

**SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
(RE: FY2010 BUDGET)**

April 20, 2009

5:30 PM

Mayor Guinta called the meeting to order.

Mayor Guinta called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Alderman Gatsas.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen M. Roy, Gatsas, Sullivan, J. Roy, Osborne, Pinard, O'Neil,
Lopez, Shea, DeVries, Smith, Murphy
Alderman Ouellette arrived late.

Absent: Alderman Garrity

Mayor Guinta advised that the purpose of the meeting shall be discussions relating to the proposed FY2010 budget for the Fire Department and the Police Department.

Alderman J. Roy stated if I may, Your Honor, I would like to apologize to you for the comments I made last time. I got a little animated about one subject. At the same time I would like to thank you for your patience for letting me speak and say what I had to say. So please accept my apology.

Mayor Guinta stated thank you, Alderman. I very much appreciate that sentiment and as I said at that last meeting, for future meetings going forward when clarification from me is required to this Board I will certainly give it in advance but I appreciate your sentiments and look forward to continue working with you.

Mr. James Burkush, Fire Chief, stated good evening.

Mayor Guinta asked is the pleasure of the Board for the Chief to give a quick presentation and then questions?

Mr. Burkush stated we submitted to you our full complement staffing budget of \$19,683,530 that would allow full complement. We currently have seven firefighter vacancies and one vacancy in administration. We received from the Mayor's proposal \$18,542,114. That's a difference of \$1,141,000. Those were the numbers we received from Finance or the Mayor's Office, those two different numbers. The furloughs that were discussed in a separate document were listed at about \$480,000 for possible savings in furloughs. That is basically where we are at right now.

Alderman M. Roy stated there is still ongoing discussion regarding the furlough and the furlough program. Could you touch upon what would happen in the department if furloughs were not to happen?

Mr. Burkush replied our furlough number is slightly different from the furlough number that we got from the Mayor. We estimate the furloughs to be a savings of approximately \$400,000 not \$480,000 as listed in a separate document. To accomplish furloughs, by my estimation we would have to have five firefighters out per shift during the budget year. Obviously we wouldn't be able to fill those positions so that would result in apparatus being placed out of service. At five currently it would be approximately one engine and one ladder company out for the budget year.

Alderman M. Roy asked out of how many ladder companies?

Mr. Burkush responded currently we are running five ladders and eleven engines. Five is a reduction of about 10% of our firefighting force on duty. Currently we run 50 firefighters on duty and that would drop us down to 45 firefighters on duty, to accomplish the furlough numbers. In addition, we would probably also experience issues with overtime as well being down that low a level of firefighters.

Alderman J. Roy asked just to follow up so that I am clear, did you say that would be a reduction of five firefighters if there were furloughs?

Mr. Burkush responded that is correct.

Alderman J. Roy stated that is a double company close, correct?

Mr. Burkush stated that is correct.

Alderman J. Roy stated that is a station that has a pump and a ladder truck in it that is closed. It may not be one station. It may be in two stations. The reality is that those two pieces of apparatus will be off for the entire year, correct?

Mr. Burkush stated that is correct, and obviously it would be done at different stations throughout the City because you would be furloughing in theory. Today it would be one station, tomorrow it would be the other station, so it would be rotating throughout the City.

Alderman J. Roy stated first of all in your budget I ran some numbers and correct me if I am wrong, 96% of your budget is wages, overtime and fixed costs?

Mr. Burkush stated that is correct.

Alderman J. Roy stated meaning gasoline, gas to heat the places, electricity to light the places. I'm on target there. Now, severance, I don't see it listed in your budget.

Mr. Burkush stated no, we don't have a separate line item for severance.

Alderman J. Roy stated the reason I bring it up is because last year we actually developed a severance line item in our budget. Have you availed yourself of the use of that?

Mr. Burkush stated we did make a request and we have not received an answer. That is something that was going to be discussed at the end of the budget year, is what we were told.

Alderman J. Roy stated we still have work to do on that. There is no severance in here. The reality is that you have seven firefighters a year that retire?

Mr. Burkush replied we estimate six, seven or eight per year. That is correct.

Alderman J. Roy stated for argument's sake we will say seven. The average is \$30,000 and when we say severance we should probably clarify that is it previously earned unpaid benefits. Would that be a good way to put it?

Mr. Burkush replied that is correct. The number would be higher; it would be closer to probably \$35,000 or \$40,000.

Alderman J. Roy asked so you are talking about \$250,000 a year?

Mr. Burkush replied conservatively.

Alderman J. Roy stated that isn't reflected in this year's budget or last year's budget so you have got to make it up somehow and you are leaving positions open for that, right?

Mr. Burkush responded that is correct.

Alderman J. Roy stated so it is affecting services. One other thing, while you are here, I noticed in the OYS budget the Juvenile Fire Setter program has been eliminated in their budget. You don't have that in your budget, is that correct?

Mr. Burkush stated that is correct.

Alderman J. Roy asked is that program a successful program?

Mr. Burkush replied extremely successful.

Alderman J. Roy asked 95% success? You are taking young fire setters and stopping them right there before they progress into our adult fire setters.

Mr. Burkush replied it has been a successful program.

Alderman J. Roy stated in these tough times crime goes up. We will hear that I am sure from Chief Mara but one of the crimes that goes up is arson.

Mr. Burkush stated that is correct.

Alderman J. Roy stated for a number of reasons. So would you say it is important to keep a program like that going, seeing it is so successful?

Mr. Burkush responded we would like to see that continued.

Alderman O'Neil asked Chief, I just want to review the furloughs. You said it is five firefighters per shift but that is also maintaining the seven current vacancies as well as the vacant administrative assistant, correct? Those positions would not get filled.

Mr. Burkush stated at the number with the furloughs we would still have to layoff six additional personnel.

Alderman O'Neil asked have those been identified?

Mr. Burkush replied according to contract, it would be the last six firefighters. If we looked at the \$19,022,000 level, that is still short six positions, plus seven current vacancies.

Alderman O'Neil stated I want to stay on the furloughs. There could be additional impact per shift if those vacant positions don't get filled. They are obviously used to cover during high vacation times, sick times, so if those are not funded, we have two options: either additional overtime or we close additional companies, correct?

Mr. Burkush responded that is correct because at the \$19 million, the number with the furloughs, we would have 13 positions unavailable to be used for coverage. Now we have numbers that show what they have saved. That pool of personnel that we call floaters, to date, has saved \$800,000 in overtime. They have covered 21,360 hours. They have cost us \$668,000 for the whole year to have those personnel.

Alderman O'Neil stated one more time on those numbers.

Mr. Burkush stated those 13 uncommitted personnel cost us \$668,000. To date, up to this weekend, they have saved \$800,000 in overtime. So if that pool of personnel is unavailable to us, it's either pay overtime or put additional pieces out of service.

Alderman O'Neil stated the net savings is \$130,000. I just want to go back to the point...if the furlough number is not restored, it's five firefighters per shift plus the seven vacant are not available, so we will see additional station closings, either permanently or on a rolling basis. Am I correct with that?

Mr. Burkush responded and six layoffs.

Alderman O'Neil stated whatever number, let's work off the Mayor's number, you said you're short about \$1.1 million. Correct?

Mr. Burkush responded if you go back, the number without furloughs is down to \$18,542,000. That's the number if we do not achieve the furloughs. Full complement staffing is \$19,683,000.

Alderman O'Neil stated so there is a \$660,000 shortfall over and above. Pull the furlough number out, and you're still short over \$600,000.

Mr. Burkush stated correct, \$661,000.

Alderman O'Neil asked that's going to lead to additional station closures, correct, if that money's not restored?

Mr. Burkush responded that's correct. We have an overtime budget but at some point we would have to take a look at how low we could let it go.

Alderman O'Neil stated so even pushing the furloughs to the side, we still have issues we're trying to address regarding levels of service in the City.

Mr. Burkush stated pushing the furloughs aside we're still six layoffs and seven vacancies, 13 firefighters short. If you look forward into the budget year, if we start having retirements, which we anticipate three or four over the summer, without the positions to cover, it's either overtime or closures.

Alderman O'Neil asked do you expect in either scenario or both scenarios that it would be achieved through rolling closures or would there have to be permanent closures of stations for the fiscal year?

Mr. Burkush responded depending upon the level, preferably, from an operational point of view, it should be rolling closures. It's done in other areas of the country where they close a station per shift or per week to try to spread it out throughout the city. That to me would be the most practical way of doing it.

Alderman O'Neil stated I know permanent closures would have some effect on our ISO rating. Would rolling closures have an effect on that?

Mr. Burkush responded yes, any reduction of manpower.

