

BOARD OF TOWN COMMISSIONERS

BUDGET WORK SESSION

May 4, 2023 4:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Commissioner Kevin M. Bianca, Chair
Commissioner Mary F. Chance
Commissioner Paula S. Etting
Commissioner Erin S. Hughes
Commissioner Donna L. Kahoe
Edward Hopkins, Town Administrator
Michael Krantz, Director of Administration
Lisa Moody, Director of Finance
Charles Moore, Chief of Police
Angela Robertson, Economic Development Coordinator
David Anderson, Media & Public Relations Specialist

OTHERS: Joan Suitt, Recording Secretary

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Chair Bianca called for approval of the agenda.

Commissioner Kahoe moved and Commissioner Etting seconded the motion to approve the agenda as written. The agenda was approved by the Commissioners.

BUDGET:

Presentation:

Bel Air Alliance

Jennifer Falcone, Executive Director and Ben Meyer, President of Bel Air Downtown Alliance appreciates the opportunity for the presentation.

Ms. Falcone advised Downtown Alliance has requested \$20,000 from the Town of Bel Air in years past and awarded \$13,500 until last fiscal year when \$20,000 was received. Ms. Falcone thanked the Commissioners for the funds.

Ms. Falcone stated our partnership with the Town of Bel Air is not just working together on projects but includes in-kind contributions as well as financial contributions. Ms. Falcone reviewed several projects to show the strong partnership. The Downtown Alliance and the Town of Bel Air partner very well together and Ms. Falcone wants to continue supporting each other in joint efforts.

Ms. Falcone notified for FY24, the Bel Air Downtown Alliance is requesting \$20,000 for marketing and \$5,000 for the Bel Air Christmas Parade. Ms. Falcone reminded the 2022 parade was the most successful to date.

There were no further questions from the Commissioners. Chair Bianca thanked Ms. Falcone and Mr. Meyer for the wonderful work of the Downtown Alliance.

Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company

Chief Scott Panowitz, Assistant Chief William Snyder, and Vice President Bill Wynne from the Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company were present for the presentation. Information on the presentation was distributed.

Mr. Wynne advised the Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company's budget runs October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023. Mr. Wynne notified there are a lot of government regulations that control our budget.

Mr. Snyder stated the fire company is an all-volunteer service, however we attempt to meet career standards. Mr. Snyder advised there is a constant increase of standards from the federal, state and local governments that places additional costs.

Mr. Snyder informed:

- 20-25% of their service is in the Town of Bel Air.
The Town will be bringing in new businesses and residential that will directly impact the fire company.
- Harford County is increasing and more people are coming into the Town.

Mr. Panowitz reported the Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company made the decision to discontinue paid staff. During a Harford County budget meeting, it was learned the Fire Departments using the Foundation would no longer be available to them. Harford County has one of better employment packages and will first staff the Departments that were using the Foundation.

Mr. Panowitz reviewed:

- Renovation of Hickory Avenue station.
- Replacement of ladder truck.
- Replacement of gear - mandatory every 10 years.
- Upgrade of protective body vests.
- Electric vehicle extinguishment equipment.
- Increase in fuel cost.

Mr. Wynne recommended the Town approach builders of new construction to contribute to the Fire Department for gear.

Commissioner Kahoe inquired about the cancer related rules on cleaning gear. Mr. Panowitz explained the guidelines being implemented to wash down gear exposed to a fire.

Commissioner Hughes asked about the incentive program. Mr. Panowitz advised every 13, 8 hour shifts is \$1,000 that helps with response time and in-house duty.

Mr. Panowitz notified the Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company is requesting \$192,704 for FY24 which is an increase of \$25,136.

Chair Bianca thanked the representatives from the Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company for their presentation.

Continued Detailed Review of General Fund Expenditures:

Police Department

Chief Moore advised there have been a lot of challenges over the last years on accountability and our grant writer has helped to keep us afloat. Chief reviewed the following line items:

Salaries Non-Sworn - \$732,376

- Hired part-time Records Information Coordinator (grant funds) who helps with Public Information Act requests and audits body camera footage.
- LEAD Officer (retired) Chip Carter - salary \$66,000 (\$35,000 is paid through a grant). Will continue applying for grant funds.

Salaries Sworn - \$2,656,630

- Request is 1% less - staff have been promoted, one vacancy recently filled, one lateral hired.

Overtime Pay - \$219,869

- Budget request higher for the merit increase.

Special Events - \$50,400

- Receive reimbursement for:
 1. St. Patrick's Day
 2. Explorer events (grant funds)
 3. Arts Festival

The remainder of the events the Town supports.

Ms. Moody, Director of Finance, advised the Town is working on a MOU for special events that are non-reimbursable. This will become comparable and gradually work up to 50% reimbursement.

