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Advisory Board
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March 10, 2014

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

The meeting began at 7:00 p.m.

Library

Mary Beth Pallis reviewed the FY15 budget request for the library. She incorporated a 1.5% increase in the salaries. The \$5500 payment to Johnson controls is the last one (of three). Several line items don't match up with what Mary Beth says has been paid over FY14, so there are some discrepancies in individual line items; however, the total amount adds up as expected. Energy bills have been much lower than in previous years; it seems the automated controls are helping, although A/C expenses tend to be higher than heat. When we discussed reducing the requested amount for energy in FY15, Mary Beth pointed out that the state requires a library's budget to grow by 3% (in actual expenditures, not forecasts) over three years. Since we've been in compliance with that regulation for the past few years, the Advisory Board thinks we can reduce energy by \$5000 (to \$18,000) and remain in compliance. Mary Beth can double-check the specific expenditures and percentages.

We need an update on the \$7000 article for library lighting design. The cost is intended to pay for an engineer to complete and submit a grant application for us; the application requires a particular skill set in order to do it correctly.

The MVLC consortium dues increased by \$100. Mary Beth is not sure of our exact costs as we used to get a small grant from the previous director, and she doesn't know if the new director will find that grant for us.

Water

Karl Huber informed the Advisory Board that he will not seek re-election this year. Ron asked who would maintain the level of detailed information that's currently on the website, and Karl said that hasn't been discussed yet. The other commissioners will continue to meet regularly (monthly).

The Water department budget is essentially flat for FY15. Infrastructure updates are still necessary. Karl said there's no sense in rehabilitating the Pond Street storage tank, as previous repairs are now failing, but it might be worth conducting a feasibility study to put storage container at the well site and ultimately turn off the Pond St. facility. Additionally, well #1 needs to be cleaned and inspected; well #2 could be improved to provide more pressure. Karl also recommended upgrading all pipe to 12-inch. New tanks at the well site would likely cost about \$553,000; upgrading all the pipes could run \$1.1 million. This would not include any changes to the access road to the well site, which may require some leveling or grading for construction vehicle access. Karl suggested that the Highway Department might be able to help with actual work or with pricing the project.

We considered whether this would be an article (yes); if it could be excluded debt (likely); whether we could get a low interest rate (will ask Bonnie about statehouse notes, whether they can run 30 years); and if this would be paid via a betterment fee to users or to all residents. Dana calculated that it would cost approximately \$56,000/year or \$60/household annually if we had a \$1.7 million cost, low interest, 30 years.

Ron noted that we should add in cost for a project manager to ensure it runs smoothly. Karl will investigate engineering costs to get us to the point of RFP.

Alan Chaney spoke from the audience, suggesting that upgrading the pipe will help sell the project to the town. He noted that there could be up to 100 new housing units on town water, requiring these upgrades for service. Dana suggested that additional users would increase the revenue stream and help with the costs.

Dana suggested putting an article on the May Town Meeting warrant to fund the cost of engineering, estimated at \$90,000, from free cash. Then in a Fall Special Town Meeting, we could vote on specific debt exclusion with exact cost estimates and RFP. Ron said that would also require a special election to vote on the ballot question of a debt exclusion.

We decided to bring Karl back on March 24 with additional information.

GDRSD

Resident Susan Prescott asked to address the board. She wanted to note on record that she supports an override for the GDRSD and she asked that the Advisory Board also consider supporting it. Sue said that the schools and the open space are two reasons people are drawn to Dunstable, and support of one indicates support of the other. She said that low taxes could soon be the only reason people move here if the schools don't get financial support.

Ron responded that the vote will likely go to the residents on election day. The risk is not getting approval there. Kevin responded that he thinks the schools are mismanaging funds and he is not supportive of increasing their funding until they get a better handle on their costs and show a better understanding of the fiscal situation. Sue agreed that Special Education funding is increasing at a higher rate than regular education funding based on research she and her husband conducted at home.

Transfer Station

Dana thinks their budget will be okay for FY15 but the future beyond that is uncertain due to increased competition at lower rates. We will reconsider at next meeting.

We adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Benjamin M...
Dana I...
Christie Muir
Stacy K...
Joseph D. D...
Ken Welby