

**TOWN OF DEERFIELD
MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
September 16, 2014
MINUTES**

Call to Order:

6:00pm Chairman Kevin Verville called the meeting to order.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Chairman Verville asked all to rise and pledge allegiance to the Flag.

Moment of Silent Reflection

Roll Call:

Present: Kevin Verville, Chairman; Jim Spillane, Vice Chair; Harriet Cady, Karen Cote, Carol Levesque, Fred McGarry and Brendan O'Donnell Members; Maryann Clark, School Board Rep; Andrew Robertson, Select Board Rep

Excused: David Carbone Member

Approval of Minutes – Tuesday 14 June 2014

Motion: Vice Chairman Spillane moves the minutes as written

Second: Selectman Robertson

Vote to approve the minutes as written: Yea 8, Nay 0, Abstained 1 – Motion Carries

Vacancy Appointment

Two citizens were present to be considered for filling the vacant MBC position. Jeff Kelley made the first introduction. He was a resident of Deerfield for some 20 years growing up and has recently moved back to town. He is the father of two young children and works to build single family homes through a business with his father. He serves on the National and New Hampshire Associations for Home Builders. F. McGarry asked if there was any concern with the time commitment necessary for service on the MBC and J. Kelley responded no, he does not anticipate any conflicts or concerns with the time commitment.

Bill von Hassel was the second candidate to speak. He has been a resident of Deerfield since 2001, currently living on Middle Road. He owns his own Financial business and, having served on the MBC previously, feels he has a good handle on the process and the importance of the role the Committee serves. He added that he has been asked previously if he finds the MBC to be irrelevant and stressed that he values the Committee and its role and hopes that all members will work to have constructive discourse.

Motion: F. McGarry moves to appoint Jeff Kelley to the MBC

Second: Selectman Robertson

Vote: Yea 6, Nay 1, Abstained 2 – Motion Carries

Chairman Verville, together with the Committee, thanked both candidates for their willingness to serve.

2014-2015 Meeting Schedule

M. Clark asked if the Committee would be agreeable to moving the start time of Tuesday meetings from 6:00p back to 6:30p. As there were no objections, Chairman Verville will amend the schedule to reflect that time change.

Motion: Vice Chairman Spillane moves to approve the 2014-2015 Schedule as amended

Second: Selectman Robertson

Vote: Yea 9, Nay 0, Abstained 0, Motion Carries

Town Budget Update

Selectman Robertson updated the Committee that the Town Budget is just over 60% spent year to date. Target expenditures at this time of year are 75% so overall they are in range. The largest factor through year end with implications on the budget will be how early the Winter weather arrives. Recently the pump on Fire Engine #2 failed, the Select Board expects the cost of that rebuild to be close to \$9,000 and the Fire Chief is looking for ways to offset that expense in his budget. It is expected that the Fire Chief will be putting forward a Warrant Article for additions to the Fire Station with an estimated costs of \$500,000-\$550,000. The Fire and Rescue Departments are working to come to terms with the ownership of the adjacent property. F. McGarry asked whether the Board might entertain an either/or vote between an addition to the existing station and a new safety complex? Selectman Robertson answered yes, that would be a consideration, though no specific numbers have been seen at this point. H. Cady asked whether that cost would be funded by bond issuance or through the operating budget, Selectman Robertson responded that there has not yet been any discussion on that topic.

Selectman Robertson updated that for the first time in several years PSNH has not contested the assessment on its property values. Deerfield is one of the only Towns where this is the case. PSNH has indicated that the actual value of their property in Town may be some \$14M more than the current assessed value. On the other hand, the NH Electrical Co-Op is contesting that its property values should be some \$1.2M lower than has been assessed. M. Clark asked whether the PSNH acceptance may be a good-will effort with the hopes of generating support for the Northern Pass Project. Selectman Robertson agreed that could be a possibility.

Finally Selectman Robertson updated that the Police Department has brought on two new Officers, Kate Bragg and Keegan Pearl. With this addition the Department is now fully staffed for the first time in several months.

School Budget Update

M. Clark spoke that the latest numbers for the fiscal year ended June 30 project an estimated School surplus of \$22,885. The School Board held a public hearing recently and voted to expend \$30,954 from the Paving Fund, the plan is to work on the area to the rear of the School and to repair the bump at the Front entrance.

The other item recently facing the board is the High School tuition contracts. M. Clark spoke that the tuition rate with Concord High School (CHS) was recently renegotiated at a significant price reduction. CHS has historically been the most expensive of the High School options available to DCS students. The new CHS rate will be based on the actual incurred costs associated with educating the students and is expected to drop dramatically. Based on this, the Board has begun to review its alternative High School policy. Previously, any student admitted to an alternative school had tuition paid by the Town. The School Board is looking to change that policy so that any tuition amount over and above the CHS base rate would be the obligation of the Family. The School Board has received significant community input on this matter and will be holding a Public Forum on October 11th at 6p in the School Library. M. Clark encouraged all members of the MBC to attend.

C. Levesque asked whether there were any current students who attended a School other than CHS where the tuition rate was greater, M. Clark answered no, she went on to provide that the current CHS tuition rate is \$14,163 and Coe Brown is \$14,133, for the 2015-2016 school year the Board can only expect that Coe Brown will go up and they anticipate CHS to drop significantly. Chairman Verville asked whether those students who had previously won the lottery for attending Coe Brown were grandfathered in. M. Clark answered yes. Selectman Robertson spoke that he shares the concern that has been expressed for families with siblings who attend Coe Brown as historically the school has accepted siblings regardless of entry into the traditional lottery system. C. Levesque asked what other

School districts have for policy addressing this situation, M. Clark answered that all she reviewed operate in this manner. This is generally the way alternative High School attendance is handled. K. Verville asked what the estimated annual cost would be if the policy were to go unchanged. M. Clark responded that the number could be wide ranging, it would depend on the number of students and where they choose to go, but basic figures might assuming 3-6 students at \$3,000-\$5,000/year. C. Levesque asked when the new CHS tuition rate would be announced, M. Clark answered that they hope to see it within the next month, as has been said previously, the Board expects the rate to be between \$11,500-\$12,000/year. She added that the Board has appealed to Coe Brown to request that they accept the CHS rate and they have declined.

Old Business

H. Cady noted that at the last meeting the School was asked to provide the forms MS4 and MS25 and asked for a status update. M. Clark responded that the School Board had just signed the document and she will circulate the information digitally. H. Cady clarified that she is looking to see all three phases of the MS reporting showing the estimated expenditures that were used for setting the tax rate, and then later the actual expenditures. She also noted that the MBC has asked for the Town to provide the same details.

New Business None

Citizens Comments None

Adjourn:

Motion: H. Cady moves to adjourn the meeting of September 16, 2014

Second: Selectman Robertson

All in Favor – Motion Carries – Meeting Adjourned @ 6:35pm

Next Meeting Tuesday, October 28th @ 6:30p

The Minutes were Recorded, Transcribed and Respectfully Submitted by Katie Libby.

Pending Approval by the Municipal Budget Committee