Alderman DeVries stated Alderman O'Neil covered a lot of my questions. So the bottom line, from what I'm hearing, if we pass this budget as presented, there are 18 firefighter positions missing from it, a combination of furloughs, the seven vacancies, the six...

Mr. Burkush asked which number do you want to talk about? There is the number with the furloughs; there is the number without the furloughs.

Alderman DeVries stated the budget presented to us, so that's with the furlough.

Mr. Burkush stated the \$19,022,000 was with the sheet that was handed out at the budget presentation. The reason I'm saying that, Alderman, is because the budget we got from HTE is \$18.5 million, from Finance.

Alderman DeVries stated and that's the budget I have in front of me.

Mr. Burkush stated so \$18.5 million represents 25 firefighter positions, two administrative assistant positions, an inspector, and a vacant administrative services manager position. That's 24 positions at \$18.5 million, with no furloughs.

Alderman DeVries stated what I also heard you say is that you'll have additional overtime costs because you'll no longer have the additional personnel. How do you extrapolate what that number represents, because that could represent additional...How do you compensate for that?

Mr. Burkush responded it's either overtime or pieces out of service. There's no other way of balancing it.

Alderman DeVries stated you just gave the example where \$600,000 spent in the floaters allowed you to save \$800,000 in overtime costs. So, there was a savings of \$200,000. By eliminating all those floating positions, which I assume is what has to happen because there's no other way to do it, you're not even dealing with the \$18.5 million because your expense side will increase for overtime. Am I correct?

Mr. Burkush responded I think the potential out there without the 13 people could be a million dollar increase in overtime. We show \$800,000 to date and we still have a few months to go. It goes back to what Alderman Gatsas had lobbied for last year, which was to keep the positions filled and we have showed justification that filling the positions saves us money. And when they're not used they also provide additional service.

Alderman DeVries stated I couldn't agree with you more, and it's something you know that several of us on this committee have fought for years to increase the complement to reduce the overtime, and it has worked. Do you have any anticipated apparatus that is going to be down for the course of the work this summer? I know there was a delay in bringing in some of the new equipment.

Mr. Burkush responded no, what we have done this year is a bit of reorganization with the fact that we have two older ladder trucks and we were running six and we're running down to five, but we've changed the organization a little bit, increased staff in our two engines. We've basically saved buying another ladder truck, but long term apparatus being out of service, we don't anticipate anymore.

Alderman J. Roy stated Chief, when I asked before we said the furlough meant one pump and one ladder out, but Alderman O'Neil hit on a point also. You've got seven vacancies now and there are going to be six more coming, possibly. Thirteen to me equates to another pumper out. Is that correct?

Mr. Burkush responded yes, we're running...

Alderman J. Roy interjected so in reality we're talking two pumps and a ladder truck out.

Mr. Burkush stated if we don't receive any additional overtime or staffing, that's correct.

Alderman J. Roy stated that would be at \$18.5 million. So \$18.5 million means two pumps and a ladder truck, even though it may be rolling, the service to the City of Manchester is significantly depleted, correct?

Mr. Burkush responded if we were to go forward and have retirements, that's a very real possibility.

Alderman J. Roy stated if we went forward with retirements it would get worse. Instead of 13 people by the end of the summer it will be 16 people.

Mr. Burkush stated that's a possibility easily.

Alderman Smith stated as you well know, Jim, I'm still upset about the ladder truck being pulled out of Station 2, and there's no recourse to get that ladder truck back in, even though we spent \$1.6 million, we're still in that fire station?

Mr. Burkush responded that station, as I've told you, we've readjusted, we've increased the staffing of that station, and I'm confident that service has not been dropped in that district at all. In fact it has been quite successful.

Alderman Smith stated well from this point I would like to see a ladder truck there. I know where it is right now. It's over in Southern. There's a need for it in Ward 10. We do have high rises in the Ward, whether you believe it or not. I'm still adamant that we put money into refurbishing this station so we could accommodate the pumper and the ladder truck. In my seven years or eight years as Alderman, we have not had a ladder truck in there three or four years or five or six months due to reconstruction and due to

necessities of rust at another station. There are 14 Wards in the City. I like to have representation. I know the firefighters do a good job. I visit them once a week. They're doing the best they can, but I'd like to see a ladder truck over there as soon as possible.

Mr. Burkush stated okay sir, duly noted.

Alderman Lopez asked what were the savings you calculated for 2009 so far?

Mr. Burkush responded \$800,538.

Alderman Lopez stated excellent job. And nothing has suffered in the City of Manchester?

Mr. Burkush responded no, we've maintained the staffing levels throughout the whole year of 50 firefighters.

Alderman Lopez asked and how many vacant positions do you have at the present time today?

Mr. Burkush responded seven firefighters and one administrative position.

Alderman Lopez stated looking at some of the numbers, and correct me if I'm wrong, if you receive \$19,022,242 you would be short \$312,288 and you would have seven vacancies to maintain.

Mr. Burkush stated I would need the \$312,000 to prevent layoffs of the six people at \$19,022,242.

Alderman Lopez stated let's say for the sake of argument we gave you the \$312,000, you'd still have seven vacancies.

Mr. Burkush stated going into the next budget year we have seven vacancies.

Alderman Lopez stated or you have to make up \$312,000. How would you make up \$312,000 if that was the case?

Mayor Guinta stated earlier you said there is going to be probably six or eight retirements, so that's how you make it up so you wouldn't actually have to have the layoffs.

Alderman Lopez stated thank you, Your Honor. What would you do? Is that correct? I'm not saying the Mayor's wrong; I just want to hear it from you as the Chief.

Mr. Burkush responded to make up the six vacancies, \$312,000, you have to reduce the number of people on duty or reduce the overtime account.

Alderman Lopez stated but you would not lose a firefighter. Is that correct?

Mr. Burkush responded at the \$19,022,000 yes. If we were told not to lay anybody off...Is that what you're trying to...

Alderman Lopez interjected no, I'm not saying that, Chief. I think you've done an excellent job in 2009 and you're doing an excellent job of managing the money in 2009. I'm not saying that. I'm saying if for some reason you did not receive the \$312,000 and you keep seven vacancies, have you calculated how you would manage without laying off one firefighter?

Mr. Burkush responded you would have to reduce the other lines, either reduce the overtime line by \$300,000 or some other line. The only other line you could reduce would be the overtime line, and that would result in a reduction of people on the trucks.

Alderman Lopez stated but you would not lay off a firefighter. I don't want to put you too much on the spot, other than to say that there are other management tools that you could use without laying off a firefighter. Of course some of the Aldermen aren't going to be happy about it, right?

Mr. Burkush stated the only other way to do it would be...if you're going to maintain the salary line, I'd have to reduce the overtime line or an operational line, and those are the only other options that I would have.

Alderman Lopez stated the point I want to end with is, in order to have seven vacancies, you need \$312,000, if I'm correct in my numbers, and you maintain seven vacancies. Or, you get the budget with the furlough. That's a different situation. Then that number 20 and 21 comes into play. If you get the furloughs back, and you get a short change of \$312,000 then you'll either manage, and in some way you'd manage, without laying a firefighter off.

Mr. Burkush stated it would be a significant reduction in service, and I'll tell you why. We're already short seven to cover. We would be going into it with vacancies. You'd be going into it with possible retirements and also our salary line would be short the \$300,000. It would be very, very difficult to manage because the overtime isn't a steady number. In other words, one week it will be higher and one week it will be lower. It would be extremely difficult to manage without that \$312,000. At \$19.3 million it would be challenging to go forward with maintaining seven vacancies because we would anticipate six more throughout the year. We would have to look at that as the year goes on, to see where the vacancies come up.

Alderman Lopez stated I'm just trying to get to the point that we're not going to lay off any firefighters. Would you agree with that?

Mr. Burkush responded it's the will of the Board, what we do, but at \$19 million you're going to go into it already short seven with a challenge to make up the budget for six, with anticipating another possible six retirements, there is going to be reduction in service. There is going to be equipment out of service.

Alderman Lopez stated that's correct, and I completely understand that. I'm just trying to put things in perspective so I'm understanding your numbers and the numbers that I've got here, and the 21 layoffs versus seven vacancies, and filling those seven vacancies, and how much money, and the furloughs, \$480,000 in furloughs taken away from you. I'm just looking at that, that's all.

Mayor Guinta stated I just want to make a clarifying statement. As I went into the process and met with the Chief, I looked at the \$18,472,000 current appropriation. I asked him what plus \$550,000 over and above that number would do for the department, and essentially what he said to me was they would have to keep the seven current vacancies, and there would be an additional six positions that would have to be eliminated. Of those positions he felt, when we met, that some of them would be retirements. My statement back was assuming that the Contingency/Salary adjustment line is kept at the \$600,000 mark or higher there could be a policy decision amongst the Board on how to deal with those two, possibly three, positions. On top of that, we have the furlough proposal, which would then require what the Chief is saying, a reduction from 50 to 45 firefighters per shift. Just so everybody knows where I was coming from in the budget process, you would agree with that statement, okay?

