

TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
TRAINING ROOM AT PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING
MONDAY, MARCH 9, 2015

Advisory Board members in attendance – Bill Johnson, Chair, Joe Oliveira, Gail Dumont, Bruce Whitney, and Jaime Piedrafite. Also in attendance - Doug Briggs, Town Administrator and Sylvia Turcotte, Executive Assistant.

The meeting was called to order at 7:09 p.m. Bill Johnson noted that they were meeting to review the FY16 Budget now that it has been updated after the Governor's budget was released and to discuss what should be presented at Town Meeting.

Doug Briggs stated that he sent out his Executive Summary on the FY16 Budget noting that it's a balanced budget with a .8% increase and that the only override would be the School's. He also noted that Retiree Health Insurance could be an issue down the road. He added that they need to put away money for this, \$45,000, as they did last year. There was a short discussion on whether the Retiree Health Insurance benefit could be undone.

Mr. Briggs proceeded with his Executive Summary with the topic of Wages. He stated that the FY16 Budget shows general wage increases of 2% for employees covered under programs/contracts that include step increases. He listed those non-union employees who would be receiving a step increase along with the 2%. He noted that other employees without step increases would receive a 3% raise. He added that the four unions should come to an agreement/settlement in FY15.

He then went to AWRSD and Monty Tech. Four concerned parents were present and questioned the proposed cuts the School Committee noted at their last meeting. They asked if the Town could give the School more. Bill Johnson explained that the School didn't have the House 1 numbers for their meeting so it was basically a first review of their budget. He added that the Town is at its levy limit so there would need to be a Prop 2 ½ override to increase the Town's contribution. He noted that the Town currently pays over the net minimum to the School. Joe Oliveira noted that cutting teachers is a yearly threat and that once all the numbers are in we'll know more. More discussion followed to explain to the four concerned parents that were present about the School budget issues.

Mr. Briggs then reviewed the Revenue numbers noting that the indirect cost revenues for Sewer, Water and Light Departments went down per the request of our auditor to bill them directly.

There was a short discussion on how to present the budget at town meeting. Joe Oliveira stated that he wanted to give a 15 minute PowerPoint presentation at the beginning of the meeting to discuss the tax bills in order to help people to understand and also to break out the budget by School and Town. Bill Johnson also noted that they should look at making some changes to their handout and to get it on the website before town meeting.

Doug Briggs went over the Expenses/Budget by department. He noted any increases were minor in most areas. Some discussion followed.

It was determined that another meeting was required and was settled on Monday, March 23rd at 7:00 p.m.

At 9:33 p.m. Gail Dumont made the motion to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Joe Oliveira. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Sylvia Turcotte
Executive Assistant