

Police, city come to terms

By ELIO GUGLIOTTI
STAFF WRITER

The city and police union have agreed to concessions, thereby avoiding a reshuffling of the police department's ranks.

The police union has agreed to give the city back its \$1,000 clothing allowance for officers, which equates to a savings of about \$104,000 for the city.

The concession was approved by the City Council, 4-0, during a special meeting June 26. City councilors Craig Minor, Frank Nicastro, and Kevin McCauley were absent.

"We're very grateful that we've been able to negotiate with all the unions," said Mayor Art Ward.

The police union was the last union to agree to concessions.

The city approved a budget in early June that

didn't increase taxes. During the weeks leading up to the budget adoption, the city approached the unions for concessions in order to keep taxes flat and avoid layoffs.

Two unions, representing support staff and supervisors, agreed to forgo scheduled raises before the budget vote. The police union and the union that represents "outside workers," initially balked at the city's request.

The city is currently in arbitration with the fire union over its contract.

When it came time to vote on the budget, the city approved a plan to lay off three laborer positions within the Public Works Department, and demoting two higher ranking positions in the police department back to the patrol division to balance the budget.

However, officials left a window open for the

unions to come back with concessions.

The "outside workers" union did so shortly after the budget was approved and agreed to give back their scheduled 1.8 percent raises for this year. The raise had been agreed to earlier in the year during contract negotiations.

By agreeing to give back their raises, the positions intended for lay-offs were reinstated.

Now that the police union has agreed to concessions reshuffling the ranks will no longer be necessary.

"I'm grateful that everybody understood the economic situation and stepped up to the plate and came to terms so that everyone's job is secure," said Ward.

Comments? Email Egugliotti@BristolObserver.com.

Pizza delivery man robbed on Gridley Street

A pizza delivery man was robbed at gunpoint as he was trying to deliver a pizza on Gridley Street.

Police said a delivery man from People's Choice was bringing a pizza to 147 Gridley St. at about 10:45 p.m. Saturday, June 27 when the suspect approached the man from behind and put a gun to his face. The suspect

demanded money and the pizza from the delivery man, police said.

Police said the delivery man gave the suspect between \$40 and \$50 and the pizza, who then left the scene.

The suspect was described as a white male, about 5 feet 10 inches tall, with a thin build, police

said. At the time of the robbery, the suspect was wearing a dark colored baseball hat, sunglasses, a blue bandana over his face and a black jacket and dark jeans, police said.

As of press time the investigation into the robbery remained open.

Elio Gugliotti

Youth employment receives funding

The city will receive \$287,655 of stimulus funds for a summer youth employment program.

The funds were announced by state Rep. Chris Wright (D-Bristol) in a prepared release.

"This is great news for Bristol's youth who were counting on these summer jobs," Wright said in a written statement. "With significant cuts to summer youth jobs funding at both the local and state level, this money was desperately needed to provide the invaluable work experience that will provide lasting benefits throughout their lives."

The city's share comes out of \$11 million of stimulus funds approved by the state legislature for the program statewide. The summer jobs program runs for six weeks beginning July 6, with jobs reserved for youth

ages 18 to 24 and employment centered on working in parks and at summer camps.

Bristol's share of the money is expected to fund 105 jobs Wright said in the release.

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Defibrillator: Supported by Heart Association

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forward for keeping people healthy and alive," Harris said.

State lawmakers weren't the only staunch supporters of the bill. The American Heart Association whole-heartedly backed the legislation.

"We absolutely love this bill," said Joni Czajkowski, senior director of government relations for the association.

According to the latest statistics supplied by the association, there are more than 265,000 out-of-hospital sudden heart attacks in the United States annually. Out of those figures, only 5 to 8 percent of the people survive because CPR and defibrillation efforts are administered too late.

Harris said statistics show that the use of CPR and defibrillators immediately after a heart attack dramatically affect the survival rate of a heart attack victim.

"Once you have that, the survival rate increases each minute," said Harris.

According to the association, 552 people died of a heart attack in the state during 2006, the latest statistics available.

Robert Townes, senior regional director of communications for the association, said statistics for youths who suffered heart attacks were not available. Although he said the figures would be less than that of adults, youth who suffer heart attacks are not uncommon.

"It happens more often than people think," Townes said.

Over the last school year, a 10-year-old in Stamford had a heart attack during recess in December.

A school custodian is credited with saving the student's life, because he immediately began performing CPR.

A 16-year-old junior at Windham Technical High School in Willimantic wasn't so lucky. The student suffered from heart complications during a warm up for wrestling in October and died.

The bill itself was initiated after the death in Norwich in 2007 of a 17-year-old student, who died from a heart attack during a run. The student's parents started a memorial fund after the student's death to raise awareness and buy defibrillators for schools.

The intent of the bill is not lost on Streifer, who said he understands and appreciates the bill's purpose. But, it's the way the bill itself is written that has Streifer frustrated.

The bill includes a section that states if they can't afford it, school districts will not have to be in compliance with the law next year.

"That's ridiculous legislation, either mandate it or don't," said Streifer.

Czajkowski said the bill was written in a creative way so that no federal, state, or local funds are needed to buy the defibrillators, which she estimated cost between \$1,000 to \$1,200. The bill was written, she said, with the idea that school districts would receive donations

from civic organizations for the equipment.

Harris said the last thing the state wanted to do, especially in the current economic conditions, was force another unfunded mandate on school districts.

"We know through our research, there are private funds available," Harris said.

However, Streifer felt if the school district can't afford or doesn't receive enough donations to buy the equipment and train staff, the law could leave the district vulnerable to lawsuits.

"What it essentially does it put school districts at financial risk for potential lawsuits," Streifer said

Harris disagreed with Streifer saying the law states school districts are only responsible, if they can afford it.

"I don't see any real exposure," Harris said.

How the school district handles the issue has yet to be determined.

Over the coming weeks, Streifer said, officials will sit down with companies that provide the needed services and equipment and then make a recommendation to the Board of Education.

"At this point, I can't tell you what we're going to do," Streifer said.

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