Mr. Burkush responded okay.

Alderman Ouellette stated I guess with the line of thinking where Alderman Lopez was going...thank you for clarifying that, Your Honor. If we're going to ask you to make up the difference in retirements, you're not going to be able to keep your 50 per shift. Is that a fair statement?

Mr. Burkush responded currently what we do, like we did last year, this current budget year, is we went into it, we hired in June. We had the firefighters through the high budget periods. We started experiencing retirements and we have to keep a vacancy for six months to make up the severance pay, and I thought there was no contingency for severance. So that's how we make the severance back up, is by holding vacancies.

Alderman Ouellette stated so again, back to my point in terms of...the magic number, when we talked in your office, Chief, was 50. At a given shift you need 50 firefighters to cover the City on any given shift to keep the services where we're at now. If you have to manage a budget through attrition, in terms of the retirement positions, that's going to bring that number below 50, and that's what you're talking about when you're talking about how services are going to be greatly affected if you're managing that way. Sure, there will be no layoffs, and that is obviously the first goal of the Board, but I think that if we're talking about reducing a significant amount of coverage in the City, I know if that was the case, that is the way you would have to go, you would be very effective in managing it that way. Obviously that number of 50 which you have talked about before is probably where this Alderman would like to see that number kept because I think that...

Mr. Burkush interjected to maintain that 50 it's either have extra personnel or to have overtime budget and we have a combination of that which balances, which works pretty well. It was looked at in 2004 by City Auditor Kevin Buckley. He looked at the system on which we operate, and I've done extensive research to make sure, because if you have

no positions, nobody to cover, and you do it all by overtime, a lot of times you get to a position where you can't hire...it's Christmas or whatever. You have difficulty in hiring. The system we operate has been looked at by Kevin Buckley and it's a pretty efficient system to have both, to have a budget of overtime and also to have extra personnel.

Alderman Ouellette stated so what I'm hearing is that \$312,000 or round about there, that hole that's in your budget, if you can't find some way to fill that, it's quite possible that services in the City will be reduced. That's what I'm hearing.

Mr. Burkush stated that's correct. It's either/or. It's whatever you decide that you want to do.

Alderman Murphy asked Chief, what are the seven vacancies you have right now? Are you having problems meeting the 50 per shift or are you meeting that?

Mr. Burkush responded we've been maintaining the 50 per shift.

Alderman Murphy asked with the seven vacancies?

Mr. Burkush responded that's correct.

Alderman Murphy stated but it's going to be affected if we can't fill the \$312,000 hole. You've got two options, which I think is what you were just explaining to Alderman Ouellette. Either your overtime goes up or it drops, and if you lose those six positions and you maintain your 50 per shift, do you know how much your overtime is projected to go up by?

Mr. Burkush responded that's what we were discussing. That's what we had shown was \$800,000 to date if we didn't have those people. So our current overtime budget this year was \$707,000. So you could anticipate if we didn't have those 13 people, we would have taken the \$700,000 and added the \$800,000, with a possible expenditure of \$1.5 million in overtime, which is the way the city of Nashua operates. There are other cities that operate strictly overtime, no floaters.

Alderman Murphy stated my next question is entirely unrelated, but I know that the Police Department has looked into grants for officers. Are there similar programs available for the Fire Department?

Mr. Burkush responded there is a grant called SAFER, which you would have to agree to supplement the force. You can't take it and use it for existing positions. It's only for additional positions.

Alderman Murphy asked and there's nothing else that's available and out there?

Mr. Burkush responded there's nothing in the stimulus. We've been working with the Mayor's office. Mark Laliberte is working and Alderman Lopez has been trying to find stimulus money. We haven't found anything.

Alderman M. Roy stated Chief, we've talked a lot in the past about NFPA standards. In talking to this Board you've talked about increasing manpower and offsetting overtime. Could you touch upon...I don't want the people out there to think that you're flush with manpower and you've got guys standing around. Can you touch upon NFPA standard for an engine and truck in a city of this size?

Mr. Burkush responded there are a whole host of standards that NFPA addresses. One of them is 17.10, which is the standard of deployment for professional firefighters. It talks about four people on every engine and every truck. It is a standard that many fire departments are working towards. For example, the city of Nashua has four firefighters on every pump and truck in the city. They run less, and it is a strategic goal that we'd like to work to, and one of the ways that we would do it is by looking at the redistribution of fire stations in the City. Also, combining a few companies, and basically try to achieve the goals with additional personnel. So it is a strategic goal of mine to work toward that number. Another real important standard also talks about getting to your house in five minutes, whether it's a fire or an EMS issue. That's also a standard which we are working to achieve in the City. Basically with the addition of the East Industrial Park station that allowed that ward to get service to under the five minute mark. We would like to rebuild and move a fire station further south to get down by the Londonderry line. We have an issue with getting down there in time. So those are the standards that we're trying to achieve, and to increase efficiency by combining stations and looking at that, but those are all long range goals that are going take looking at fire stations, our locations and unfortunately additional staffing in this very trying time. Unrelated, ISO has notified us that they are coming into the City to do a review of insurance rates for the City. The City of Manchester currently enjoys a class two rating, which is out of ten, with one being the highest. Manchester has a class two rating, which allows our residential and commercial insurance company users to enjoy very, very good fire rates. We believe that in this next review we are going to achieve class one, and there are only three in the New England region – Hartford, Connecticut; Cambridge, Massachusetts; and I believe there is another community in Massachusetts. That will allow people who pay insurance in the City to enjoy the lowest rates possible for commercial and residential. So, the ISO is coming through this summer. It has a lot to do with the water supply system in the City and the Fire Department and dispatch services. We hope to achieve that goal this summer.

Alderman M. Roy stated so looking at your long range goals, you've talked about efficiency. I hear the buy in on the political side is, we've got to be willing to work with you regarding station locations and response times, but in turn we may end up with a more efficient, more cost effective Fire Department.

Mr. Burkush stated we did a lot of work this summer working on the strategic planning committee with the Highway Department and Police Department, and we're hoping to move that project. There was a bond that was issued for that project on strategic facilities. That is one area that we are extremely interested in and we're also looking at other avenues of efficiencies, maybe combining a couple of stations and looking at those advantages.

Alderman M. Roy stated and just one...and I'm going to make this very ward-specific...as you know, I'm Ward 1 in the most northern part of the City. If you were to do rolling closures, I assume that would include Engine 5 and Truck 5 as well.

Mr. Burkush stated we would do every Ward, every station.

Alderman M. Roy stated if you were to look at a medical call, let's say that defibulator that would be put out of service at Engine 5, where would the engine that has the defibulator be coming from?

Mr. Burkush responded it would either be coming from headquarters or Engine 10 on Mammoth Road.

Alderman M. Roy stated so, Merrimack Street or Engine 10 on Mammoth Road.

Mr. Burkush stated that's correct.

Alderman M. Roy stated and that would gravely affect response time?

Mr. Burkush responded yes.

Alderman O'Neil stated Chief, I'm not even sure who carries this, whether Finance or HR carries it or you do, but I'm guessing if there are layoffs, somebody has to carry in their budget unemployment compensation?

Mr. Burkush responded we don't have that line item.

Alderman O'Neil asked who carries that, Your Honor?

Mayor Guinta responded HR.

Alderman O'Neil asked do we know a number if there are 16 layoffs at the Fire Department? Do we know what that number is?

Mayor Guinta responded no, but what I have budgeted would have to be increased. I can get a number from Jane. For every ten positions, roughly...we can get you that information, but I can tell you that what I've budgeted would have to likely go up.

Alderman O'Neil stated I'm guessing that would be true of furloughs as well. I've had a number of lawyers call me, labor lawyers, and say it's their belief that a furlough is a temporary layoff, so those employees are eligible.

Mayor Guinta stated it would depend on how it's structured, what would be agreed to. For example, if there is a week at a time I believe there would possibly be an unemployment benefit. If you structure it differently, it may not apply. So it depends on whatever agreements we could reach with the unions.

Alderman O'Neil asked could we get some budget number that if it is...my understanding is that it's based on a week. I haven't seen a specific plan. The furloughs have to equate to something in employment compensation, so I'd like to know what that number is and therefore break it down per department. That needs to enter into this discussion, I think.

Mayor Guinta stated I'll have Mark research that and get that to everybody.

Alderman Sullivan asked just as a point of clarification, how many employees do you have total? I know you said 50 is the full complement per shift. How many employees do you have department-wide?

