



**OFFICE OF THE
Advisory Board
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March 7, 2011 Meeting Minutes

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

Meeting opened at 7:10 p.m.

Minutes

Dan suggested several changes to the Feb 7, 2011 meeting minutes. The minutes from Feb 10 and Feb 15 were approved unanimously by those who were in attendance on those dates.

Water Department

Karl Huber and Peter Georges appeared before the board to review the Water Department's FY12 budget. Because this department uses an Enterprise Fund, their items do not appear in our Line Item Summaries tab; Water Dept is a separate tab at the end of the FinCom Budget Workbook.

Since there has been no progress and not much discussion on sharing a new employee with the Highway dept., the Water Dept reduced the new employee line item to \$6,493 from \$11,326 (FY11) and moved the difference to the Repairs & Maintenance line item. During FY11, the Water Department used outside sources for a variety of assignments that might have been the responsibility of the new employee if he or she existed. It is likely that the Water Dept will continue this process in FY12. The Water Dept has a contract with Pepperell which has amounted to well below \$10,000 in costs this year.

Joe asked if the Water Dept had the income to support the increases in the Public Works Supplies and the establishment of a Reserve Fund, and Karl confirmed that they do.

Harold asked if the Water Dept anticipates any articles or issues to be brought up at town meeting. Karl said the department would like to get feedback on what people in town want.

It was determined that the increase in Clerical wages is currently 3% and will need to be aligned with whatever increase is eventually given to other town employees.

The department outfitted the town well with an alarm this year, which is required for compliance with state regulations. He also said they have notified pool companies and bottled water companies that there is the potential for a business relationship, increasing revenue for the town. One future project under consideration is getting a storage tank.

Board of Health/Transfer Station

Two things have changed at the transfer station this year:

1. One hauler is no longer bringing the trash he picks up to the town transfer station. He is bringing it out of town and that has caused an approximately \$12,000 loss of revenue from sticker sales.

2. The new dumpsters are generating approximately \$30,000 in savings for the town. Although there are some issues that need to be worked out, such as confirming the pick-up day, it is worthwhile.

Disposal costs for FY12 are anticipated to be \$44,400, which is about \$26,000 than FY11. Additional costs for holidays and bulky items are anticipated to be about \$9,000. There have been discussions about sharing a new recycling center in Groton, which would reduce our trucking costs because of the close proximity.

Ron asked where the town is actually going to see the dollar benefit of switching to the new roll-outs. Maria said she isn't sure because the system is still so new.

Kim noted that all direct costs should be in the Transfer Station Enterprise Fund, and any difference between those costs and the revenue from sticker sales should determine the amount of the town subsidy. Kim estimates the revenue to be \$67,100 from sticker sales and retained revenue, resulting in a decreased subsidy amount of \$28,400.

There was additional discussion about moving from the calendar year to the fiscal year.

GDRSD

Superintendent Joe Mastrocola, School Committee Chairman Jim Frey, and Business Manager Gerry Martin appeared to discuss the school district's budget. They brought paper copies of the proposed FY12 budget, which was approved at last week's School Committee meeting.

The teacher contract negotiations are still in the calendar-setting stage. Dana asked what would happen if the negotiations result in higher costs than anticipated in the budget. There are some reserve funds to cover increases for step and lane changes, but not for COLA. A 1% COLA for instructional staff only translates to approximately \$120,000.

The district has applied for a green schools grant to cover 100% of the cost of converting the schools to gas utilities. If the district is awarded less than 100%, there is \$48,000 in deferred maintenance costs that might be usable.

Since the FY12 budget includes money to upgrade 80 computers at the high school, Ron asked what percentage of overall technology this number covers, and it is about 80% of the high school technology. They've also generated some revenue from the virtual high school program, which two middle school students are attending.

Potential factors that might impact the budget as it sits now are the special education tuition costs, which are almost always unknown until the school year begins, and the state's Chapter 70 aid amount. No one has heard whether or not there will be cuts, and other superintendents are working with the governor's number.

The potential impact to the town of Dunstable if there cuts in state aid are as follows: if the state aid is cut by 1%, the total impact on the district is \$102,790, which translates to a \$9,169 reduction in Dunstable's assessment (instead of the higher reduction currently forecasted). A 2% cut equals \$25,579

and an increase of \$15,819 in Dunstable's assessment. A 5% cut equals \$513,000 and an increase of \$90,784 in Dunstable's assessment. These changes assume nothing else is done within the FY12 budget, such as using E&D funds or making other changes such as adding fewer new teachers or buying fewer computers.

The assessment numbers are based on October's enrollment numbers. Since then, Dunstable's enrollment has increased by four and Groton's has decreased by fourteen.

Budget Review

Dana suggested removing the police records management system from the line item summaries, since it was an article item last year.

Other

Harold noted that four departments did not appear before the board as scheduled. He strongly suggested that there needs to be a change in process, either by calling to confirm with each department or not relying entirely on electronic communications.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.