



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

June 6, 2016

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

Also present: Tracey Hutton

Meeting opened at 7:00 p.m.

Christine opened the meeting and confirmed that we would be reviewing the warrant articles at tonight's meeting and also confirmed the town meeting is scheduled for 6/14

**Article one**- adjusts the town clerk's salary to \$30,536 for FY 17.

**Dana moved to appropriate, Harold seconded and all voted to accept: unanimous.**

**Article two**- vote to transfer the amount necessary for the amortized payments for snow and ice, it will be about \$40K.

**Harold moves to support, Ron seconded, unanimous vote to accept.**

**Article 3**- re: operating budget. Tracy clarified that this article will be two motions. First motion will be to raise and appropriate the no override budget. Second motion is for if the first motion passes it would be to raise and appropriate the \$475K to fund the budget.

Christine mentioned we must have an approved balanced budget by 7/1/16. If the town does not, we will have a government shutdown. She noted that is why we are presenting two budget scenarios. Option 1 will be the NO override budget. Option 2 will be the proposed, i.e. with the override of \$475K.

Christine clarified that whichever budget we pass, there will be municipal cuts. Town engineer will be cut by 25%, transfer station will have to self-fund, i.e. no more subsidy, police will eliminate a cruiser, library will close on Saturday, highway will have cuts, fire to reduce chief training. A resident asked why the library would close on Saturday and not another... Christine mentioned that this came from the library director and to direct those questions to her.

If the override **does not** pass, the above cuts will be implemented along with the following:

- Eliminate a police officer
- Cut part time police wages and cruiser repair by half
- Highway to reduce paving by 70%
- Town employees forgo COLA and salary increases recommended by personal board
- Selectmen assistant to lose a day of work
- Library closes second day (Friday)
- May need to leave the library consortium
- other small cuts

Christine mentioned that all of these cuts are listed on the website for anyone to see. A resident asked how the board came up with the total cuts number. Christine also directed the residents to the detailed budget detail.

**Dana proposes we support the NO override budget of \$9,375,346, Ron seconded. All approved: unanimous**

**Dana proposed we support the override budget and support the \$474,878. Ron seconded. All approved: unanimous**

Further discussion from the floor:

A resident had concerns about taking the funds for the library consortium. She mentioned that if we leave the consortium, residents can't go to other libraries, which they currently can. Christine mentioned that she should address this to the library director (LD). She was not sure of the implications but the LD will need to clarify.

A resident asked about the school budget concerned that both towns voted the override down and it looks more like a "wants" assessment vs "needs" assessment. He questioned why the two towns feel like they are put up against a wall to fund a needs assessment if it was voted down? There is a new superintendent, MCAS are down. He stressed we should hold them accountable and not be forced.

Stephanie Cronin from the SC was in attendance. She confirmed that we had an outside group come up with a needs assessment. She noted the SC and superintendent had 12 information sessions on this before the first vote. She confirmed the HS is doing well but that is b/c HS was fully funded previously. The middle school and elementary are struggling more b/c of the last few years of cuts. She stressed that the SC is looking to address needs assessment and not wants.

Christine noted from an advisory perspective the NO override budget gives \$1.6MM to continue operating expenses.

The proposed budget would give the GD an additional \$200K which would fund the current needs assessment.

She mentioned that similar to how we trust our police chief to tell advisory board what his department needs, we trust the superintendent to tell us what they need.

Another question came up from a resident about how we can find the \$13K to keep the library consortium.

A resident asked what happens if one town votes for the override and the other does not at town meeting. If it fails in either or both we could go to super town meeting or the SC could certify a lower budget. Tracy noted at super town meeting the SC could approve the budget by 2/3 if the towns don't pass it, if it doesn't happen we would continue to have super town meetings until the towns and SC come up with an agreed budget, or until 12/31. The state steps in at that date.

**Article 4-** Free cash transfer. To summarize, the advisory board and the BOS wanted to bring the override number down so all agreed to put \$200K from free cash into the override bringing the number down to \$475K. This almost depletes the free cash, only leaves close to \$30K.

**Ron makes the motion, Harold seconded, all approved: unanimous.**

**Article 5-** Christine summarized that this is dotting our I's and crossing our T's for past conservation purposes. These CR's have already occurred, this is just housecleaning previous CR.

**Dana moves we support, ron seconded, all approved: unanimous.**

A resident asked if there were any other info sessions planned. She is worried that there is a lot of people won't know about town meeting and the election. Christine wasn't sure how to reach people that either are not on social media, don't attend meetings and don't attend town meetings. Dana suggested we put the PowerPoint on the town website etc...

Dana asked if we could do a letter to editor of the Lowell as a board or a resident. Tracy confirmed we could write a letter to the editor as resident.

Christine said that she will reach out to Lowell sun and invite them to the town meeting.

Discussion around having informational flyers too pass out at the town concert educating the residents on what it means if the override passes and what it means if it doesn't. The board mentioned that residents can advocate for or against at any of these venues. It was reiterated that the advisory board cannot advocate for or against any ballot question.

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 P.M.