



OFFICE OF THE
Advisory Board
TOWN HALL
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March 18, 2015

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

Also in attendance: Madonna McKenzie

The meeting opened at 7:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

The board unanimously approved the minutes of March 9, 2015.

Transfers

There were no transfers to consider tonight.

Highway

The Road Commissioners came in to ask for a transfer to cover a deficit in the snow and ice budget. The deficit currently sits at about \$53,000 in expenses and \$26,500 in wages. There are also bills that have not come in yet, so the total is expected to be around \$85,000. A request for reimbursement has gone to FEMA so there may be funds returned to the town.

Madonna confirmed that all incoming bills will be paid even though the account is in deficit right now, so the board asked that the commissioners wait another 30 days to come in with a firmer number and to get the Board of Selectmen to approve the transfer as well.

GDRSD

Ron informed the board that the superintendent and business manager of GDRSD would like to meet with us to discuss the Stabilization Fund that has been proposed previously. Ron's concerns are that the account is funded annually through the operating budget and that there is no town oversight on the spending. The benefit to the fund is not having to request debt exclusions for things such as the middle school roof repair of two years ago.

FY16 Budget Review

The Articles currently stand at \$10,000 for town hall furnace repair and \$17,500 for a survey of River Street, requested by the Conservation Commission. Ron asked if any articles had been submitted from the library or fire department and Madonna said no. The board noted that the River Street survey had been requested last year in anticipation of using the site for the new salt shed; since that is no longer necessary, we may be able to wait on this spending.

We reviewed the budget line item by line item. There was a question around whether the \$85,000 salary for a Town Administrator is the right number and whether it includes benefits and other

"loaded" factors. Dana presented research showing the average Town Administrator salary in MA to be around \$58,000 and the average Town Manager salary around \$55,000.

Madonna questioned whether we should continue to budget for the accounting audit every year or remove it. We decided to leave it in and allow this year's allocation to roll over to free cash.

There is a 2% wage increase in place for all town employees, except the police who have a union contract for their increases. The chief has requested a 3% increase, which does not yet have approval from the BOS. (COLA currently sits at 1.7%.)

We added about \$1500 to the Town Clerk for an additional election. Ron asked whether \$15,000 was enough for Town Hall Energy; we decided to increase it to \$18,000.

We also discussed the Transfer Station subsidy, which is higher this year than last. It was \$18,000 last year and the request for this year is \$25,000. At some point, we have to discuss the viability of this town resource.

The retirement number is firm, as is Group Health, which is down from last year. There was a 4% increase in Workers' Compensation.

We reviewed the calendar leading up to Town Meeting, which is May 11. Our public hearing must be held on April 27. We'd like to meet with the BOS next week to review the budget.

We adjourned at 9 p.m.

Ken Webb
Dana Goff
Paul J. Matus
Christine M