



OFFICE OF THE
Advisory Board
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February 3, 2014

Present: Ron Mikol, Kevin Welch, Joe Dean, Harold Simmons, Dana Metzler, Christine Muir

Meeting opened at 7:00 p.m.

GDRSD

Christine summarized the information distributed at recent School Committee meetings. Dana mentioned that the Greater Lowell Vocational Technical school improvement debt will need to be excluded. This year's amount is expected to be \$25,000; next year's amount should be about \$40,000. This debt/improvement project has not yet been put before the voters of Dunstable.

Ron will invite School Committee reps to meet with the Advisory Board on Thursday evening. All financial update documents are accessible on the school district's website.

FY 15 Budget

Most budget requests have been sent in to Joe. He does not have Parks & Recreation, Fire, or several others.

Accountant

Kim Fales met with us to review the most recent audit report. She clarified that the audit pointed out the use of free cash to reduce the tax rate because it should have been placed on a separate line on page 2 of the recap, not because they don't recommend this practice.

She also proposed an article for the Town Meeting warrant; she and Bonnie would like to purchase a software package that integrates tax collections with Vadar. Currently, Bonnie uses Point software, which doesn't integrate with Vadar and therefore makes the process of reconciling accounts less efficient. After purchasing the software, \$2900 will be included in the operating budget to support the software. Kim noted that the \$19,000 cost of the software could be spread out into five payments over five years. No hardware upgrade is needed. There will likely be some cost to convert the historical data from Point into Vadar, but Kim doesn't know the exact amount right now.

In the Accounting budget, Kim has incorporated a % increase for her assistant only, not for herself.

Representative Sheila Harrington

Representative Harrington came in to inform us of some options related to the school's budget shortfall. There is an E & O insurance that covers errors and omissions and may provide some financial relief for GDRSD. However, Ron pointed out that the increase in future premiums may not be worth the amount received in hand this year. Harrington does not know what amount GDRSD might be able to receive.

There is also a possible state reimbursement for exceptional circumstances but it's not clear whether this situation fits those requirements.

While Harrington was in our office, Town Clerk Carol Skerrett came in to discuss recent election reform measurements. She noted that these reforms are unfunded and create significant hardship for small towns like Dunstable.

Board of Selectmen

Chairman Danny Devlin sat with our board to review some budget elements. He did not know if the proposed \$64,000 salary for Town Administrator includes the benefits numbers. For 20 hours a week, this salary seemed high to many members of FinCom. On average, a full time town administrator earns around \$90,000. The Selectmen think they have some candidates in mind, and the Advisory Board recommended posting this position to see what other candidates emerge.

In the Police budget, the BOS is looking at a 2% cost of living adjustment, not 3%. The current collective bargaining agreement ends on June 30, 2014. Negotiations for new contract begin shortly.

The proposed Fire Dept budget is up by 9% and shows a salary of \$49,000 for the chief. The Advisory Board noted that there should be a written contract outlining the desired salary and steps to reach it.

Kevin said he thought we shouldn't consider putting money in Fire & Police departments until the school budget is settled. Ron stated that the Public Safety building is not likely to happen too quickly.

The River Road survey, budgeted for \$30,000 via an article at Special town meeting, is not yet moving forward.

We adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

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Dana Devlin
Christina Muir
Harold K. Smith
Joseph P. Deane
Gene Webster
Richard J. Myster