Mr. Burkush responded department-wide is 258.

Alderman Sullivan asked how many of those are line personnel, actually out on the trucks?

Mr. Burkush responded it's about 234 if you count the district chiefs.

Alderman Sullivan asked would the balance be administrative personnel?

Mr. Burkush responded we have ten dispatchers, a chief, two deputies, six secretaries, and five people in communications; fire prevention has three inspectors. Basically the total uniformed force is 234, out of the 258.

Alderman Gatsas asked Chief, last year when we gave you your budget and we authorized you to hire, effective July 1st, how many people did we direct you to hire?

Mr. Burkush responded we hired eight. That's what we were directed to hire.

Alderman Gatsas stated so that brought you to full complement, and you've lost seven vacancies since then. The savings you had in 2009 was how much?

Mr. Burkush responded so far to date, \$800,538.

Alderman O'Neil asked Your Honor, could we get some clarification, because there was some discussion. The net savings was \$130,000, because there was cost to fill the positions. There was a question that came from the other side, and I think it was somewhat...the savings was not \$800,000. The savings was \$130,000.

Mr. Burkush stated Alderman Murphy asked me how much the overtime would be if we didn't have the positions.

Alderman Gatsas asked if you didn't hire the other eight employees would you have had \$800,000 in savings? Is that what you're telling me?

Mr. Burkush responded no, the total 13 uncommitted people is what saved the \$800,000.

Alderman Gatsas stated maybe I'm missing something. You started with eight, you hired them. So on July 1st you were at full complement at 234.

Mr. Burkush stated and that gave us floating personnel for thirteen.

Alderman Gatsas stated don't confuse me with floating. Let's talk total complement so we're comparing apples to apples. It was 234. On July 1st you were authorized to hire 234 people. During the course of this year you had seven people retire, so your

complement went to 227. So the savings of the \$800,000 isn't truly a savings of \$800,000. It's a critical question.

Mr. Burkush stated if we didn't have those people...those people actually covered 21,360 hours. I'm not following you.

Alderman Gatsas stated Chief, my question is...you're saying that there is an \$800,000 savings. If I said to you, if you saved \$800,000 then I should be able to pull \$800,000 out of your budget, you wouldn't be able to operate. So you didn't save \$800,000.

Mr. Burkush responded no, we had a cost of \$668,000.

Alderman Gatsas stated so the \$132,000 or \$138,000 number that Alderman O'Neil threw out is closer to what you're going to save in this year's budget. Maybe it goes to \$140,000 because there are three months left, but you're not going to save \$800,000.

Mr. Burkush stated okay. We've got another three months to go.

Alderman Gatsas stated Chief is it true or what? I understand but \$140,000 is the number you're going to be at. I don't think you're going to get to \$800,000 in three months, unless you have another ten people that retire.

Mr. Burkush stated no.

Alderman Gatsas asked and in that budget for those seven that did retire, how much was your severance pay?

Mr. Burkush responded \$149,000 severance we paid.

Alderman Gatsas stated severance for the seven vacancies was \$149,000.

Mr. Burkush stated that's correct. We had two relatively junior personnel that left that didn't have much severance.

Alderman Gatsas asked on a normal seven what would it be?

Mr. Burkush responded the year before was \$237,000. The year before that was \$260,000.

Alderman Gatsas stated thanks.

Alderman O'Neil stated Chief, I just want to make sure I understood you. Of the seven you said two of them were very junior so the \$149,000 really reflects five career people. I just want to make sure I understand that.

Mr. Burkush stated that represented about four people in a regular year, that \$149,000.

Alderman O'Neil stated because you had some others that left that just didn't have significant time at all.

Alderman Gatsas asked Chief, do you have any money in the CIP budget?

Mr. Burkush asked in this current year?

Alderman Gatsas replied well, in the current year now and the next year going forward. I'll give you an example. Police has money in there for Drugs and Guns, which is about three employees. So, is there money that you have in CIP...What do you have for money in CIP?

Mr. Burkush responded we have a matching grant for breathing apparatus; we did not get the grant. And there was another small \$8,000 balance in one other one.

Alderman Gatsas stated and the stimulus money that you're looking at currently, you're saying that there are no dollars in there, the same as where the Police had either to save jobs...your qualifications weren't the same.

Mr. Burkush responded there was zero for fire service.

Alderman O'Neil stated I think I'm correct on this, and the Police can just nod their heads, they actually rewrote the rules on the COPS program, correct? Because originally COPS was the same as for fire safety, you could only be for new personnel. Maybe somehow we can get...I don't know where the fire service comes under. Is that Homeland Security as well, eventually? Is COPS Homeland Security or Justice? Maybe somehow we need to have Homeland Security talk to Justice and rewrite the SAFER grants to allow for existing positions. I don't know how we can get that word to the Congressional delegation. Is there a significant amount of money in the SAFER grant?

Mr. Burkush responded yes, there have been some communities in the state that have been successful in getting SAFER grants. I believe Goffstown and Bedford...

Alderman O'Neil stated we need it for existing, not new.

Mr. Burkush responded that's correct.

Alderman O'Neil asked Your Honor, could somehow your office reach out to the Congressional delegation on that?

Mayor Guinta responded yes, I'll have Mark research that issue too.

Alderman Gatsas stated Chief, again, you gave me a number. What did we authorize you to hire on July 1st of this year?

Mr. Burkush responded eight.

Alderman Gatsas asked and what are you proposing to think there may be vacancies in 2010 for?

Mr. Burkush responded possibly six. Additional retirements you're talking about? Possibly six. That's about our average.

Alderman Gatsas stated well if I'm looking at eight and seven, six isn't your average, at least not in the last two years. What was it in 2008? It had to have been seven because we gave you seven to fill.

Mr. Burkush stated we had eight retirements in the previous fiscal year.

Alderman O'Neil stated Alderman Gatsas is leading me with these great questions. Chief, is there a concern by you at all...and I know we have some members of the Senate here, that any significant changes to the retirement system could send a mass exodus? I want to say last year we had 75 firefighters that had age and years of service.

Alderman Gatsas stated it's 70.

Alderman O'Neil asked it's 70 this year? So, the severance number, the whole thing could get thrown out of whack if there is a significant change in the legislature on the retirement. Am I correct?

Mr. Burkush stated we have 75 people that currently can retire.

Alderman O'Neil stated I stood one night, if I may, at a hockey game between Chief Burkush and Chief Mara and they both made the statement if there is anything crazy with the retirement system, they have no choice but have to retire. There's a lot on the line here. There are 75 that have age and years of service. I'd hate to know what the payout would be on that.

Alderman Gatsas stated \$2.3 million.

Mayor Guinta stated I think it's higher than that. Anyone else? Police is next. I have to go to the School Board meeting this evening. We're meeting with the union in a public meeting to talk about their proposals for cost saving measures. I'm going to hand this over to Alderman Lopez. However, as Police comes up, I just wanted to give my thought process was in meeting with the Police Department prior to the budget address. Essentially, Police currently receives \$18,978,000. I asked them if we increased that by \$600,000 to the \$19,578,000, what would that mean for the budget? I asked them also to apply as much of the grant money that is applicable to this budget. Obviously some of the grants are stronger than others in terms of the amount and number of positions that we could potentially receive. I've obviously asked them to be aggressive and file for as many positions as they possibly can. If this number was adopted and they were able to receive 100% of the grant money, I think that would get us about to full complement. On top of that we then had the furlough proposal, which obviously you see is a reduction of \$489,000 for the Police Department which, if that was adopted by the unions, my thought was there wouldn't have to be layoffs, but obviously there would be implications regarding scheduling with the officers as well. So, I at least wanted everyone to know where I was coming from prior to my leaving this meeting. Does anyone have any questions for me prior to my having to go to the School Board?

Alderman Gatsas stated I'll save them for a later time, Your Honor.

Chairman Lopez stated Chief, make your presentation and then we'll get into questions.

Mr. David Mara, Police Chief, stated good evening. As you can see from the handout that was provided, the one dated April 8, 2009, that was addressed to Alderman Lopez, as you can see from that, with furloughs, assuming that furloughs go through, we would be at...without furloughs we had a \$427,837 shortfall in the budget. If the furloughs go through, that number goes up to over \$900,000. That's where we're at. When you're looking at our budget, our authorized complement is 225, but we're asking the City to fund 211. The rest are going to be coming from existing grant positions, as well as eight vacant positions are going to be used through the COPS program. We are hoping to get three from that and then five through the JAG program where we explained before that that is the \$659,000 one-shot deal that we get. We're also, under the Mayor's budget, taking \$100,000 of that grant and putting that into our overtime budget as well, which leaves us roughly about \$200,000 left after that where we are proposing to keep that for the next couple of years, just in case we don't get Drugs and Guns money through Streetsweeper, as well as to fund our JOLT program and any other shortfalls that might come up. So that's where we're at. Any kind of vacancies that we have to make up, we can't count the...for instance, we have eight vacancies right now. If we would be asked the same questions that the Fire Department was asked, as far as vacancies go, the eight vacancies that we have, if we were to leave them vacant, it really doesn't affect the budget because that's going to be grant money if we do get that grant money, all of it. If we do have a shortfall, any money that we could make up from vacancies would have to be new vacancies that come up during the course of the next fiscal year.

