



OFFICE OF THE  
Advisory Board  
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April 22, 2014

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

The meeting began at 7:00 p.m.

#### Public Hearing & Parent/BOS Info Night

Dunstable resident Sue Prescott met with the board to discuss questions she anticipates at the public hearing next week. The four questions, with answers, are as follows:

- What is the impact of the override on the average homeowner? The financial impact is about \$167/year on a house valued at \$368,000, which is the average valuation for Dunstable. On a \$400,000 house, the financial impact is about \$181/year; \$500,000 home equals \$226/year.
- What are the benefits of the override? The override keeps our municipal and school budgets whole, without cutting services on either side. While some municipal budgets have been modified, e.g. extending a cruiser lease another year before replacing, no services have been cut or impacted by the proposed budget.
- What would be cut from the municipal budget if the override fails? Nothing specific has been identified at this time. Some of the municipal expenses are mandated and not open for reductions, such as retirement and insurance. It's likely that every department would see a reduction in budget if the override fails.
- Why does FinCom support or recommend the override? The override is a mechanism allowed under Proposition 2 ½ for towns to increase their budget more than that percentage as needed. Some of the town's costs grow more than 2.5% annually so this mechanism lets us match those costs without reducing other services. We hope that the amount of the override allows us to stay whole for a few years.

#### Review of Warrant Articles

Dana moved that we accept all "boilerplate" articles at one time, since they are the same from year to year. Articles 1, 2, 5, 10, 11, 25, 26 and 28 were unanimously supported through this motion.

We also voted unanimously to support articles 3, 7, 12, 13, 15, 16 and 18 without discussion.

Some points were made about the following articles:

- Article 4 – easements by Salmon Brook, no cost to town. Voted to support.
- Article 6 – move money to veterans' benefits fund; balance is now \$15,000, will be \$24,000 with the additional \$9,000. Voted to support.
- Article 14 – entitlements to town employees in military service; new police officer may be in reserves and need to appear for duty on a monthly basis. Voted to support.
- Article 17 - \$20,000 for new fence around transfer station. Original request was \$10,000 so we are not confident in the estimate. Dana moved that we support up to \$15,000. All agreed.
- Article 19 – Joe noted that he supports the act of putting the override question on the ballot for the voters to decide. All agreed and voted to support.

- Article 20 – Water Dept. engineering study. Waited for Ron to confirm \$70,000 estimate. When he did, we all voted to support.
- Articles 23 and 24 – transfer station and water department enterprise funds. Decided to table until next week when final numbers might be available.
- Article 27 – revolving accounts for Cemetery, Recreation, and Council on Aging. Harold asked what happens if the department takes in more money than outlined in warrant article. Dana said the department can keep the money but not spend it during FY15; they can only spend what is authorized by Town Meeting. Voted to support.
- Article 29 – to fund Stabilization account. We agreed to take no action as we are not putting money into this account this year.
- Article 30 – will put \$200,000 in motion for free cash used to reduce tax levy. All approved.

Community Preservation

Sue Psaladakis appeared before the board to discuss articles 8, 21 and 22, which pertain to CPA funding. Article 8 provides for the transfer of funds from the unreserved general fund to the specific Open Space, Historic, and Community Housing reserves. Kim thinks it is necessary to make this transfer because of the amount of money in the unreserved fund. The state allows funds to accumulate in the unreserved fund as long as they are small amounts. However, in FY14 the state gave Dunstable a 100% match, which was not a small amount and therefore needs to be earmarked for the three specific purposes of CPA. Sue will confirm that the dollar amounts are correct. The Advisory Board voted unanimously to support this article.

Articles 21 and 22 are very similar but essentially allow the Community Preservation Committee to pay its administrative expenses for FY15. Sue will confirm language with Town Counsel. Advisory Board voted unanimously to support both articles.

We adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

*Dana S. [Signature]*  
*Bill [Signature]*  
*Harold [Signature]*  
*Christie [Signature]*