

Board of Selectmen Meeting

Minutes – February 11, 2015

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Call to Order

A regular meeting of the Deerfield Board of Selectmen was held on February 11, 2015.

Present: Carolyn Shores Ness (Chair), Mark Gilmore, David Wolfram

Also Present: Kayce Warren, Town Administrator

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 PM.

Review of Minutes

The minutes of February 4 were reviewed.

It was MOVED by Gilmore, SECONDED by Wolfram

To accept the minutes as printed.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Presentations Before the Board

Patricia Cavanaugh, Frontier Regional School, Union 38

Ms. Cavanaugh, replying to questions from the board, spoke in regard to renovations needed for the Deerfield Elementary School, particularly the roof renovation. Also present was Bob Lesko, who spoke about the potential costs related to the roof repair / replacement, and the potential of adding solar panels to the south side roof, in order to save energy costs. Ms. Cavanaugh also presented pictures of the roof as it currently stands.

Ms. Cavanaugh requested the board read and sign a resolution in support of the SBA application for the project.

It was MOVED by Wolfram, SECONDED by Gilmore

To adopt the following resolution:

“Resolved: Having convened in an open meeting on February 11, 2015, prior to the closing date, the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Deerfield, in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated February 13, 2015 for the Deerfield Elementary School located at 21 Pleasant Street, Deerfield, MA, which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category (s) for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future for Priority #5, Replacement, renovation or modernization of school facility systems, such as roofs, windows, boilers, heating and ventilation systems, to increase energy conservation and decrease energy related costs in a school facility, specifically a roof replacement; and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the City/Town/Regional School District to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.”

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

Ms. Cavanaugh described the timeline for the project. Mr. Gilmore stated his concerns with the timeline, and the fragility of the roof; Mr. Lesko described the mitigation efforts that are ongoing, and

that will be continued. Leaks seem to be caused by ice-jambs; heat tape has been replaced over time, but the struggle with leaks is ongoing.

Ms. Cavanaugh also stated that the process should have been started earlier.

Mr. Gilmore stated his concerns with the project overall, and the fact that the building seems to be prematurely failing.

Ms. Cavanaugh agreed with his concerns, and endorsed the SBA program as a potential resolution for these concerns.

Mr. Gilmore also expressed his concern with the cost of the renovation, the predicament that the town finds itself in relation to this project, and the overall quality of recent school building projects.

Ms. Cavanaugh reiterated her support for the SBA program, and DCAM as a partner in this project.

Mr. Gilmore reiterated his concerns about pre-mature failure of components and buildings, and the concern with having designer requirements for the project.

Ms. Ness thanked Ms. Cavanaugh and Mr. Lesko's support for their time.

Town Administrator's Report

WWTP Presentation

The Town Administrator spoke briefly about the presentation from the night previous, in regard to the proposed WWTP project. A handout is going to be provided by Weston and Sampson, and the presentation will be available for viewing on local access TV.

Ms. Ness expressed her interest in getting the project into the next statewide funding cycle.

Ms. Ness asked about the potential of discussing regionalization of wastewater treatment services. Ms. Warren stated that the topic has been broached, and there is interest in the conversation.

Ms. Ness also expressed her interest in discussing a potential regional services arrangement with Greenfield. She further stated that the best possible financing option is through a MassWorks grant, and she reiterated her interest in getting 'into' the next funding cycle.

Mr. Wolfram stated that part of the long-range planning process included modifying the existing South Deerfield plant to accept flow from Sunderland, plus extending the sewer up through Route 5 & 10.

Ms. Ness summarized that there are a great deal of options, and that ongoing discussion about regional options with neighboring towns should continue, as should efforts to get into the MassWorks funding cycle.

Mr. Wolfram stated that, regardless of regionalizing efforts, there are immediate concerns that must be addressed.

Other Matters

Ms. Warren presented a capital request from the Superintendent of Schools, for \$12,000 to complete a study related to retirement costs and planning, and to the establishment of OPEB.