Alderman Murphy asked do you people in academy right now?

Mr. Mara responded we just graduated five people.

Alderman Murphy asked so the eight vacancies takes into account those five people?

Mr. Mara responded yes.

Alderman Murphy asked were you down 13 before?

Mr. Mara responded yes.

Alderman Murphy asked do the eight vacancies account for...I know that you've got some people that are injured or otherwise out.

Mr. Mara stated those are people we don't have right now, part of the complement. But that is true. We do have a couple of people...we have three people at this time that are out for injuries and medical conditions. Then we have two people that are on military leave is well.

Alderman Murphy stated so you're down a total of 13 right now.

Mr. Mara stated yes, we're down approximately 13.

Alderman Murphy asked with the furloughs that the Mayor is proposing, how is that going to affect your shift coverage?

Mr. Mara responded with an over \$900,000 shortfall, it would significantly affect us. What we would have to do, to make sure that any of our emergency response is not degraded at all, is take people out of divisions. For instance, community police, we would have to take people out of detectives and juvenile and traffic to be able to continue

the emergency coverage. We could not make that up by keeping vacancies open. We would have to lay off people.

Alderman Murphy stated now Chief Burkush said that would result in a reduction of five people per shift for him. What kind of parallel reduction would that result in for you?

Mr. Mara responded seven to eight per day.

Alderman Murphy asked do you know where you stand with any of the grant programs that you've applied for?

Mr. Mara responded we've already been told we're going to be getting \$659,000. Of course we have to apply how we're going to use that money. We're confident we'll be able to use that for five positions. The Cop grant, we've already had that application in, and we're cautiously optimistic to get at least three. There really isn't any way to tell.

Alderman Murphy stated the COPS program, the application closed on April 14th is what the website is telling me. Do you know when you're going to hear how many positions? I think you applied for ten.

Mr. Mara responded we were told to expect around September, but when we went to an informational session they were saying late summer. So hopefully we'll hear before September.

Alderman O'Neil stated Chief, I want to follow up on Alderman Murphy's question. You indicated that the \$917,000 shortfall was not made up, and of that \$489,000 is furloughs and \$428,000 is just general operating budget shortfalls. From July 1st through the end of the fiscal year that would mean between seven and eight slots per day that

would not be filled. And I think you said you would have to reallocate seven or eight people from other divisions of the department to cover the slots on patrol.

Mr. Mara responded that would be the average, yes, but we are formulating a plan where we're looking at every alternative that we have. We might take somebody out of a division outright and put them in patrol.

Alderman O'Neil stated but if you did that, that would mean fewer officers available for community policing, fewer officers available for traffic enforcement or fewer officers available for any of the investigative work. So although your primary responsibility is to cover patrol and answer the calls for service, there would be an impact to the public, not in response to 911 calls, but if they were involved in something that required investigative work there would be...

Mr. Mara interjected I feel there would be a significant impact.

Alderman O'Neil stated or if they have speeding or traffic problems in the neighborhood, there just would not be officers available for that. Community policing which, to your credit, you've expanded, would have to be scaled back. So, there is an impact to services if that number is not restored.

Mr. Mara stated without a doubt.

Alderman J. Roy stated thanks for coming out tonight, Chief. Alderman O'Neil just answered one of my questions here about what the impact of the furlough was to your everyday operation. One of my favorites is severance. What was your severance this year?

Mr. Mara stated severance this year by the end of July we will be about \$524,000.

Alderman J. Roy asked and that's how many officers?

Mr. Mara responded that was 14 officers.

Alderman J. Roy asked in an average year ten officers go?

Mr. Mara responded it varies. This year we had more than usual.

Alderman J. Roy stated this was a bigger year than normal. I think normally about ten officers go. So you're talking about \$450,000 a year usually?

Mr. Mara responded I think over the last five years or so that's what we've averaged.

Alderman J. Roy asked the same as the Fire Department, you didn't have any advantage this year with the severance line item because it really isn't established yet; it hasn't helped you out yet. And if it doesn't this next year, this is going to affect your operations every day as well, correct?

Mr. Mara responded yes, it will.

Alderman J. Roy stated that will translate into more than eight positions that you won't have the ability to fill each day, which will mean a greater drain on your ancillary groups.

Mr. Gary Simmons, Deputy Police Chief, stated usually we've been told we can continue to hire. We've always been authorized for that 225 complement. The Board has always been gracious to allow us to keep hiring. But we're anticipating that this year we're going to have to watch that severance and probably maintain vacancies until that's made up, unless something else is told to us differently.

Alderman DeVries stated Chief, I want to start off by continuing to compliment you, because the City continues to notice your efforts on behalf of controlling crime and other activities in the City. I for one certainly am not looking to go backwards on that. I don't believe I heard Alderman Roy just follow up with the other line of questions in reference to retirements. Can you tell us how many eligible police you would have ready to retire today if some of those retirement bills were to go through? I'm sure you know what we're referring to.

Mr. Mara responded yes, more or less. He's looking that up. I can tell you what would be devastating, just looking at it from a cost effective standpoint. When people have to make a decision as to who are eligible to retire, I can tell you that our whole command staff would be – virtually all our captains, chief, deputy chief, as well as some lieutenants, would retire.

Alderman DeVries stated while you're looking up the number, just to elaborate...Alderman O'Neil did it as well. The concern is a bill that passed in the House that is now in the Senate that would keep individuals on the department with no additional benefit going toward their retirement for an additional five years. When you have legislation like that it's only obvious that anybody who is eligible to retire today would go before they feel the impacts of having to stay another five years for no change in their pension. Do you have a number?

Mr. Mara responded 24, that's a minimum.

Alderman DeVries stated it's fair to say that police are younger than firefighters.

Mr. Mara responded yes.

Alderman DeVries stated it's not an easy job. Neither is.

Mr. Simmons stated the 24 is what we have, Alderman, who could retire with the age. However, that number that you might have gotten could be higher because a lot of people have bought military time and/or bought in five years during that period of time when the retirement system had that. We don't have that number because we don't know who those people are until they come to us. We had 24 based on the numbers of people we know that have the age and the time. However, the Alderman is correct that there are several others out there that we're not aware of because they have military prior experience elsewhere or maybe bought up to five years of service. We're not aware of those that are. I believe he's got a more familiar number, based on conversations he's had with some of the members. He's saying double it, and that wouldn't surprise me, based on what we know of some people who have bought time.

Chairman Lopez stated that's fair.

Alderman DeVries asked Chief, is there a difference between the HTE listing as to the budget numbers? I know Chief Burkush had indicated that the number we have in front of us in our budget books that I'm working off of at least is \$19,089,182. Is that the number you're working from?

Mr. Simmons responded that's the number we were using. But the two documents that you have – the April 8th document and the one I just passed out – that was anticipating the furlough being put back into the budget, which I guess we probably shouldn't have done. But we anticipated that being put back in, just based on conversation. So we're actually looking at the \$19,578,469 number.

Alderman DeVries asked that's your make whole number?

Mr. Simmons responded no, we got to that number by taking the Mayor's number and putting the furlough back in. Our make whole number is the \$20,006,306.

Alderman Shea asked when are we going to get a positive answer from any of the people involved in City government as to whether or not furloughs will be an acceptable part of the budget or not? In other words, is there a time that either the people that are involved in the government will say... I don't know if I should direct it to you or whomever? The Mayor's not here.

Chairman Lopez stated I'm going to answer that question this way. The union asked to meet with a couple of Aldermen and I took the liberty to meet with them, along with Aldermen O'Neil and Roy, for information purposes only. I can assure every Alderman here that we did not negotiate anything with the unions. I brought some things to their attention, and one of the things that I brought to their attention is that if there is going to be any movement, they might want to give us some kind of notice around the first of May, whatever the case may be, understanding that 12 of the unions, according to Tom Clark's memo, say that they want us to honor their contracts. I did tell them that this Alderman would honor their contracts, if that's their desire. That's where we left it. Until such a time as...I only speak for myself, not for Aldermen O'Neil or Roy...they want to come forward to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen collectively and do something or individually and do something, there's nothing that we can do in reference to contracts. Tom Clark has indicated that once you open up a contract it's open. I can give you that information. The other part of your question would be, in order to change the budget, naturally you know you need eight Aldermen, and you need ten Aldermen to do that. And the Mayor has veto if it's only eight or nine.

