

Deerfield Board of Selectmen

March 11, 2015

A regular meeting of the Deerfield Board of Selectmen was held on March 11, 2015, at Deerfield Town Hall, 8 Conway Street, South Deerfield, MA.

PRESENT: Gilmore, Wolfram, Ness; also Kayce Warren, Town Administrator.

The meeting was called to order at 6:15 PM.

PRESENTATIONS

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT: PAN AM RAILWAYS

The board received a presentation from Environmental Resources Management in regard to the Deerfield Rail Yard. Presentation was given by Lindsey Colburn, John Drobinski, and Tom Mosher.

Generally, the presentation addressed past efforts and future remediation planning related to the “Lake Asphalt” site, identified as RTN 1-16603 (related to petroleum hydrocarbons in groundwater, and low-level asbestos remediation), and RT 1-15823 (related to diesel releases and abatement / remediation efforts), and other environmental concerns.

Specifics were discussed in relation to “Cap and Cover” remediation for asbestos, PAH (petrochemical aromatic hydrocarbons) and institutional controls (such as deed restrictions) for lead remediation; monitoring efforts related to VPH impacted groundwater were also discussed. ⁱ

There was some discussion about the resolution strategies, and coordination of information with GeoInsight as the Town’s agent and advisor.

DEBORAH BLODGETT; CIVIL WAR MONUMENT PRESENTATION

The board received a presentation in regard to the conservation and preservation of the Civil War Monument located in Old Deerfield. Presentation was given by volunteer researcher Deborah Blodgett, and Tim Neumann, Executive Director of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association.ⁱⁱ Application has been made for CPC grant funds to support preservation efforts.

There was some discussion of methods of preservation, including replication of the sculpture in other materials, including bronze and other materials.

Mr. Gilmore suggested that the Historic Commission needs to suggest a plan of attack, and that the primary concerns are (a) the risk of the monument’s collapse related to the safety passers-by, and (b) whether or not the Board expresses support for stabilization and renovation efforts.

There was some discussion about fundraising efforts related to the preservation efforts.

Blodgett: Well, now you know there is a problem, and that something must be done from the safety standpoint. There is damage, and something must be done now.

Gilmore stated that priorities were stabilization, preservation, and redisplay. Blodgett stated that they received a price for stabilization, but that was part of a larger removal, and preservation effort.

Neumann stated that they were not asking for specific action or decisions, but to make the board aware of the current status of the monument.

There was additional conversation about potential public and private funding partners.

More information was to be needed, and will be forthcoming.

DISCUSSION / DECISION ITEMS

OUTREACH COORDINATOR APPOINTMENT

A letter from Diana Damon was considered. The SCSC Board of Oversight had

It was MOVED by Gilmore, SECONDED by

To confirm the appointment by the SCSC Board of Oversight of Theresa Dempsey to the South County Senior Center Outreach Coordinator position.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

PROPOSED PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION ON FY2016 BUDGET

An initial proposal for “Your Town 2016”, a televised information session promoting the town budget and the efforts of town departments, slated to air on April 8, 2015, was reviewed.

There was discussion about the status of information, and the deadline for budgets related to preparation time necessary for the project.

There was some discussion on the Governor’s budget, and changes to funding levels, particularly related to charter school reimbursement.

There was additional discussion about other changes and reductions to levels of funding from the state.

Specifics of the information session will be developed over the next week.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR ‘S REPORT

The Town Administrator reported on the Frontier Regional Schools budget request as voted, and the increase to the request made by the FRS Committee. There was some discussion on the effect of the increase as related to the DES Committee, and their proposed budget.

Gilmore: We had a school committee who opted to ignore the recommendations of their staff – the school superintendent and school business manager. That’s our issue. Why does the committee feel compelled to change the recommendation without any real deliberations with the towns?

Wolfram: Agreed – No blame should fall on the School Administration. They did a tremendous job preparing the budget.

Gilmore: The FRS Committee should provide an explanation as to why they did what they did.

The Town Administrator advised that some information might be found in the minutes of the meeting. TA also advised that a meeting with other town executives and finance committees about this topic might be in order.

There was additional conversation about cost for services, and 'balanced services' vs. 'balanced budgets'.

