

TOWN COUNCIL
Town of Trumbull
CONNECTICUT
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TOWN HALL
Trumbull

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FINANCE COMMITTEE
FY2023-2024 PUBLIC HEARING
MINUTES
APRIL 24, 2023

CALL

TO ORDER:

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. All present joined in a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT:

Kevin Shively, Mary Isaac, Nicole Satin, Anthony Dorsey, Tony Scinto, oy Colon, Mike Buswell, Alissa Hall, Jason Marsh, Kelly Mallozzi, Steve Lemoine, Thomas Whitmoyer, Ashley Gaudiano

ALSO

PRESENT:

First Selectman Vicki A. Tesoro, Chief Administrative Officers Cynthia Katske and Kathleen McGannon, Town Attorney Daniel Schopick, BOF Chairman Lainie McHugh, Economic & Community Development Director Rina Bakalar

The Chair explained this is the FY2023-2024 Budget public hearing, the full Town Council will vote on the budget next Thursday, May 4, 2023 and the Finance Committee will vote on Monday, May 1, 2023. The budget goes back to the BOF after the Council adopts the budget to set the mill rate. Once an allocation is made by the Town Council the BOE gets their lump sum, they determine how that is spent. If there are specific interests with what the BOE the Chair recommended to reach out directly to the BOE.

The Chair asked those present to speak to keep their comments to two (2) minutes.

There were two (2) people present to speak.

1. Kevin Plumb an EMS volunteer and a technology executive professionally was present. He advocated for the Trumbull EMS budget as it was submitted. The requested funding will allow the service to attract and retain the best possible talent. There's real competition in the Bridgeport area for EMT's and paramedics. In the end our ability to

have and retain the best talent is clearly the main objective. The need for EMTs and paramedics in the United States is significant at this point in time. The demand of these roles will continue to grow significantly in the coming years by factors such as our aging population, population growth, and increased chronic health issues all present here in the Trumbull. Additionally, the amount of high stress involvement and environment that these EMS workers often have to deal with is significant, such as life threatening medical emergencies, traumatic accidents and other things. These all take a toll on the mental and emotional health of these care providers within our town. A study by the Journal of Emergency Medical Services have found EMS workers are 10 times more likely to attempt suicide than the average population.

According to the Department of Labor the median average wage for a police officer in 2020 in the state of Connecticut is \$74,000 an EMT is \$38,000. Based on the MIT living wage calculator this for a single adult in Connecticut is \$31,000. So that is something to consider as we try to attract the best possible people we can offer the service.

With regard to the Town's long range financial planning he asked to consider a thorough objective review of the Trumbull EMS facility. It was currently opened in 1976 with the original intent to support a volunteer service that primarily responded from home and now currently is a facility staffed 24-hours a day. They are not called to responding from home. The crews are living and sleeping in the EMS quarters, when you go through and take an objective look, you'll see there is some real missing pieces there. Mr. Plumb submitted a picture of the EMS sleeping quarters, (attached). We expect them at two o'clock in the morning to wake up and be their best when we need someone like them the most. Improving the facility is something to consider.

2. Maria Chappa lifelong resident, a former EMS volunteer and now a paid per diem staff EMT was present. Currently she is a long-term substitute science teacher in Shelton at their middle school, when she accepted the position she was shocked to learn she would be making \$30 per hour. As an EMT she is paid \$19 per hour, an \$11 per hour difference. Teaching is difficult but it is nothing compared to working in EMS.

A day in EMS is as follows:

You and your crew members perform CPR on someone who had three kids and a wife back home, but will not make it back one more time, then you are sent to a home of an elderly resident who has fallen and has no one to help them up, by hour five you are talking with a patient who has decided to end their life. All these people need your help. By hour eight you're exhausted and hungry because you haven't had time to eat a full meal during your shift. You finally come back to a station built in 1976 with no renovation since to chart. When you get home you can't stop thinking about the kids that will never see their dad again and how you tried so hard to save them, all for \$19 an hour.

According to an article published in the Trumbull Times March 1, 2023 the starting salary of a police officer in Trumbull is around \$65,000. The starting salary for an EMT for the town of Trumbull is about \$20,000 to \$30,000 less. Now I'm not disregarding the police department does work very closely with EMS and does appreciate everything they

do. She brings up their base salary to show the drastic difference between the two services. Both are staffed 24-hours a day, 365 days a year. Both services dedicate their days to helping the community. Two years ago she worked a shift on Thanksgiving, two crews were dispatched to a scene for a cardiac arrest, unfortunately, they arrived far too late to be able to even initiate resuscitation efforts. This year on Thanksgiving she thought about that elderly woman the entire day wishing she had been found her hours earlier.

69% of EMS providers reported not having enough time to recover between traumatic events that happened on shift, survey also shows about 30% of first responders experience PTSD, anxiety and depression. This is about 10% more than the general population. Now you might be wondering why don't they attend therapy or reach out for help. In Connecticut, a single therapy session for someone without insurance can cost up to \$250 a session. Most people attending therapy may have between one-two sessions a week. This means the total for a month will range \$1,000-\$2,000, about on average \$18,000 a year on a salary of \$44,000. On top of that the individual has to pay rent utilities, buy food, make car payments, and even support their family if applicable. If it came down to putting food on the table for her children or attending therapy, she would most likely feed her children.

Over the past few years the town of Trumbull has acquired several apartment buildings. The Residence at Main, 10 Trumbull and Woodside Trumbull to name a few and collectively these apartments have about 661 units. With more apartment buildings come more residents, and more possible patients needing to be transported to the hospital. In order to keep up with this demand, the Town will have to expand staffing for Trumbull EMS, in turn, the budget must be increased. She along with the members of Trumbull EMS urge the town of Trumbull to increase the budget. In the end the quality of care provided to the town is in their hands.

Hearing no further comments from the public the public hearing was closed at 7:13 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Margaret D. Mastroni
Margaret D. Mastroni, Clerk

**Supplemental Picture for Kevin Plumb Public Comments
Trumbull Emergency Medical Service
Existing Sleeping Quarters
4/24/23**