Alderman Shea stated my question then is, assuming that no one is going to accept the furlough plan that has been suggested, how does that impact your department? Would you have to lay off people or would you have to cut back on different types of programs?

How would that affect your department, assuming that there are not going to be any furloughs?

Mr. Mara responded as I said before, that would put us over \$900,000. I believe we would be at \$917,000 we would have to absorb or make up.

Alderman Shea asked how could you make that up?

Mr. Mara responded as I said before, we wouldn't be able to keep vacancies because we are not asking the City to fund those vacancies. We are depending on grant money. So even if we kept them vacant, it doesn't save us any money. So what we would have to do with that much money, we would have layoffs. It would be a combination of civilians as well as police officers.

Alderman Shea stated part of the problem is we discuss things but we don't really get to the real meat of the problem. In other words, we start going around and saying what's going to happen if 34 guys retire because of this or that. But we're talking about the budget for 2010. So I think as an Alderman, personally, I have to find out what impact it's going to have if, in fact, the furloughs are not going to be realized, and from what I can hear, they probably won't be. So the general public and the Aldermen have to understand that if the furloughs aren't then this is going to happen. We have to lay off ten police officers, or we don't have to. We can use funding and so forth, so that there is a clearer picture because in my mind I don't follow all of this discussion because one person says this and you answer and another says that, and so it becomes a little bit complicated if, in fact, from my point of view you don't understand specifically what the overall picture is going to be, in terms of, we'll say, working from reality numbers. That's what I'm interested in. So you're saying that if the furloughs aren't realized there will be \$917,000 that have to be made up somehow because there will be that much less in your budget. Am I correct in stating that?

Mr. Simmons responded that's what we're looking at, yes sir. And that's assuming that we get all the grants that we've applied for.

Alderman Shea stated in other words, you get all the grants that you mentioned at the last Board meeting, in other words, the \$654,425, and you would still be short that amount of money.

Mr. Mara stated yes sir.

Alderman Gatsas stated Mr. Chairman, I'm surprised because the last I counted there are 14 members on this Board. I would have assumed everybody would have been extended the courtesy if you were sitting down with unions as a Board when I understand there were three of you that were there. We certainly could have sat down, and if you're going to tell me that City Solicitor told you that it wouldn't be wise for the Board to sit there, I would think we could have done it in executive session and have those discussions as an entire Board. Now maybe you can tell us publically what you discussed, if you feel it's appropriate. If not, I think that it's inappropriate that you as the Chairman do a selection process because certainly I would think that maybe I'm going to call the unions tomorrow and meet with them myself.

Chairman Lopez stated go right ahead.

Alderman Gatsas stated but I would at least extend it to all Board members.

Chairman Lopez stated let me explain, Alderman, that the union asked me if I would sit down with them and ask the Board. I checked with the City Solicitor and he said that would not be a wise thing to do. That would be a negotiation if 14 Aldermen sat down. First of all, the information that they wanted was information that they didn't have, such

as the numbers in reference to what was the tax increase and what was the furlough number between the School Department, which I had as 6.80 and in reference to the 12 unions. Most of all it was just an informational meeting that I went to. I took two Aldermen with me. I took an Alderman At-Large and I took Alderman Roy with me. I don't see anything wrong with it.

Alderman Gatsas asked are you intending to share that information with your other 11 colleagues?

Chairman Lopez responded there's nothing to share other than to tell you what you already know, which is that we're short \$1.9 million in building aid coming into the City of Manchester. We're short revenue. I think they wanted to hear those numbers from the particular Aldermen, and they can speak for themselves. They were there. I don't see anything wrong in providing information to the union. We didn't negotiate; I assure you of that. We weren't speaking for 14 Aldermen and I wasn't speaking as Chairman of the Board for any Aldermen.

Alderman Gatsas stated I've got to believe some of the other Aldermen have to be just as miffed as I am about it. I'll be shocked if they aren't.

Chairman Lopez stated well that's fine. If that's it, so be it. I can't help that. I did this on my own as asked by the unions to meet, and I took two Aldermen with me for informational purposes only, and the truth.

Alderman Gatsas stated but you're missing my point. When are you going to share that with your other colleagues?

Chairman Lopez responded I would have shared that with you.

Alderman Gatsas asked when?

Chairman Lopez responded it could have been tomorrow night. I don't know. I think you're the only one. If some other Alderman wants to ask me a question...I brought two Aldermen for the same purpose, to make sure that I had two witnesses as to what went on at the meeting. So that's it. With the guidance of the City Solicitor, that's what I did.

Alderman Pinard stated you met with the union. Obviously they would not meet with the Mayor. The union did not meet with us. And I agree with Alderman Gatsas that the full Board, all of us elected by the people to represent the people...in this case you're the only one that met with the union, and I don't think it's fair.

Chairman Lopez stated Alderman, I'll correct you once more. Three Aldermen met. I was not the only one.

Alderman M. Roy stated I think what's getting lost in this discussion is that the unions reached out to Alderman Lopez and asked him to meet. On different occasions, constituents, unions, people that we serve, people from inside and outside of the City, call us individually or as a group to meet and discuss problems or have discussions that they feel are pertinent to their employment, the welfare of the City, or what we do as Aldermen. So, where Alderman Lopez wanted people at the meeting, it wasn't feasible or advised by the City Solicitor to have 14 people there. There were also 14 people that were not summoned by the unions or asked by the unions to meet with them. So much like every time one of us has a phone conversation with someone in our Ward, we don't report that back to the Board. Alderman Lopez did what he did at the request of the unions...let me finish Alderman Gatsas...and invited two Aldermen and had it approved by the people who had asked us to meet, much like when our phone rings. So I don't see any difference between my conversations with those union members that day or union members any other time, or constituents at any time. If people would like to make an

issue out of this, yes, they can meet with anyone they would like to whenever they can. But again, we discussed it with the Solicitor's Office, and it was advised not to have 14 people in the room.

Chairman Lopez stated I'm going to interject right now. This is a special meeting in reference to the budget, and I'm going to rule that we're going to talk about the budget. We're going to bring this subject up at the full Board of Mayor and Aldermen tomorrow night. We'll bring it up then, because it has no bearing on this subject whatsoever.

Alderman Gatsas asked how do you say it doesn't have anything to do with the subject at all? Were you meeting with the unions because it didn't have to do with parameters of what the budget could be? You just said what you met with them about. It was \$1.8 million in building aid, revenue sharing...How are those things not significant in this budget process? And how does somebody sit here and say that when Mrs. Jones calls about her garbage collection, that the meeting that you folks had with the unions, because I would not think it's that trivial. I would think it would be a little bit more important than that when you're talking about a tax rate in the City of Manchester and jobs that concern union members. So let's not make it trivial that a call that I may get from Mrs. Jones about the garbage not being collected, that that's the same significance as what we're talking about for a budget because that's exactly what he related...

Chairman Lopez interjected well Alderman, let me just say that you get a call from Mrs. Jones and you can't answer the question, just give her my phone number and we'll take care of it. This is getting out of hand here and I'm not going to allow it. We're talking about the Chief's budget here. I want to concentrate and focus on his budget. Once he leaves, if there is unanimous consent and we want to talk about this, or we'll take it up at the regular meeting.

Alderman O'Neil asked today your current complement is what?

Mr. Simmons responded right now we are at 213.

Alderman O'Neil asked and do you happen to know your approved civilian complement and where you are today?

Mr. Mara responded yes, 67 is our approved.

Alderman O'Neil asked and do you know where that is today?

Mr. Mara responded at this point we're down five and a half civilians, and we have permission to hire two and a half, so we will be down...

Alderman O'Neil stated so it's 64 then. I want to work backwards, Chief, because I have some concerns about the COPS grant money, whether or not we're going to see it and how we make a decision on the budget, so I want to work backward. In the memo you handed out tonight, you asked for 211 positions that are city funded. Correct?

Mr. Mara responded yes.

Alderman O'Neil stated based on a previous presentation we have the money for the Byrne or JAG grant, which is another five positions, correct?

Mr. Mara responded that's correct.

Alderman O'Neil stated so we know safely if all funds were approved, at least municipally, along with the Byrne Grant, that we are at 216, correct?

Mr. Mara responded yes, but the number that we have of 211 also includes four other grant positions that we currently already have.

Alderman O'Neil stated that still leaves nine positions that we're counting on some level of federal support. Is that correct?

