



**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**

March 14, 2011 Meeting Minutes

Attending: Dan St Jean, Ron Mikol, Harold Simmons, Christine Muir, Joe Dean,
Absent: Dana Metzler
Meeting opened at 7:03 p.m.

Approve Minutes

The Board unanimously approved the minutes from February 7, 2011 and March 7, 2011 meetings.

Fire Department Budget

Fire Chief Charlie Rich presented his FY12 budget request. The \$8750 EMS budget has been absorbed into the Fire Dept. budget; \$1000 went into the Fire Chief salary, almost \$4000 went into Fire Dept. Salaries & Wages; \$1000 went into Repairs & Maintenance. The rest of the EMS budget was dispersed in smaller amounts throughout the rest of the Fire Dept. budget.

Energy costs at the fire station are lower due to new windows. Repairs & Maintenance includes \$750 per truck for an annual full service and inspection. Prof. and Tech. Services line item includes food and supplies for training sessions. Vehicle Supplies includes fuel costs. Firefighter Supplies includes new equipment: \$5200 for 5 air bottle sets, \$5300 for 3 sets of gear and boots; \$2000 for state forestry program (the state covers another \$2000), \$5000 upgrades the Jaws of Life; \$2500 to replace and upgrade other equipment; and \$5000 brings other equipment up to the standards required. The total is \$25,000.

Chief Rich does not plan to restructure the pay for calls. Currently he pays \$10 per call, while other towns around us are paying \$18.50/hour (Groton) and \$22.50/hour (Tyngsboro).

There is an opportunity to obtain a new Forestry truck at no cost to the department, other than approximately \$500 to get the truck to town. There is no place to garage it, but it's built to withstand being outside. The Selectmen have yet to approve the acquisition.

Chief Rich really struggled to find an answer when Dan asked him what he would cut if he absolutely had to. Eventually he chose \$1000 of fire repairs, maybe.

Someone asked if the money from fire permits, inspections, and other work could be put back into the Fire department budget. Chief Rich estimated it would be over \$10,000 in the time he's been chief.

We added \$1250 to the Training line item to match the Chief's original request. This brings the Fire Dept's total budget to \$94,620.

The wage increase included in the FY12 request is 3%. Dan noted that the Selectmen have asked us to work with 1% for now.

There was talk of perhaps building a new station at some point; the Chief mentioned that grants are available for that kind of project and said that Londonderry, NH just received one. The grants do require that land and plans are already in place.

Highway Department

The review of the Highway Department's budget request began after it was established that there is still approximately \$65,000 in the snow budget.

Dan asked why the Highway Department already entered into a 3-year lease contract to build a new truck at a cost of \$55,000 per year. The truck replaces a 1996 truck, which can still be used and allow some savings for only hiring a contract driver instead of truck and driver. The department anticipates a 15-year life span for the new truck. Payments for the new truck will come from Chapter 90 funds. The department has been "saving" or "rolling over" Chapter 90 funds for a few years now, so that they have essentially saved up the money to pay for the truck in full.

Dan made it clear that entering into this contract without considering alternatives such as a capital debt exclusion, as we've done for the Fire Dept's new trucks, really limits what the Advisory Board can recommend as far as the rest of the Highway budget. Specifically, if the truck had been put up as a debt-excluded article, there might have been room to increase the Paving budget or to make it easier to bring on an additional employee.

We do have to consider putting up an article for \$40,000 to pay for the plow for the new truck. No one knows whether leftover Snow & Ice funds can be used for purchasing the plow.

Highway is still interested in hiring a third full-time employee. Dan asked for numbers to show specifically where the savings will occur to justify this hire. The Highway Dept will ask Terry to create a spreadsheet but estimated that they paid \$20,000 to a private contractor last year, as well as \$12,000-\$15,000 for private trucks to be on the road; this combination covers a good percentage of the new hire's salary. The salary for the third employee is not in the current FY12 budget request.

Route 113 Engineering Costs

We moved into the Board of Selectmen's office to discuss the Town Engineer's request for an additional \$28,000 to complete the application process for the grant to cover the costs of rebuilding Route 113 at McGovern's Farm. Jeff Ryder explained that the additional costs are related to additional work he had to complete because the project was not completely approved as many had thought when the work was first proposed. The plans had to go through an additional review process to get approval from the full project review committee.

Upon final approval, the \$87,000 that the town could pay (including the additional \$28,000) only yields a 25% complete design plan. Ron cautioned that the final number for completing the project in its entirety could get significantly larger. Jeff Ryder agreed to bring more detailed information to the Selectmen's meeting on Monday, 3/12. Ron said he could attend as a representative of FinCom.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.