



OFFICE OF THE
Advisory Board
TOWN HALL
511 MAIN STREET
DUNSTABLE, MA 01827-1313
(978) 649-4514 x222 FAX (978) 649-4371
finance@dunstable-ma.gov

March 9, 2015

Present: Kevin Welsh, Harold Simmons, Ron Mikol, Pam Crocker and Christine Muir
Absent: Dana Metzler

Also in attendance: Madonna McKenzie

The meeting opened at 7:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

The board unanimously approved the minutes of February 12, 2015.

Transfers

The board voted unanimously to approve a transfer of \$69 from the Reserve Fund to the Liability Insurance account, to make up for increase in workers' compensation cost.

Water Department Infrastructure Project

Water Commissioners Bryan Conant and Mark Cullen visited the Advisory Board to provide details and updates on the plan to improve the municipal water infrastructure. They distributed a brief presentation with information, including a map showing where water pipes and hydrants are currently located, the multi-use district (MUD) where they would recommend installing a new tank, and a summary of the project costs as provided by the engineering firm, Tighe & Bond.

The Advisory Board asked a multitude of questions, with the following answers: The map location is not exact. The proposed system could easily handle an additional 100 customers within the current range. The tank can be somewhat hidden to improve the aesthetics. The current location is not ideal for adding new tanks because there is not enough room. There may be some grants or low interest loans available to help with financing. They don't know when the project can begin.

The Advisory Board recommended that the Water Department be prepared to provide as many financial details at town meeting as possible, including all financing options and costs per customer/resident, as well as a complete outline of the benefits to the entire town.

Two residents were in attendance at the meeting and each commented on the proposal. Fire Chief Brian Rich noted that the improvement could lower insurance rates for buildings within 1000 feet of the water lines, and lowering the ISO rates could result in lower rates for all buildings in town, including residential.

Alan Chaney said that the proposed community housing sites will have access to town water as well.

Ron suggested that we figure out the amount available before we reach our levy limit so we can be sure that the debt can be excluded. We should also determine what a 40 year debt schedule looks like.

Madonna noted that low interest loans are probably more likely for Dunstable as our per capita income may limit grant eligibility. She also stated that the Water Department needs to obtain approval from the Board of Selectmen by the 3/25 meeting and that the ballot question needs to be submitted by mid-April. She suggested creating a committee to review the project and create a presentation for town meeting; she recommended that Dana and Ron be on the committee as well as one of the Selectmen, the Town Accountant and the Town Treasurer. The first meeting of this committee is tentatively scheduled for Monday, March 16.

FY16 Budget Review

Ron asked if Madonna was aware of changes being discussed at the state level regarding reductions in local aid receipts. He will show her messages that he has read from the MMA.

Madonna indicated that she had not confirmed all the links on the Overview page were accurate, which is why the current Recommended Amount is higher than the Requested Amount. The Articles tab has not been updated yet, and shows last year's articles. We anticipate finance-related articles for the Water Department, middle school roof, Greater Lowell Regional Technical Vocational High School renovations and the TAD suicide prevention program that is offered to the schools.

There is an increase to the election costs line item as the town clerk had forgotten to include one election. There is also an increase to the Dog Officer line item as we have a new officer who needs additional equipment and training courses.

New Business

Alan Chaney wanted to make the board aware of a potential CPC purchase to be voted at town meeting. The proposal is to provide funds to help the state purchase Agricultural Preservation Rights (APR) to the Tully farm property, which abuts the Dunstable Rural Land Trust and includes frontage on Hollis and Fletcher Streets. A sale like this means that the state owns the development rights to the this property in perpetuity, meaning that the property would never be developed, sub-divided or used for anything other than agricultural purposes. The appraised value a year ago was \$1 million; the development value of the land is \$845,000 and the agricultural value is \$155,000. The state would purchase the land for the development value, putting forth \$480,500 towards the purchase, leaving \$364,500 to be paid by the town through CPC funds. This purchase would leave approximately \$75,000 in the CPA's undesignated fund.

No funds are required from the town as the CPC account balance can cover the costs. Mr. Chaney requested a vote of support from the Advisory Board but we decided to wait until the Chair returns.

We adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Ken Welch
Billy Mitchell
Paul F. Coe
Harold K. Smith

Christine M.