



**OFFICE OF THE
Advisory Board
TOWN HALL
511 MAIN STREET
DUNSTABLE, MA 01827-1313
(978) 649-4514 x222 FAX (978) 649-4371
finance@dunstable-ma.gov**

February 7, 2011 Meeting Minutes

Attending: Dan St Jean, Ron Mikol, Harold Simmons, Christine Muir, Joe Dean, Dana Metzler
Also attending: Kim Fales

Meeting opened at 7:00 p.m.

Approve Minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes from January 3, 2011 and approved unanimously.

Review Existing FY 2011 Budget

Kim brought copies of the most recent Snow & Ice expenditure reports, which covered expenses through January 31st. There are still outstanding bills of approximately \$20,000 in addition to expenses related to the most recent snowstorm. Overall, the Snow & Ice budget has used about 32% of the allocated budget for this year, which is pretty good for this time of year and the type of winter we've had so far. Kim will send this report to Dan on a weekly basis and Dan will forward to the rest of the committee if he notices something worth bringing to everyone's attention.

Joe asked Kim if the EMS and Fire Dept. account codes have been changed in the accounting software, reflecting the recent merger of the two budgets. Kim said no, nothing has changed yet. We will have to look at this when we review the Fire Dept. budget though, as there will be some increases due to the absorption of the EMS budget. (The back story on this is that the EMS department has been disbanded because Dunstable does not have its own ambulance.)

Old Business

None

Pending Transfer Requests

None

FY 2012 budget

Dan has repeated the FY11 numbers to the FY12 requested budgets for those departments that have not yet returned their requests to the committee. These departments' numbers are highlighted in a rose color and include Selectmen, Town Hall, Library, and others.

Kim is meeting with Joan from the Board of Health on Weds., presumably to discuss that department's budget requests. Joe needs to contact the Veteran's Agent personally because he doesn't have working email. Mary Beth Pallis gave Dan a printed copy of the library's FY12 budget request, which Dan passed on to Joe to add to the spreadsheet.

Ron questioned the long-term debt number and asked what retired. Kim said the number reflects two payments towards the fire truck in FY11, each in the amount of \$60,000.

Dana then asked why the tax bills were higher this year. There are two reasons: last year's debt exclusions increased, and the CPA 3% contribution is based on the tax bill, not on individual assessments. This latter reason also means that any overrides would have a larger impact as well.

We turned to the budget Overview sheet, noting that the requested amounts put the budget in a \$103,000 deficit. This is largely due to the Highway Paving request of \$150,000. This number was \$15,000 last year so some thought the extra zero was an error; it is not a mistake, and Dana noted that this part of the Highway budget used to be closer to \$150,000 years ago. However, the committee would like to see a schedule of roads to be paved before moving forward with the higher number.

It was also mentioned that the Highway Department is seeking to begin a three-year lease on a new truck at a cost of \$55,000 each year. The lease is proposed to be paid out of the Chapter 90 funds, not the municipal budget. Kim said that Dunstable typically receives about \$135,000 each year in Chapter 90 funds, so even after paying the lease amount there would still be up to \$70,000 to put towards paving and help reduce the current overall deficit.

We determined that there are at least four articles that could potentially be listed on the Annual Town Meeting warrant: \$50,000 for Stabilization; \$16,800 for two semesters in FY11 of Minuteman Tech tuition; \$10,000 to create a trust fund for covering unemployment costs; and \$22,000 for a license plate reader camera for the police.

GDRSD Budget & Finance Meeting

Dunstable's assessment is expected to drop \$34,000 in FY12 and our debt amount should drop \$60,000, both of which results in a savings for the town's portion of the public school budget. School Committee Chair Jim Frey and Superintendent Joe Mastrocola want to meet with the Finance Committee to discuss the FY12 budget. Dan will try to schedule them for March 7 or 14, when we expect all committee members to be able to attend the meeting.

The teacher contract is still in negotiation. However the school district has realized a \$100,000 savings on the copier contract, and expects to save \$275,000 by privatizing the special education buses.

Electronic Communication Requests

Dan wanted to review the process of sending out and receiving budget requests electronically. Things seemed to go very smoothly this year.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.