Mr. Mara responded we have five for the Byrne and then we have three for the COPS.

Alderman O'Neil stated it's that which concerns me, and I guess my question would be, knowing that this is a tough budget year and if we can address issues like the furlough, what is the number based on...I don't know if you ended up giving a test this spring or not, so you may not be able to hire anyone. Did they end up giving the test?

Mr. Mara responded we postponed it till June.

Alderman O'Neil stated as of right now there is not a pool of candidates, other than maybe some certified people, is my understanding. We're not shaking anything up if for some reason you don't test in June. Is that correct?

Mr. Mara responded yes.

Alderman O'Neil asked I don't want to jump too far ahead, but how many certified officers have you been in contact with that you could end up making offers to if you felt comfortable with some number?

Mr. Mara responded right now today I feel comfortable with three, with some other good candidates that we are in the process of looking into.

Alderman O'Neil stated I'm still trying to...and maybe I should meet with you one on one. I still need to get a handle on this whole grant thing. I'm a simple man and I like to keep things as simple as possible, and it's pretty confusing to me. The Byrne grants are pretty clear-cut, but the COPS grant is very confusing...when we're going to know and what the amounts are, etcetera. It's my opinion or observation...I don't know what to call it, that the importance of the SRO's both in our middle schools and our high schools, probably became more important this year than any other year in the past, that I'm aware of. We've had assaults on teachers, although there probably have been assaults over the years. Do we know where that stands with the Board of School Committee at all?

Mr. Mara responded we are planning this fiscal year to have no reduction in that.

Alderman O'Neil stated so there will be seven. Is that correct?

Mr. Mara responded that's correct.

Alderman O'Neil asked would you agree...and maybe we can get some data. Is there any way to track activities that they've had this year versus officers that have been in the schools in the past? I seem to be more aware this year of assaults on teachers, assaults on kids. It seems the SRO's have become more valuable than ever in the schools.

Mr. Mara stated we can certainly try to get data.

Alderman O'Neil stated I don't know if there is a way you track it.

Mr. Mara stated I look at it, if the SRO's weren't in there, I think things would be a lot more hectic at the schools. I think they are a great deterrent to have in our schools.

Alderman O'Neil asked is there a way you can try to track at some point?

Mr. Mara responded I can talk to our crime analyst person and see if they can come up with some stats on that. I'm not sure if we track it in that particular manner.

Chairman Lopez stated you have four officers on the Byrne grant and now you're going back out for that. Is that correct? Don't you have four existing officers?

Mr. Mara responded not on the Byrne grant. We have a couple officers on a domestic violence grant. It's on the handout that was passed out tonight.

Chairman Lopez stated I'm trying to get to a number here, the number nine, but there are two officers for MHA too, right?

Mr. Mara responded yes, what MHA does is they give us \$85,000 towards their salaries, so it doesn't cover both of those officers' total salaries.

Chairman Lopez stated with 211 positions, you've got five, nine, eleven, fourteen officers in all those grant mixtures to get you to 225. Is that correct?

Mr. Mara responded that's correct.

Alderman Ouellette stated I'm going to ask you along the same lines that we were asking Chief Burkush. Providing we put back the money for the furloughs, is it my understanding that you're still \$427,837 short between your number and the Mayor's number?

Mr. Mara responded yes.

Alderman Ouellette asked if we give you a budget, how are you going to manage that without that \$427,000?

Mr. Mara responded with any future vacancies, what we would do is keep those vacant. We would try to cut down on the amount of overtime, which would involve taking people out of divisions to cover the overtime as well.

Alderman Ouellette asked are you projecting any retirements next year, and if so, how many?

Mr. Mara responded every year, as I said before, we average about ten. Assuming nothing happens with the retirement bills, we're anticipating possibly eight.

Alderman Ouellette asked would that cover the \$427,000?

Mr. Simmons responded there is also \$300,000 in severance that we'd have to deal with as well. We'd have to make that up.

Mr. Mara stated and it all depends, too, on when those retirements come about, to be able to realize a savings.

Alderman Ouellette asked are you telling this Board that you think competently you can make up that \$427,000 without layoffs?

Mr. Mara responded I would do everything possible. We would have a plan. We would do everything possible not to have any layoffs, but I wouldn't be able to guarantee that.

Alderman Ouellette stated I think I'd like to have you go more into detail in terms of how you would manage that \$427,000, because I think that's important, because if this Board decides to go with the Mayor's number, or we don't have enough votes to override the Mayor's veto in terms of changing that number, I'd like to see what that plan would be, to see how prepared that you'd be ready to go forward with some sort of a plan so I could have a direct understanding of what the actual impact to the department would be, if we were not able to fund that.

Mr. Mara stated what we would do, as I said before, would be through any vacancies or retirements. We would not fill those positions, as well as if there were any overtime spots that would come up. One thing I would guarantee is we would not compromise any emergency services, any patrol units. That would be our first priority. What we would do if any overtime spots would arise, we would pull people out of divisions to fill those cars. We'd see how that worked and, if necessary, there would be some layoffs.

Alderman Ouellette asked the \$300,000 for severance, are you budgeting for that in your budget now?

Mr. Mara responded no, there is no line item in our budget for severance.

Alderman Ouellette asked so you're already projecting that you're going to be in the hole \$300,000 before we even start next year?

Mr. Mara responded if those eight people leave, yes. This year we were fortunate. We were able to make up much of our severance through vacancies, but there is no guarantee that would happen next year.

Alderman Ouellette stated that definitely concerns me about your budget because I couldn't agree more with Alderman Jim Roy last year talking about severance. I think it's something that we really have to start planning for, especially if some of these bills pass the legislature. That would be disastrous.

Alderman M. Roy stated Chief, I'm going to go in a little bit different direction. It's a direction that you've probably come to expect from me. Do you know what your department spent in workers compensation last year?

Mr. Mara responded I'm sorry. We don't have that number.

Alderman M. Roy stated it's a loaded question. It's not in your budget. For the people watching at home, the City spent \$1.04 million in workers compensation. Like severance, we need to get a handle on numbers that affect employees but don't show up in your budget. The Mayor has raised the number to \$1.55 million this year in his budget. I've asked the Finance Department to give us a breakdown by department. Are there ways that you think you could reduce the injuries to officers, patrol staff, front line people, through either changes in technology or changes in how they're trained?

Mr. Mara stated I feel pretty good about our training division. Not only do they get trained up at the state academy but we actually take new recruits once a week when they're in our academy and they're given hand-to-hand combat techniques. They go to a judo studio and we have a couple of officers that are certified in defensive tactics that also offer some training. I know you are a big proponent of tasers. Part of police work, you're always going to have injuries. It's the nature of the job. We just try to give them all the tools that we can, either in training or in technology that our budget will allow.

Alderman M. Roy asked and would you, in modern law enforcement, consider a taser one of those tools?

Mr. Mara responded I am a proponent of tasers. I do feel that it would make the officer's job safer, and also safer for the person. However, as we've had this discussion before and I've looked at other departments that have had it, not only do you have that initial outlay which can be hundreds of thousands of dollars, but every year you have to recertify those officers. In a department of our size that could go from \$40,000 to \$60,000 a year to recertify them, with the overtime costs. So it's cost prohibitive at this time.

Alderman M. Roy stated I agree, and I just wanted to get that on the record again this year.

Alderman Sullivan stated Chief Mara, I have a question about a specific line item in your complement handout that you gave us this evening. It's the victim witness advocate. I'm assuming this is over at District Court for domestic violence.

Mr. Mara stated there is one at District Court and there's one at the station as well.

Alderman Sullivan stated I'm looking on here. It has it listed as vacant. What's the status of the victim advocate right now?

Mr. Mara responded there is a part-time position that's vacant. We're actually doing a background check on an individual right now. That's a 20-hour position.

Alderman Sullivan asked is that under funds that are city budgeted or is that federal?

Mr. Mara responded that's the city budget.

Alderman Sullivan asked are there any federal Violence Against Women Act funding streams available for a position like that?

Mr. Mara responded well, there is funding available. As you can see, we already apply for those and get funding for those positions. We are hoping, based on the stimulus money and all that has been going through, because if you look at them, these grants are slowly due to expire and/or get reduced. We're hoping, with the stimulus money that maybe they won't reduce it in the next year or so, or this year.

Alderman Sullivan stated so we're crossing our fingers on that, but that could potentially help us in that area. Thank you.

Alderman Smith stated Chief, I want to commend you on the fine job you're doing. I noticed under potential funds for Manchester from the stimulus program, you applied for JAG and you applied for COPS hiring recovery already. What about StreetSweeper funds?

Mr. Mara responded we're still waiting to see how much that's going to be. We're going to be in contact with the state police and we usually work in conjunction with them on those funds.