Regionalization was discussed, as a solution for some concerns being considered by towns and schools.

Ms. Warren also presented the budget for the Regional Canine Control. Ms. Ness asked about the possibility for a vehicle replacement. Ms. Warren replied that a request has not been received.

It was MOVED by Gilmore, SECONDED by Wolfram

To approve the Canine Control Budget as submitted

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

Ms. Warren discussed the possibility of holding meetings with representatives for other towns to discuss regionalization. A meeting date of February 18, 6 PM was proposed, with the regular Board of Selectmen's meeting to follow immediately after. February 19, after the SCEMS Board of Oversight meeting was proposed as a backup. Ms. Warren will discuss dates and report back to the board.

Ms. Warren also spoke about a 'Grease' policy for the town; a guideline for the development of a 'grease' policy was presented; the potential of a moratorium was discussed.

Gilmore: Why does the town accept grease now? If we say 'no more grease' how will that affect the town, and overall?

Wolfram: the largest volume is trucked in.

Ness: A moratorium will allow us to consider the issue, and develop a formal policy.

Gilmore: You don't know who a moratorium will affect.

Ness: Yes, we do. One entity, one truck, currently. A moratorium may also allow us to consider the impact on town finances, WWTP operations and local businesses and even households. This is an issue, similar to the 'flushables' problem that the town is dealing with.

Warren: The moratorium will be only on trucked in grease?

Wolfram: Yes.

Gilmore: No one is bringing in grease in pails?

Warren: No – that answer is confirmed by WWTP Supervisor.

It was MOVED by Wolfram, SECONDED by Ness

To put a moratorium on accepting grease at the Waste Water Treatment Plants, until such time as a town policy can be established.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

Budgets

Ms. Warren stated that work on budgets is ongoing, including trying to get a budget from Frontier Regional Schools. Deerfield's percentage is about 46%. A public hearing on the FRS budget will be on or about March 10, with a vote likely to follow.

Revenue figures have been available since early December.

Mr. Olmstead (in audience) reported that a five-year average of income figures are being used to predict expected income for the FY2016 budget process.

Expedited Permitting District Application Packet

A draft version of the EPD Application was presented. Ms. Warren discussed the process used to develop the application, including adherence to the EPD bylaw, and fees.

Ness: What are other towns doing? Does this compare to other town's EPD application / requirements?

The board will take this under advisement. Town Administrator is directed to provide comparison of this process with other towns and cities, including process and fees.

Joint Meeting with Recreation Department

Rob Ackerman, Committee Chair; Sue Antonellis, Rec Director, and several members of the committee were present.

Mr. Ackerman discussed the Recreation Department's current program offerings. Budget request is level funded for FY2016. The Committee is proposing to slightly increase fees to pay for additional maintenance costs.

Question: Will increases of fees affect attendance?

Answer: No. Fees for Rec Department programs are very reasonable.

Question: What are the thoughts of the committee in regard to regionalization?

Response: Explain...

Question: Regionalizing – in several departments – is being considered as a means to cut operational expenses. One thought is to 'share' the position with other towns, to lessen costs.

Answer: That's being done already, to some extent. Regular regional collaboration is being conducted, mostly in terms of sports programs, field use, etc. All adult programs are currently available to residents from other towns.

Gilmore: True regionalization would allow access to other streams of funding that may not be currently available. Regionalizing recreation is a lower-priority, and there are other items on the plate; however, the BOS is asking many departments to consider ways to share services with other towns – and share revenues.

Question: Are there any incentives for regionalization?

Gilmore: There are. Many specialized grants look more favorably on regionalizing efforts.

Discussion continued, including discussion on a proposed project/study to consider regionalization options as related to the Recreation Department.

Mr. Ackerman stated that the Rec Committee had not considered regionalization as a potential. Should there be some action on the part of the committee? Ms. Ness suggested that a conversation might take place, and potential options for regional cooperation might be considered and discussed.

