



OFFICE OF THE
Advisory Board
TOWN HALL
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February 10, 2014

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

Police FY15 Budget Request

Chief Downes and Lieutenant Dow attended our meeting to review the FY15 budget request. Everyone agreed that the budget should be considered on its own merits, even though the school budget is unsettled and may have significant impact on all municipal departments.

Dana noted that the request to bring up officers' hourly wages is not really a 3% cost of living adjustment, but rather a comparison of the local market. The distinction is important because all municipal employees will want the same COLA.

Chief Downes said that he was able to talk with Ashby's Chief today and his officers get a slightly higher rate than Dunstable's; it takes eight years to reach the top step; the average raise over the past few years is 2%; the health insurance split (subsidy) is 90-10.

The overtime number, which represents the largest percentage growth from FY14, represents holidays, sick time, court time, and training sessions. While they try to conduct training during an officer's regular working hours, it's not always possible to do so. The chief is currently carrying a \$65,000 liability for the remainder of FY14, which only leaves about \$14,000 to back-fill shifts.

The Other Supplies line item is up by about \$9000. The Chief thinks this may largely be due to replacing technology around the station.

Vehicle supplies is up about \$4000. Two cruisers are near the end of their useful life and will need to be replaced. One needs a new transmission, which will cost at least \$2500. The standard practice over the past few years has been to lease two new cruisers every two years. Ron asked if there's a specific benefit to that practice instead of one new cruiser every year. The biggest drawback may be the transition to that cycle, in terms of additional lease costs until we hit that point.

An increase in dispatch fees from Groton is not anticipated, but a fairly recent news article makes everyone think we should confirm or watch this item.

The Chief has requested two articles for consideration at town meeting: one for license plate readers and one for security cameras at the station. Dana asked if the issues around the license plate readers have been resolved, but there may still be complaints from the ACLU. The Chief would put higher priority on the security cameras anyway.

Finally, the tactical equipment is pretty far past its expiration date and requires updating. Therefore, several accounts (# 005) have slightly higher amounts than previous years. The Chief has been having difficulty ("blue screen of death") with the server for the records management system so he may be looking to replace that.



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February 5, 2014

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:05pm.

Attending the meeting were school representatives Jim Frey and Luis DeLoureiro. The representatives explained how the issues arose and the outcome so far. The 2013 fiscal year is closed and finally balanced with the use of a significant amount of E&D.

The current 2014 fiscal year is running a deficit of an initial amount of \$900K. This has been reduced through use of some E&D and cuts to currently a shortfall of \$460K. There is hope that this will be reduced more and possible to zero by the end of the year.

The problem now facing the district is the upcoming 2015 budget. The worst case scenario is with an increase of 2 ½ over last year's appropriation the district will need an additional \$2.5 million from the two towns. This equates to \$600K for Dunstable. The current schedule calls for the school committee to make a presentation on February 12th and vote its budget on March 5th. This will be a budget at its highest amount, as they can reduce the amount later, but cannot increase it.

The discussion then moved to ways to accomplish funding the request. The residents of Dunstable would see a \$600.00 increase to their tax bill on average should an over ride pass. We suggested that the school committee seek ways to reduce the number as much as possible, with concessions from the union, and that nothing is held from cuts including special ed. Our goal is to work with the district to resolve the issue. Until we work through the town side of the budget and know the district's number we are with holding a recommendation at this time. It is unlikely that Dunstable will be able to fund the district without an over ride.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20.

Dana Metzler
Harold K. Simmons
Joseph P. Dean
Kevin Welch
Ron Mikol