



**OFFICE OF THE
Advisory Board
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February 15, 2011 Meeting Minutes

Attending: Dan St Jean, Ron Mikol, Harold Simmons, Christine Muir

Also attending: Selectmen Kevin Welch and Ken Leva; Library Director MaryBeth Pallis and Trustees Mary Mahoney and Catherine Bence; Town Clerk Carol Skerrett; Town Accountant Kim Fales; Town Treasurer Bonnie Ricardelli

Absent: Dana Metzler, Joe Dean

Meeting opened at 7:04 p.m.

Approve Minutes

The minutes from February 10 were not ready for review and approval tonight.

Old Business

No old business was brought up for discussion.

Library Budget Request

The largest increase in the Library's FY2012 budget request is for Other Supplies, which includes books and DVDs. This amount must equal at least 20% of the total library budget in order to maintain state accreditation.

Dan asked what bills are paid out of trust fund money and not included in the municipal budget. No utilities are paid out of trust funds; some maintenance items, such as painting the building trim and reinstalling handicapped parking signs, are paid from trust funds. The trustees work hard to apply trust funds in areas that keep with the intentions of the trust fund provider.

MaryBeth is going to schedule a formal review of the energy audit report provided by Engineered Solutions. The trustees, the Selectmen, and Ron will also attend. Kevin would like to see the library obtain grant money towards a new HVAC system, just as they did with the window replacements in the Union building. The cost of the ESI recommended changes is approximately \$52,000. We added a placeholder in the articles list in case the library cannot get grant money. The amount in the article can be reduced or removed up until the time of town meeting.

Dan asked if the library is obligated to continue working with Johnson Controls. Ron said their software is proprietary so we would need to continue a relationship. However, the hardware is a separate piece. Ron thinks the library may need a less complex and sophisticated system than what is currently in place or what is recommended by ESI.

In the meantime, Denommee continues to work on maintaining and repairing the current control system. There is no contract in place but Denommee has a checklist that he uses each time he appears on-site. MaryBeth does not expect additional bills for any ongoing work.

Bonnie Ricardelli asked if there's any chance that CPA funds could be used towards this energy renovation. It's not likely that the project meets any of the CPA requirements, though.

Other points mentioned on the library budget:

- Custodial pay comes from the Salary and Wages line item.
- Plowing is done by the Highway Dept.
- The lawn is maintained by a private contractor and is paid out of the Repairs & Maintenance line item. Occasionally, state aid or grant money is used towards landscaping.

Dan asked if the library would consider adding more hours, particularly on election days when the polls are open in the community room. MaryBeth and the trustees stated that the library maintains consistent hours every week without consideration for one event or group, because then multiple groups and holidays or events would also request additional hours. MaryBeth noted that the state requires the library to be open for 15 hours each week because of the town's population. The Dunstable library is open 28 hours, with the recent addition of two more hours on Tuesday afternoons. MaryBeth also said the library's budget is only 1.6% of the total municipal budget.

Christine asked about the increase in office supplies expense in FY12 over FY11. This discrepancy is a matter of categorizing each bill or expense in the right account to conform to the state's accounting system.

Town Accountant Budget Request

The FY12 accountant budget incorporates a 3% wage increase that is absorbed within the rest of the budget, keeping the total amount level-funded. The budget includes \$10,000 for an audit in FY12. Kevin asked if Townsend uses and is satisfied with RE Brown auditing, and Kim said yes. The PY encumbrance line item for \$10,000 is from the FY10 audit.

Town Clerk Budget Request

Carol offered several suggestions on improving the efficiency of town hall, which may impact the budget. Her suggestions include an energy audit of the building because of the drafty windows and attic door, checking the effectiveness of the toilets in the basement bathrooms, and consolidating office supply purchases within town hall as well as with other municipal departments.

She also noted that her network access was affected by a change that allowed Internet access to Sunday school classes held in the building. The front door alarm is not actually connected to the police station, contrary to popular belief. And so far, she has found 17 names on the school enrollment list that do not appear on the town census list. It is likely that these families just didn't list children on the census forms, but the board is interested in this because of the potential financial impact.

As for Carol's budget, the election budget is lower in FY12 but will rise again in FY13 because of the presidential election. Census work is included in the election budget. There were no other questions or significant increases in any of the budgets for which Carol is responsible.

Town Treasurer Budget Request

The only increase in the treasurer's budget request is the addition of \$1080 for an unemployment consultant to handle investigations and disputes of claims. An initial review with the consulting

company, Unemployment Tax Management Corporation, suggests that the town could save almost \$3000 annually with this service.

Bonnie asked if the board would advise starting the contract now or waiting until July 1. The consensus was to start now, once she has approval and a signature from the Select Board. The motion was made to recommend that the Selectmen enter a contract with UTMC, and was unanimously approved.

Bonnie is expecting the Health Insurance rate within a few days.

Harold asked how the system of two tax bills, instead of four, is working out. Bonnie only had one significant complaint; otherwise, it is working well.

County Retirement number is down. Bonnie noted that making one payment annually instead of two saves money.

The debt numbers are also falling as loans are being paid off.

Budget Overview to Date

The current FY12 requests put the budget into a deficit of \$277,000. Reducing the COLA to 2% instead of 3% and removing the Highway's \$150,000 paving request moves the budget into only a \$6,000 deficit.

Ron said the Board of Health might come up with an article for renovations at the transfer station. He also noted that there needs to be a review of the Transfer Station enterprise fund and town subsidy because some anticipate a shortfall in that department. It is generally agreed that the Transfer Station should move to a fiscal (July 1 – June 30) year instead of the calendar (January – December) year to reduce confusion.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.