Holiday Bonus - \$5,675

- Budget request higher, reflects increase for working certain holidays.

Shift Differential - \$58,600

- Budget request higher, reflects increase for working 11-7 shift and 3-11 shift.

Training - #12,950

- Less training for FY24.

Gasoline - \$90,000

- In partnership with Harford County Consortium for stable costs.

Supplies - \$16,652

- Increase of \$1,000

Firearms Supplies - \$15,000

- Decreased \$1,000

K-9 Supplies - \$9,500 (new line item)

- Used for food, veterinarian bills, and related supplies for K9 Nacho.
- Reimbursement for care of retired K9 Blitz.

Uniforms - \$61,838 - increase

- Sworn and Non-Sworn uniforms
- 2 additional officers
- Body Worn Cameras

Vests - \$5,338 - will apply for grant funds

- 4 replacements - rotational (5 years) and includes internal carrier and trauma plates.
- 5 replacements - external carriers (2 year shelf life)

Patrol Vehicle Accessories - \$64,500

- 3 marked vehicle replacements (up 34%)

Vehicle Maintenance - \$34,500

- Maintenance costs increasing.

Vehicle Capital - \$150,000

- 3 vehicle replacements

Chair Bianca inquired what is planned if grant funds are not found for the LEAD Officer. Chief Moore stated Chip Carter provides a lot of value to those involved in the LEAD Program and takes stress off the patrol.

Chief Moore informed 37% of time is used for the LEAD Program and the rest is Redlight Camera and Parking Enforcement.

Red Light Camera Program

Ms. Moody notified there is no change in the request. Howard County will re-bid the contract currently with American Traffic Solutions, Inc. (ATS). The one-year period, beginning January 1, 2023 was the last of seven renewal periods.

Costs of the Red Light Camera Program - \$231,975

- ATS (camera operations) - \$2,560.25 per month, 4 cameras for 12 months, equates to \$122,892.
- ATS (back office processing) - citation processing is \$11.50 per approved citation, averages 730 per month, equates to \$100,740.
- Howard County (RAEC) facility cost is \$655 per month for 4 cameras, equates to \$7,820.
- Phone line - estimated cost \$523.

Chair Bianca inquired if the Town has explored additional red light cameras. Chief Moore informed the Town did try and when State Highway measured the number of accidents there was not enough.

Economic Development Department

Ms. Robertson, Economic Development Coordinator reviewed the following line items:

Travel, Training, & Membership - \$12,500

- Used by 4 staff members to attend meetings, seminars, trade shows and conferences. Also includes work during legislation session, Arts and Economic Development Days in Annapolis and staff memberships in different organizations.

Ms. Robertson reported increased costs in hotel, mileage and class fees. There are now opportunities to take classes online that were not available before COVID. Ms. Robertson informed this line item has been reduced \$800.00 for FY24.

Postage - \$300

- Covers postage requirements and cost reduced by \$100.00.

Business of the Year/Archer Bull Award - \$6,000
(new name - Bel Air Annual Award)

- Supports invitations, program production, catering, facility rental and purchase of awards. Line item reduced \$600.00 for FY24.

Marketing & Public Relations - \$40,300

- Used to market the Town - events, visual marketing, trade shows, photography services, video production, brochures, Harford Night, MML, Visitor Center literature, and much more.

Main Street Marketing - \$15,000

- Used to supplement Bel Air Downtown Alliance's marketing efforts. The Downtown Alliance promotes downtown businesses, events and attractions throughout the year.

Cultural Arts

Marketing/Events - \$5,350

- Used for planning and marketing events held by the Cultural Arts Commission as well as sponsorships to the performing and visual arts programming at the Armory. The line item increased \$1,000 as more sponsorships are being requested by non-profits.

Public Art - \$3,000

- Used for public art projects commissioned by Cultural Arts as well as projects sponsored through their public art sponsorship program. Business owners can request funds for art to be placed on their building. Decreased \$1,000 for FY24.

The Commissioners had no further questions.

Commissioner Kahoe recognized Ms. Robertson for an outstanding job in guiding the Cultural Arts Commission on spending and her work during Harford County Arts Week.

Ms. Robertson informed Arts Across Harford will be two weeks this year.

Christmas Parade

Ms. Moody will contact the Downtown Alliance to clarify financial reporting.

Discussion by Commissioners on Budget Issues

Ms. Moody informed items 1-7 on the Outstanding List is informational. Items 8 and 9 need a decision by the Work/Budget Session on May 9th. Ms. Moody will add the follow-up on the Christmas Parade to the list.

ADJOURNMENT:

With no further comments, the meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

APPROVED: May 15, 2023

Signature on file
Kevin M. Bianca, Chair
Board of Town Commissioners

Signature on file
Michael L. Krantz, Town Clerk