

number of drug arrests last year with the same number of officers. Major Jarvies replied that it was the result of more coordination with other agencies, more interaction between the Narcotics Unit and Patrol officers, cooperation from the courts, and citizens calling in and giving information. Mr. Horton added that the Town was especially grateful to the judges who had effectively banned people from going back into the areas where they had been arrested for illegal activities. Mayor Waldorf asked if all of the District Court judges were doing that now, and Major Jarvies replied that they were.

Mayor Waldorf asked if the rule for Project Turn Around continued to be that it had to be a drug offense that did not involve a weapon. Major Jarvies replied that it was. Mayor Waldorf praised that program and noted that it had begun with a small grant.

### **Budget Presentation: Fire Department**

Fire Chief Dan Jones noted that the Fire Department was facing issues of new technologies and growth. He said that they had been significantly impacted this year by the Council's decision last year to add six new positions and a small attack pumper at the Elliott Road Fire Station. Chief Jones stated that this had been the first step in a three-step process, which will include six additional firefighters this year, giving the 12 needed to open the new station at Southern Village. He explained that the Department would request six additional personnel next year to put the mini-pumper back in place.

Chief Jones stated that the Department's base budget was within the guidelines. He noted that they have an aging fleet, which is an increasing maintenance demand, and said that they had been working with Public Works to try and address that. He added that they would also be contracting out some maintenance work on the pumpers.

Chief Jones noted that they had added dollars to the building maintenance account. He pointed out that the Capital Improvements project that the Council had authorized to renovate the training facility had been completed. Chief Jones explained that the Department had ongoing replacement issues for fire hoses and radios and so forth, but had a program in place for replacing them on a schedule. The exception, he said, was that they are facing replacing their entire breathing apparatus due to large technological advances in the industry and upgraded standards. Chief Jones said that the Department should be coming back to the Council in the spring with bids to begin construction of the Southern Village fire station.

Council Member Bateman asked how many of the firefighters in each division are Spanish-speaking. Chief Jones replied that there were only two employees at the current time who were Spanish-speaking. In the Administration Division, he explained, there were four. He stated that there were fifty-four in the Suppression Division and three in the Prevention Division.

Council Member Bateman asked why the Town was hiring six firefighters a year before the station was ready. Chief Jones replied that the plan was to have that fire station open by July 2001. He explained that new firefighters needed to be trained and acclimated to the system, procedures, equipment, and layout of the community. He said that they needed six months to do that, and noted that the Manager had

challenged him to do it in three months, which would be difficult, he said.

Mr. Horton pointed out that firefighting depends on coordinated, skilled teamwork. He noted that it takes time for new people to learn this and for more experienced employees to understand it. Mr. Horton agreed that six months would be preferable, but added that since the Town could not afford that this year he thought it could be done in three.

Mayor Waldorf asked if the \$292,000 was for six positions for a full year, pointing out that the staff was recommending half that figure. Mr. Horton said that he would recommend half of that amount.

Council Member Foy asked how the Town would pay for fire service if it annexed Southern Village in June but could not have the fire station ready until September. Mr. Horton replied that it could be provided from other stations, or, as an alternate, Southern Village could continue to use the services that are provided in that area by North Chatham Fire Department. Council Member Foy asked if the Town would pay for that. Mr. Horton replied that they would, noting that there would be costs associated with it in any case. Council Member Foy asked how much it would cost. Chief Jones answered that it would be negotiated with North Chatham. Mr. Horton pointed out that the Town probably would cover from other stations and avoid that cost. Chief Jones stated that he was optimistic that the station would be open by July 1<sup>st</sup>, but, if not, another option would be to temporarily house some personnel and a pumper in that part of Town, since it will be summertime.

Council Member Ward asked if costs for the training position and the Inspector 2000 tracking program were included in the budget. Chief Jones replied that they would be add-ons. Council Member Ward asked what the best estimates were for potential revenue from training facility user fees. Chief Jones replied that they had proposed that the fire training public education position combine two former positions because of revenue problems this year. He said that Inspector 2000 is a software program for computers in the field, which would make it a much more efficient operation.

Chief Jones said that he did not see the training facility generating much revenue because those who use it (except for the Town of Carrboro) do not contribute to its renovation. He explained that he had proposed user fees to try and recover the costs of wear and tear on the facility.

Council Member Wiggins asked if the Fire Department was facing a challenge to stay fully staffed. Chief Jones replied that there had been no problems finding recruits, but the Department does have trouble finding a diverse group of recruits. He said that they are aggressively pursuing that. Council Member Wiggins asked about the Fire Academy, which had been set up for that purpose. Chief Jones said that his staff was too limited now to continue that program.

Council Member Ward observed that the Fire and Police Departments' budgets had both increased. He asked for comments from the Manager on how to "get a grip" on that kind of growth. Mr. Horton explained that this was the first increase for the Fire Department since 1982. He pointed out that there had been no change in basic personnel for 17 years, and commented that they should be able to go several more years without another such increase.

Council Member Foy asked when the Council would see revenue projections for Southern Village. Mr. Horton replied that there was a hearing on annexation scheduled for March 20<sup>th</sup>. He said that the Council would have a tighter set of numbers on cost and revenues then.

Council Member Strom asked if the revenue from the State to provide services to the UNC campus was fixed or negotiated. Mr. Horton replied that it had been a fixed number for many years, having gone up from zero. He said that the Town was grateful to have the new level of funding and that it probably would stay at that level unless political conditions were to change. Mayor Waldorf added that the State Legislature had determined the amount.

Mr. Horton commented that a very large percentage of false alarms come from the UNC campus. He said that the Town would be looking at assessing some penalties for those alarms.

Council Member Brown asked how close the State funding comes to the actual cost of serving the campus. Chief Jones replied that it makes up about 25% of the budget and that service to UNC costs between 28% and 30% of the budget. Mayor Waldorf noted that there were capital equipment issues as well, adding that she was not sure that the Town would have had to buy the ladder truck if it were not for the campus. Mr. Horton replied that the Town would still have needed the truck because there are houses in Town that are as big as commercial buildings.

Council Member Ward asked if the Council could add this to their list of legislative matters. Mayor Waldorf replied that they could, but expressed concern that the funding might be taken away if too much attention were drawn to it. Mr. Horton added that the Town had to beg last time to hold on to that funding.

Mayor Waldorf asked Chief Jones to comment on the Fire Department's lack of a thermal imaging camera. Chief Jones described the various advantages of having such a camera (particularly the ability to see through smoke) and outlined the attempts the Department had made (including approaching the University) to fund one for each truck. Mayor Waldorf reacted enthusiastically to the idea of asking the University and suggested bringing it up with the Board of Trustees. She noted that the Town needed five cameras and said she believed this was important even though they cost \$25,000 each.

Council Member Bateman volunteered to help raise funds for the cameras.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m.