Ms. Ness stated that budgets are stretched to the limit. "Let's not talk about cutting services, let's talk about how to maintain and grow what we have." How do we go to the next level? How do we maintain fulltime staff? How do we maintain program quality and quantity?

Ms. Ness reiterated that the board is not in favor of continuing to cut budgets, and is looking for options to maintain services through innovations like regionalization. The Rec Committee was requested to meet again near the end of March to continue the conversation.

Public Comment

Mr. Olmstead spoke about a memo sent to the Finance Committee, regarding the budget process, and a response that was sent.

Ms. Ness responded, stating that level funding was requested of departments, and that the goal of the budget was to be level-funded.

Olmstead: I didn't ask for a level-funded budget.

Ness: You asked for 'no increases'.

Olmstead: I didn't say 'no increases' I said that we don't have the funds. Finance Committee is looking at the potential of a Prop 2 ½ override, but don't have determination that it is going to happen. If an override isn't going to happen, the Finance Committee can recommend based on that. We are looking for the budget information, and you're not giving it.

Ness: You are getting the budget information as we receive it.

Olmstead: A number of budgets are missing. When are we going to get this information?

Ness: When we get it.

Olmstead: You're saying that FinComm will get it when you want it to be released.

Ness: No, you'll get it when we finalize the information!

Olmstead: When will you have the budget so that we can review them?

Ness: As soon as we have them.

Olmstead: That's not acceptable.

Warren: What's your solution? What part of our current workload should we stop?

Olmstead: That's your decision.

The discussion continued. A heated exchange between Olmstead and Wolfram in regard to the timeliness of budget submission. Olmstead stated that the deadline of town meeting loomed.

Gilmore: Finance Committee wants all the information, regardless as to whether it is available or not. A number of factors have contributed to late budget submission. The BOS can mandate that town departments submit their budgets by a deadline. However, there are a number of factors that prevent from this happening. There are additional options.

Ongoing discussion about the difficulties of getting budgets to the Finance Committee. Concerns about the possibility of continuing the Annual Town Meeting to a date later in the fiscal year. Discussion about other budgets that can't be adjusted after the fact.

Mr. Olmstead requested an update on OPEB. Ms. Ness replied that, based on her research, there was potential to reduce pension payments, and maintain the town's bonding rating.

Olmstead: we need to have the conversation soon.

Gilmore: I don't think we need to do research on something that is causing great trouble to all towns and cities in the commonwealth. If we start throwing money at the problem, only to find out that the problem is going to be solved in other ways, we've wasted time and money.

Warren: Any discussion or plan regarding OPEB needs to be an education, considered choice.

Warren: (to Olmstead): If the finance committee has specific questions for specific people or department, write it down, send it via e-mail to the person. Allow the department head to respond in a careful, considered way.

Olmstead: We've gone through these budgets before. Unless there's a substantial change to these budgets, we won't need to see these individuals.

Gilmore: If you don't have questions, why do you want to see the department head to appear before the committee?

The discussion continued, particularly in relation to the School Committee, the FRS and U38 budgets, and the role of the Finance Committee in the development of those budgets. Mr. Olmstead was encouraged to task the Finance Committee to engage the School Committees as they deliberate on their budgets.

Upcoming Meetings

The board agreed to meet on February 18, but to not meet on February 25.

Executive Session

It was MOVED by Ness, SECONDED by Wolfram

To enter into Executive Session as allowed by M.G.L. c.30A §21(a)(6) to consider the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property, (specifically, the so-called "Oxford" property), the Chair so declaring that an open session may have a detrimental effect on the Town's negotiating position.

ROLL CALL VOTE: GILMORE: YES; WOLFRAM: YES; NESS: YES.

The chair stated that no further business would be conducted after resuming from Executive Session.

The board was adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas C. Finn

Document List

SBA Resolution