



OFFICE OF THE
Advisory Board
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February 21, 2012 Meeting Minutes

Attending: Joe Dean, Harold Simmons, Christine Muir, Dan St Jean
Absent: Ron Mikol, Dana Metzler

Meeting opened at 7:05 p.m.

Prior Meeting Minutes

The four members attending tonight's meeting unanimously approved the meeting minutes from February 6, 2012. The minutes for the February 13, 2012 meeting will be considered at the next board meeting, as only three members present tonight were at the previous meeting.

Transfer Requests

We received a request to transfer \$1043.45 from the Reserve Account to the Building Vehicle & Liability Insurance account (0001-09-945-5740-0000-000). The current balance in that account is \$809.65. Expenditures listed on the Jan 31 2012 "burn sheet" total \$70,683.35. The invoice that generated the transfer request lists a 2005 trailer used by the police, two claims on what appears to be the same single vehicle (a Mac dump truck), and \$130 insurance claim for a camera. The board is not clear on the reason why this invoice has only recently arrived, and why these items weren't included in a prior invoice. Dan will check with Danice Palumbo for more information. The board will table this request until the next meeting.

Accountant

Andy Gould sat with the board to review the PY encumbrance of more than \$10,000 for Highway Special Project Engineer/Legal Services Retaining Wall (0001-04-420-5300-2010-000). Dan explained that this is related to the reconstruction of the retaining wall on Route 113 at McGovern's Farm, and that the project is now going on two years. Christine checked previous minutes and noted that the state is expected to provide funding notification this spring, for those projects that are given approval for state funds. Andy will check with Selectman Walter Alterisio for history and current status.

Andy also discussed his budget request for FY2013. He will be looking to hire an assistant for approximately ten hours a week. He has modified the previous job description for this position and will post shortly.

Andy asked why the current budget shows audit fees every year instead of every other year, as before. Christine thinks Kim may have changed the year in which audit fees are budgeted so that those monies don't have to be carried over as an encumbrance from the previous fiscal year. Instead, the audit fees will be budgeted for the year in which the audit occurs.

Police Department FY2013 Budget Request

Chief Downes and Lieutenant Dow appeared to discuss the police department's FY2013 budget request. The Board of Selectmen – Walter Alterisio, Ken Leva, and Danny Devlin – also joined us for this discussion. Walter asked for clarification on how the police officers are paid for detail work; there is a

revolving account, seeded with \$3000, from which police are paid and into which contractor payments are deposited. This process allows officers to be paid even when bills are not settled immediately.

Chief Downes noted that he came up with a new number for the Overtime line item, at the request of the BoS. Instead of requesting \$177,572, the Chief offered \$146,708 for Overtime wages. This number is based on actual overtime expenses between June and September, but does not include investigation time. The Chief stressed that the overtime wages is always an estimate because of the number of variables involved in the final figures.

He also noted that \$177,572 gives him more confidence in filling all shifts as much as he would like to; this is his preferred number for that line item. Dan asked at what point it makes more fiscal sense to hire an additional officer instead of paying overtime, and the Chief replied that an additional officer only saves the department \$13,250 in overtime costs. Harold noted that over time, the additional officer would accrue time off, eventually adding to the overtime costs again.

Joe asked the Selectmen if they are comfortable with the \$146,708 number, and they agreed.

Chief Downes noted that Groton and Pepperell are proposing to add another officer to their departments and he would also like to do that. There are seven officers now, including the chief. It's been ten years since an officer was added to the department.

Dan noted that the overall police budget is up 4%. Since we can only project a 2.5% increase in the overall municipal budget, Dan asked the Chief where he thinks we can make up the difference (1.5%).

Dan also asked for specific benefits gained by hiring the administrative assistant. The Chief said that she is saving the department approximately \$900/week by doing work that the Chief had been doing previously. This number is based on a one-week sample of her time to complete specific tasks within five categories of work. Having her in the office plus the computers in the police cars has reduced the amount of work that Groton Dispatch has to do for us. The assistant can also provide some First Responder activity since she has completed training. The Chief is also hearing anecdotal evidence that people appreciate having someone at the station to answer the door when needed.

The Police Department is requesting two special articles for Town Meeting; a license plate reader, which the BoS is not supporting; and surveillance cameras at the police station to help protect the assets stored there. A \$5000 quote for this item is included in the police department's full budget proposal.

New Business

Joe will respond to the email from a member of Wayland's Finance Committee regarding the switch from an appointed board to an elected board.

Harold has put his name in for Fire Chief and will not participate in next week's discussion of the Fire Department FY2013 budget request.

Meeting adjourned 9:15 pm.

