

OFFICE OF THE
Advisory Board
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July 14, 2014

Present: Ron Mikol, Harold Simmons, Dana Metzler, Christine Muir, Kevin Welch, Pam Crocker
Attending: Madonna McKenzie, Interim Town Administrator

The meeting opened at 7 p.m.

Transfers

Madonna presented two transfer requests:

- \$4,697 from group health insurance to town hall clerical to pay out earned and unused sick time for Danice Palumbo, who retired as of June 30. This is the full liability as far as anyone knows. Only three other town employees retain this option.
- \$4,655 from the reserve account to town hall energy, to pay balance due on Glacial energy bills. The town has switched to National Grid for better rates, and Madonna said Kim expects the first bill from NG to arrive this month. Harold asked if the other town buildings are all set or have outstanding bills, and Madonna thinks there are no more outstanding bills. Ron asked for confirmation that the town has ended the relationship with Glacial.

Both transfers were unanimously approved. Dana requested copies as the requests were not presented on the usual triplicate papers.

Prior Minutes

The board members present at the June 2 and June 9 meetings unanimously approved the minutes of those meetings.

Broadcasting Advisory Board Meetings

Dana has pursued the request from last month for this board to consider broadcasting its meetings. He has suggested that the cable equipment be moved into the larger room where we usually meet, as the current BOS office is rather small for the Advisory Committee and provides limited seating for members of the public to attend in person. Ron asked whether all boards could move their meetings to this room for the opportunity to be broadcast live and/or recorded.

New Business

The town has received a notice from Essex Agricultural school in Danvers; a town resident has been accepted and will begin high school studies there in September. The town is responsible for tuition payments (of approximately \$18,000 annually) as well as transportation. We believe the state will provide 100% reimbursement of the transportation costs for this student.

The bill for membership dues for the Association of Finance Committees was received. We unanimously agreed to pay the \$129.

Madonna presented her suggestion and expectation for a revised budget process for the FY16 cycle, that involves greater collaboration between the Advisory Board and the BOS, as well as a more involved role for the

Town Administrator. The Board of Selectmen will consult with the Advisory Board and set guidelines for the budget. The Town Administrator (T.A.) will work with all departments to be sure they have and understand the guidelines. The T.A. will receive the budget requests from the departments and will prepare a balanced budget based upon the information received and the guidelines. Next, the T.A. will submit a balanced budget to both the Selectmen and the Advisory Board and also provide a copy to all departments. The Selectmen and the Advisory Board will conduct hearings on the budget submitted by the T.A. and any additional requests. The Selectmen and Advisory Board will then meet jointly to discuss recommendations and issues. The Selectmen will then submit their recommended budget. The Advisory Board will make its recommendations. The Advisory Board will recommend a budget and hold a public meeting on the budget. The Selectmen and the Advisory Board will take positions on the budget.

She noted that there may be a Special Town Meeting in the fall, and Dana suggested that we include an article requesting debt exclusion of the payments for the Greater Lowell Regional Vocational Technical High School building renovations, which will cost approximately \$40,000 annually.

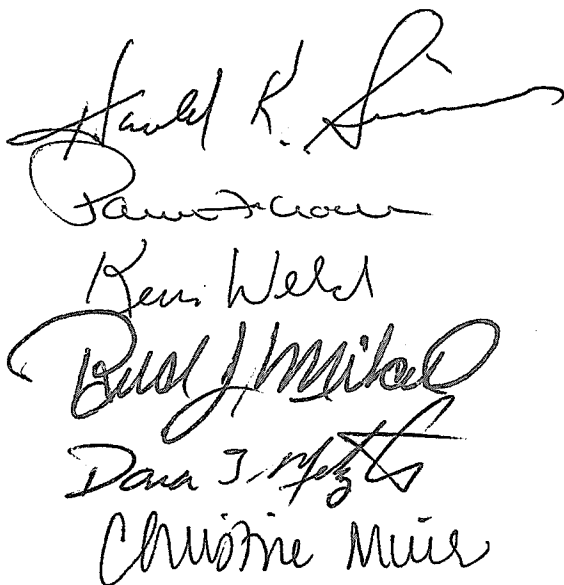
Library Director Mary Beth Pallis and Trustee John Callahan requested that the Advisory Board consider restoring the \$5,337 that was removed from the library budget because of energy savings. To retain state certification, public libraries are required to receive annual appropriations equal to the average of the past three years' appropriations plus 2.5%. Mary Beth is concerned that the reduction of over \$5,000 will put certification in jeopardy. Dana asked that Mary Beth calculate the three-year average appropriation so we can work with an actual number rather than an estimate. He also asked that she invite a member of the State Board of Library Commissioners to explain and discuss the requirement with us at a future meeting.

Mary Beth received a letter from Kim asking about the \$7,000 that has been appropriated, but not spent, for library lighting design. We agreed that she should ask to hold the appropriations for another twelve months.

The conversation then evolved into a discussion of town-wide facilities maintenance and whether that responsibility could be part of a Facilities Committee that would oversee all town buildings, or whether that belongs to a Master Planning Committee.

Dana said he has discussed the Transfer Station's budget with Kim and they should be all set for this year. Brush has been cleared to begin making room for the construction of a new fence.

We adjourned at 8:15 p.m.


Handwritten signatures of several individuals, including:
David K. [unclear]
Ken Welch
Bud J. [unclear]
Dana J. [unclear]
Christine Muir