



OFFICE OF THE
Advisory Board
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March 30, 2015

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

Also in attendance: Madonna McKenzie, Town Accountant Lorraine Leonard, Selectmen Walter Alterisio and Ken Leva

The meeting opened at 7:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

The board unanimously approved the meeting minute of March 18 and 23.

Transfers

There were no transfers to consider tonight.

FY16 Budget Review

Lorraine and Madonna asked the board to review the debt exclusion numbers on the Overview tab of the budget spreadsheet. The accountant wanted to confirm that the numbers were correct and included everything they should. We concluded that, although there was an error in calculating the debt (double-counting interest with principle, it was a wash in the end.

It was noted that we should verify whether the non-excluded debt for the GDRSD middle school roof and GLRVTHS renovations is included in the revenue side; it should not be there because both are currently not excluded debt.

The application to FEMA for reimbursement of expenses related to the first significant snowstorm has been submitted. The expenses for that storm totaled \$171,710.95. Based on the expectation to receive 75% reimbursement, the town would get \$128,783.21. Dana proposed adding \$85,000 to anticipated revenue for FY16 to balance the budget, based on the EMA reimbursement. Lorraine suggested that we create a "grant bucket" to put aside the reimbursement amount, which allows us to get past the June 30 deadline for certifying free cash. The state DOR will allow towns to run a deficit in this account without penalty, as long as the FEMA reimbursement application has been submitted. Gov. Baker is asking for towns to be allowed to submit for reimbursement of expenses beyond the two days of that first snowfall.

The FY16 budget currently shows a deficit of \$12,800. We reviewed line items on which various attendees had questions. The police cruiser line item allows for two cruisers over two years, on a lease to buy basis. Ken asked about clarifying the differences among various "supply" line items in the police budget, and suggested that we look for ways to consolidate purchasing. Harold questioned the per gallon price used to calculate gas expenses; it is over \$3 in the budget but far less than that at the

pump. We decided to reduce that line item by \$10,000, from \$40,000 to \$30,000, to reflect the fall in prices. That allows for prices to run an average of more than \$2.50 without emptying the account balance.

In the Fire Department budget, we determined that the Communications cost of \$5,000 is firm. We also decided to raise the Fire Chief's salary by \$3,000 to a total of \$50,000. Ron requested that we consider an article for \$2,500 to clean and coat the ceiling in the garage bay. The board determined that the Chief could use money in his operating budget to do this instead of putting out an article.

We also discussed the Electrical Inspector line item. The FY16 budget includes a \$2,000 increase from \$8,000 to \$10,000. The amount is based on 80% of revenue generated by permits taken out for the work inspected. Ron questioned whether this includes the emergency calls on the town's behalf. According to the individual's budget, it does not. We need to confirm that and determine how to pay for those calls.

The biggest change from the FY15 budget to FY16 is the \$85,000 allocated to a full-time Town Administrator. The Board of Selectmen support this line item, in position and salary. The Personnel Board has not yet reviewed. With benefits, this line item is around \$100,000. It does not include a car or travel budget, although some travel expenses are provided for in the professional development/training line item.

Kevin asked what the tax rate would look like if the current version of the budget was balanced and approved. General consensus was that it would be around a 2% increase. The rate increased by almost 6% last year because of the override and the fact that we didn't take advantage of the full 2.5% allowed in FY14. Ron noted that the rate might change once we factor in the Water Dept infrastructure costs that would come due first, such as the engineering costs.

The board generally agreed to reduce the River St survey funds to \$0, as there is no immediate need for this.

We adjourned at 9 p.m.

Dana Swift
Ben Weld
Frank R. Lewis
Robby Mitchell
Chris M. M.