Alderman Smith stated I think this is very important that we get all the potential funding for the department and we know where we stand, because we're going to have to have budget done by June, and I commend you on your efforts in the Police Department and the job you do. Thank you very much.

Mr. Mara stated thank you, and if I can clarify, with this budget we are not asking for Drugs and Guns funds. We're hoping to get that through grant funding. If StreetSweeper doesn't come through, for some reason or doesn't adequately fund it that is why we want to hold some of the additional Byrne grant money.

Alderman O'Neil stated if I can go back to my earlier question, because I have read through your memo again...211 on the complement; 211 city funded; five on the Byrne grant, which we know is here. Somebody else brought up the Housing Authority, MHRA. We're pretty sure on that, correct?

Mr. Mara responded yes.

Alderman O'Neil stated that brings us up to 218 funded. What is the GTEA?

Mr. Mara responded those are Grants To Encourage Arrest funding. Those are the two DART officers that we currently have.

Alderman O'Neil asked and then VAWA?

Mr. Mara responded that's Violence Against Women?

Alderman O'Neil stated that's domestic violence. So, we're pretty sure on funding we can get to 221. Is that correct, if the City funds the 211?

Mr. Mara responded yes if the City funds the 211. As you can see, those other grants that you mentioned, they are due to expire during this fiscal year.

Alderman O'Neil stated but there seems to be some indication that funding will be available.

Mr. Mara responded traditionally it has been and we're hoping nothing changes there. That brings us to 217. The grants you just referred to, there are six positions that are grant funded. Assuming we get the Weed 'N' Seed, the competitive Byrne grant, the MHRA, the VAWA grant and the Grants to Encourage Arrest. That's six positions all together. The 211 brings it to 217. That's another grant that we're hoping that we get. One of our officers right now...the Weed 'N' Seed officer is funded through CIP. There's another competitive Byrne grant that we've applied for his salary and benefits through that. And again, there's no guarantee we're going to get that.

Chairman Lopez stated Chief, I've got one question here. I called you about it, but I've got to bring it up again because it was brought up. In the overtime salary, \$1,368,750, you indicated that there was \$100,000 in that grant that you receive for overtime on the \$659,000. Is that right?

Mr. Simmons responded of that \$659,000, besides the five officers that we want that to fund, we also are applying \$100,000 out of those funds to go into our overtime line item.

Chairman Lopez asked has this number changed then to \$1,268,750?

Mr. Mara responded yes.

Chairman Lopez asked so we save \$100,000 there?

Mr. Mara responded I believe when we looked at it before they put it in the salary. They took it out of the salary line.

Mr. Simmons stated maybe Mr. Sanders could answer that because when we did it over, we removed it from our overtime, but as the Chief just said, it looks like it was actually taken from the salary line, that \$100,000.

Chairman Lopez asked can we have a clarification, Mr. Sanders?

Mr. Bill Sanders, Finance Officer, responded yes, that's probably correct. We took it out his the salary line at City Finance, weren't sure where it went, so we adjusted the salary line.

Chairman Lopez asked and the overtime salary line would be \$1,268,000 then?

Mr. Sanders responded that sounds correct, and salary line would go up by \$100,000.

Chairman Lopez asked can we get an update from Finance on this particular item?

Mr. Sanders responded certainly.

Alderman Gatsas asked Chief, did we authorize you to hire any sworn officers on July 1st of this past year?

Mr. Mara responded yes you did.

Alderman Gatsas asked how many?

Mr. Mara responded at the time it was eleven, I believe.

Alderman Gatsas stated so your complement at that time was 214.

Mr. Mara stated the way the numbers went the highest we got up to was 224 after hiring those people.

Alderman O'Neil stated I had a conversation with the Chief not too long ago about this. We authorized eleven but in fact when you went through your whole process you only ended up with ten that you actually offered jobs to.

Mr. Mara stated that's correct.

Alderman Gatsas stated that was eleven vacancies we authorized to fill to get you to get to 224. Is that what you said?

Mr. Mara responded you authorized us to get to 225 but we only got up to 224.

Alderman Gatsas stated and if I look at the budgeted number for the authorized 224, you were requesting...we budgeted, not your request...we budgeted \$16,295,000. That was for our assumption that you still had ten officers that you would have coming out of your grant positions, correct?

Mr. Mara responded no, that would be six grant positions at the time.

Alderman Gatsas stated so six grant positions would have taken you to 218 that we were funding. Well, I look at that number of 218 versus 211, that's seven officers and it's \$2.3 million in additional salary in the salary line. Something doesn't compute. Do you see what I'm saying? You're requesting for 211 positions on a sheet where you did a very good job of showing us what's on your CIP budget and what's in this budget. I appreciate that, thank you. It's \$13,464, 944. If I were to take those same six positions out of your 224 complement, that you had last year that we budgeted for, because six of

them came out as grants, it would have taken you to 218 positions, because six of them were funded with grants on this side. You're at 226, less six, 218. Is that correct?

Mr. Mara responded I think that's correct. I can tell you that last year we has asked for significantly more to cover those salaries than we actually got.

Alderman Gatsas stated regardless of what you asked for, I know what's in the budget and what you're asking for this year.

Mr. Mara stated that number also includes civilians as well, the 65 civilian positions. There are actually 67 authorized civilian positions.

Alderman Gatsas stated so the number of \$13,964,944, plus \$3,226,900 is \$17, 191,844. So with that number, when you look at those numbers at 211...well forget about the 67 because we'll just leave that on the side...if I pull that number out of here...if I pull that comparable number of \$3.2 million out of what we budget you, you're going to come to \$13 million. You're a million dollars short in your salary line alone.

Alderman O'Neil asked they're a million dollars short?

Alderman Gatsas responded if I take what we budgeted last year, \$16,295,443, and if I take the \$3.2 million for the civilians out of that, it leaves me at \$13 million, roughly, and some change. So I'm looking to see how we possibly, with only \$13 million in the budget, could have taken care of 211 positions, because that's \$485,000 away from where you're going.

Chairman Lopez asked did he count the five officers that he's counting in his...

Alderman Gatsas interjected those are grants.

Chairman Lopez stated but this year he's putting five in those particular grants.

Alderman Gatsas stated I know, but I'm just looking at grant to grant, salary to salary.

Alderman O'Neil asked Alderman, does that include...they presented earlier they were short \$428,000 in their operating budget, over and above the furlough number. Does that enter into that?

Alderman Gatsas responded no, the \$13,964,944 is regardless of furloughs.

Alderman O'Neil stated but they still said they were short \$428,000.

Mr. Simmons stated roughly during the course of the year, on this particular budget, we did a breakdown and it looks like we've saved about \$885,000. That would be from all the people that retired or left during the course of the year.

Alderman Gatsas stated give me that number again, please.

Mr. Simmons stated \$885,000.

Alderman Gatsas asked does that include you paying your severance out of the \$885,000? You had to pay severance. It had to come from your budget, right?

Mr. Simmons responded it didn't come from this, no. It's not part of that \$885,000.

Alderman Gatsas stated but the \$524,000 came from your budget.

Mr. Simmons responded yes.

Alderman O'Neil stated Deputy, I don't know if you caught our earlier discussion with the Fire Department about savings, and that end of it we tried to agree on what the net was. That's a net savings?

Mr. Simmons responded that was a net savings, yes.

Alderman O'Neil stated I don't know if you get caught up in...by us allowing you to bring the complement up to 224 that probably saved you in some overtime, but there was an expense to get there.

Mr. Simmons stated I can tell you that we got up to 224. We hired those ten but in a few months we were back down to being short eleven again. Then we hired five more, so that's why we're...

Alderman Gatsas stated it's a \$360,000 net savings. I'm using round numbers.

Alderman M. Roy stated Gary or Chief, while you're doing this and we're getting the numbers from...comparison of last year to this year, what is your Board-authorized over-expenditure that you're currently at?

Mr. Mara responded we've been authorized to hire up to 225.

Alderman M. Roy stated I'm just talking budget numbers. Every month we get a slip from the Finance Director that says, 'X department is in this condition.' If we're really talking apples to apples, and I expressed by the 'Board-authorized' because we directed you to do that, what is that number that needs to be calculated?

Alderman O'Neil stated I've got it right in front of me, the last one I think, from April 7th.

Mr. Sanders stated I have one here that I'll be issuing tomorrow night. The Police Department, based on their latest forecast, is projecting an expenditure deficit of about \$204,000 for this fiscal year.

Alderman Gatsas stated so that's a \$320,000 net instead of \$360,000.

*There being no other business to come before the Board, on motion of **Alderman Smith**, duly seconded by **Alderman Shea**, it was voted to adjourn.*

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk