



OFFICE OF THE
Advisory Board
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November 3, 2015

Attending: Dana Metzler, Amie Stevens, Ron Mikol, Christine Muir
Absent: Harold Simmons, Pam Crocker

Also attending: Town Administrator Tracey Hutton, Fire Chief Brian Rich

Meeting opened at 7:05 p.m.

Fall Town Meeting Warrant Review

The Advisory Board met to review the few items on the Special Town Meeting warrant on which we had not yet made a decision to support or not. The dollar amounts needed to support the warrant items leaves the town with just over \$231,000 in free cash. Christine asked for clarification on what happens if we cannot use \$200,000 (or so) to offset the tax rate; Dana answered that the free cash essentially allowed us to spend that amount over what's permitted within Proposition 2 ½, unless we request an override.

Ron wanted to reopen discussion of the fire communications costs, and reduce the \$30,000 to half that amount, in an attempt to keep the town's free cash position as high as possible going into the FY 17 budget season. We have regularly used approximately \$200,000 from free cash to offset the tax rate, and if use that amount again in FY 17, after funding all these article, we will drive free cash to an unprecedented low number. Christine said she did not want to reduce the Fire Communications line. The Fire Chief stated that there is no new equipment being purchased with the \$30,000. This money reimburses the chief for the \$11,000 he's already spent from his FY16 operating budget, and provides for the installation of the pole and an existing repeater. Dana noted that since we are not planning to apply any free cash towards the FY17 budget, it doesn't make much difference whether our balance is \$231,000 or \$307,000.

Dana questioned whether the \$5,518 for the water department expenses should be paid from free cash or by the Water Department. Tracey noted that the Board of Selectmen support the expense being paid from free cash.

In the end, the board did not rescind approval for either of the above articles, 3 and 6, respectively. The board also maintained its support for article 8, for design services for the library entrances. Christine asked who would oversee the project, as previous projects often continued for multiple years with slow progress. Tracey said she will provide oversight. Ron questioned there is funding to complete the project after design services are obtained. The cost of actually completing the project is unknown at this time.

The board also voted unanimously to support articles 7 and 9, for the Water Stabilization fund and the Town Hall elevator. The latter is likely to come in at a cost lower than the \$9,064 listed on the warrant so we expect the motion on town meeting floor to include a smaller number.

We also noted that there still needs to be an article for the Snow & Ice deficit, which will cost \$19,507 in FY17. This will be paid out of free cash. The Town Accountant provided to the Board a recap of the available tax levy capacity, which is only \$10,000. That amount drove the decision to fund this deficit over three years and fund it

from free cash rather than adding it to the tax rate, as we originally thought could be done. (We cannot add to the tax rate because the amount is more than the available levy capacity.)

Christine asked what happened to fund the new snow plow and blade, and the answer is that it will be a transfer out of the Snow & Ice account.

Due to the amount of funding in these articles, and its draw on the free cash number, the board discussed the need to create the FY 17 budget fully within the levy capacity, as opposed to adding the \$200,000 (or any other amount) from available free cash.

We adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Don Smith
Billy Miller
Christine