTAL REVISED POLICE DISTRICT FY24 BUDGET | \$ | 524,102 |
| PROJECTED NON-TAX REVENUE | \$ | 99,808 |
| GENERAL FUND PAYMENT FOR SERVICE | \$ | 100,000 |
| TO BE RAISED BY TAXES, POLICE DISTRICT | \$ | 324,294 |

The amount of revenue projected from non-property tax sources is lowered to \$99,808, from \$171,900 in the version presented in March.

The high-utilization organization payments and ARPA Funds lines remain, but neither is shown as a revenue source at this time. The biggest addition (+\$72,808) is funding from a Federal COPS grant,

which would be used for hiring the third officer and offset 75% of the position’s pay and benefits for FY24. The COPS grant is explained in more detail in the expenditure section.

Ordinance fines are shown at a modest \$5,000; this is revenue derived from speed enforcement activities, primarily. Other smaller changes include charges for police reports (\$500) and fingerprinting services (\$1,000; for volunteers, pre-employment purposes, and so on).

The \$100,000 approved in the General Fund receives a new, more accurate name (“General Fund Payment for Service”) to reflect both the funding’s origin and proposed use. Prior versions of the budget had referred to the amount more colloquially as a, “transfer,” rather than as a payment for service.

What remains, once those other revenues are subtracted from the total proposed budget, is \$324,294 to be raised by property taxes within the Police District. This is a reduction of \$175,193 from March.

The *estimated* tax rate impact is a decrease from FY23 to FY24; the annual and monthly impacts are shown in the table:

| | <i>Property Owner Impact (Estimated) [2]</i> | | |
|-----------------------|--|------------------|------------------|
| <i>Property Value</i> | <u>\$200,000</u> | <u>\$300,000</u> | <u>\$400,000</u> |
| <i>Annual Change</i> | \$ (6.63) | \$ (9.94) | \$ (13.25) |
| <i>Monthly Change</i> | \$ (0.55) | \$ (0.83) | \$ (1.10) |

For comparison’s sake, the approved budget for the current fiscal year called for \$328,485 to be raised from Police District property taxes.

Expenditures

The table shows the proposed changes by category; the majority of the decrease is in personnel costs, reflecting the reduction in number of full-time officers (captured in the Police Administrative category):

| | <u>FY24 Town Meeting</u> | <u>FY24 Revised (v.02)</u> | <u>(Reduction)</u> |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| <i>Police Administrative</i> | \$ 630,987 | \$ 425,852 | \$ (205,135) |
| <i>Police Operating</i> | \$ 135,400 | \$ 98,250 | \$ (37,150) |
| <i>Other Police Expenses</i> | \$ 5,000 | \$ - | \$ (5,000) |
| <i>TOTAL</i> | \$ 771,387 | \$ 524,102 | \$ (247,285) |

To retain one of the full-time officer slots, the proposal is to seek COPS grant funding for the third officer’s position. Applications are due in May, and if awarded, the grant would help cover a maximum of \$125,000 for pay and benefits over three years. The FY24 revised budget proposes to front-load and then phase-in those costs, with the grant-funded share of the officer reduced (to 40% in FY25 and 15% in FY26) and the Town-funded share increased (to 60% in FY25 and to 85% in FY26).

There are multiple smaller adjustments within the Police Operating portion of the revised budget, with some lines increasing and others decreasing. Operating expenses have been halved (-\$7,500), the line for contract services reduced by \$10,500, and dispatch reduced by \$15,000 (based on pricing;

Barre City will be the Town's services provider). Those reductions are offset, in part, by increases for janitorial services (+\$4,100; based on recent bid results and a change in level of service) and technology (+\$2,500; for body and taser camera programming and video storage).

The proposed transfer to the Police Equipment Reserve is zeroed out. ARPA funds have been used for initial vehicle and equipment purchases. The process of saving for vehicle and equipment replacement should begin sooner than later, and will likely require more aggressive funding in future fiscal years to catch-up.