The TA reviewed the 'Bottom Line' budget numbers with the board, and provided an update on the work of the Capital Improvements Planning Committee (CIPC).

Warren: Realistically, you're looking at a \$244,000 deficit.

The TA suggested some avenues to reconcile the budget, including the use of remaining free cash to balance the budget, and imposing a moratorium on other capital spending at any Special Town Meeting in FY2016.

There was discussion about potential revenue sources in coming months and years. License fees were discussed as a potential revenue source.

A member of the public suggested that, with any proposed changes to revenue streams or funding sources, a clear description of the impact of those on average tax bill should be included as part of the discussion. The Board generally agreed with the suggestion.

The Town Administrator should be able to provide updated FY2015 revenue numbers at the next meeting.

BUDGET SUMMARIES

The TA presented up to date budget numbers, and highlighted a few details on the sheets.

Inquiry: what kind of savings can be had with reduced staff and hours at Town Hall?

A worksheet was presented that detailed the impact that cuts to weekly hours, and cuts to both hours and salary.

There was some discussion related to OPEB funding, and potential funding sources and methods for same.

The TA suggested using free cash to balance the budget, but the Board expressed concern about using all of the current free cash meet expenditures.

There were discussions about budgets and budget policies, about the impact of an override of Proposition 2½, about the potential for establishing a spending policy that allows for proper funding, and allocation for capital resources.

From the audience: "I would be reticent to ask for an override until each department was 'right-sized' for the size of the town."

Frustration was expressed at the problems faced when considering budgets.

Gilmore: It's premature to discuss options of funding, or solutions to budget shortfalls, before talking to all partners in the conversation.

The phrase "what Deerfield needs", and the implications of that phrase when considering budgets, was discussed.

SUPPORT LETTER FOR HUD GRANT APPLICATION

Ms. Ness requested approval for a letter in support of a Housing and Urban Development

It was MOVED by Gilmore, SECONDED by Wolfram,

To authorize drafting a letter of support for the grant by the Town Administrator, and authorize use of signature stamps upon review and approval of the draft.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

It was MOVED by Gilmore, SECONDED by Wolfram

To approve minutes from February 25, and March 4, as submitted.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

CIC GRANT UPDATE

The Town administrator updated the board on the status of the CIC Grant for capital purchases for South County EMS.

HIGHWAY GARAGE AWARD

It was MOVED by Wolfram, SECONDED by Ness

To award the Deerfield Highway Garage sale of land to New England Natural Bakers, Inc., as the responsible and responsive bidder with the most advantageous proposal; and further move to enter into the purchase and sale agreement for the Oxford Property and the Deerfield Highway Garage land with new England Natural Bakers, Inc., as presented.

Mr. Wolfram endorsed the action as having a long-term benefit for the town.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

The Board considered the necessity of a committee to explore and recommend a Tax Incentive Financing agreement related to the property.

MEEHAN REQUEST RE/ "TREE" INCIDENT - SECOND READING

It was MOVED by Gilmore, SECONDED by Wolfram

To deny compensation related to this request for reimbursement or compensation.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND AGENDAS

The board was advised of upcoming agenda items slated for the meeting on March 11.

Meetings are tentatively scheduled for March 11, March 18, April 1, April 8 (5:30 PM, with Public Information Session at 6:30 PM), and April 22. A meeting will also be posted for April 27, in conjunction with Annual Town Meeting.

Town Administrator will be on vacation between March 20 and April 2.

The Board requested updated budget sheets from the Administrator / Selectmen's office, which will be discussed at the next meeting on March 18.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, it was MOVED by Wolfram, SECONDED by Gilmore

To authorize signing of payroll and vendor warrants, upon completion, and at the convenience of the Board members, and then to adjourn.

VOTED: 3, 0, 0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:39 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas C. Finn

ⁱ Document Attachment: "Public Comment Draft: Phase II CSA Addendum, Phase III RAP Addendum, Phase IV RIP Addendum, PHASE IV Completion Report, & Temporary Solution Statement, Former Lake Asphalt Site, East Deerfield, Massachusetts, Release Tracking Number 1-16603"

ⁱⁱ Document attachment: "Conservation of the Deerfield Civil War Soldiers' Monument", Dated 11 March 2015.