



OFFICE OF THE  
Advisory Board  
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October 3, 2016

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

- Tracy opened discussion on the transfer station. She anticipates they will be \$20,000 short of where they were supposed to land for revenue. Dana suggested they look at their recycling schedule, maybe cutting back to save on costs. Dana also mentioned that they may be looking at other options, including curbside pickup. Christine suggested we have the transfer station management come to a meeting to discuss their fiscal situation in January/February.
- Tracy transitioned the topic to capital planning. Most of the departments have submitted their “sheets” to the cap planning board for 2018. The chair of the board, Robert Jacobson, was present at tonight’s meeting. Tracy mentioned that we would bring the committee in front of the board in December/January time frame. Tracy suggestion December 5th as a possibility for them to attend the advisory board meeting.
- Christine introduced Lorraine to discuss GDRSD budget. Dunstable’s assessment was about \$35K more than our no override budget. \$162,080 was the difference between what was voted at town meeting and what was actually required for the assessment. Since it’s not necessary to tax residents for the full override amount, but we don’t want the FY18 taxes to be too much of an increase, we can reduce the amount of local receipts budgeted for FY17 by \$100,000. ~~One option is to reduce the amount of local receipts which will decrease some of the FY2017 (\$230,592). Lorraine suggests to lower the local receipts projections by \$100,000 to \$649,750.~~ Dana agreed with this suggestion, the rest of the board agreed.
- Christine suggested we have a joint meeting in Q116 with the groton finance board to ensure we are all on the same page for budgeting with the schools. Lorraine mentioned that groton finance board is meeting tomorrow October 4th with the selectmen. Christine will reach out to the chair of the finance board to set up a joint meeting.
- Christine brought up for discussion the de-regionalization study and asked for any discussion from the board. Dana said he didn’t think there was any benefit to de-regionalize. Amie agreed that she didn’t think it was feasible for us to stand on our own, especially with administrative costs. Tracy countered that the administration doesn’t have to be all in house, you can contract some of those services out for cost savings. There could also be dual roles for administration for additional cost savings.

- A question was posed from the audience if the DOE handles de-regionalized studies. Lorraine clarified that the DOE had funded the studies in the past but does not actually handle the study. She said from her history with DOE, they typically favor larger school districts. They encourage regionalization. Christine mentioned that we are only allowed to raise taxes 2.5%, but costs for schools are averaging 5%. The money will inevitably need to come from a decrease in municipal services.
- A question was posed as to how many students swallow union could handle. 400. Tracy mentioned that the next part of the feasibility study would encompass hard numbers etc. A question was also posed would de-regionalization favor groton more than dunstable? it was discussed that de-regionalization would favor dunstable. Selectman will decide whether to pursue further studies.

### **Committee update**

- Christine was a representative on the regional agreement amendment committee (RAAC). They spent a year going over the regional agreement with MARS. They eliminated a lot of setup language. Spent time discussion capital costs and make sure it was an equitable distribution. Committee voted on final draft and it should be posted on website. Next step is the agreement goes to DESE and then —legal counsel. It will then go before both town meetings in the spring.
  - Dana asked if we needed to renovate swallow union, would groton contribute to the cost? It was confirmed that yes, they would contribute the percentage of students.
- Christine is also on the GD operational review committee. There were RFPs sent out. Three responses were received and they have an interview with one of the consultants next week. The study could cost up to \$100,000. Christine was adamant when meeting with the operational committee that dunstable does not have the funds to contribute to this study.
- Dana is on the housing committee which is studying the MUD district. They recently came up with numbers we could charge for homes and rentals. There would be 40 units, 3 buildings. The numbers appear to be affordable. The apartments would be marketed to over 55. The townhouses would be marketed toward first time home buyers.
  - a question was posed by the audience if we would have to upgrade the water system. There may be an opportunity for CPC funds to help the developer upgrade the system. Dana stated we are waiting on an update from the water department over the next few months.
- Dana is also on the public safety committee.
  - Plans are drawn for the safety complex. They have been reviewed by both Fire and police chief. They have reviewed various parcels, i.e. behind west auto and behind gates property. The third parcel is behind salmon brook. Range of costs for this project could be \$7-10MM.
  - An audience member suggested we look at “regionalizing” our public safety.
    - can we regionalize some admin functions. do other towns do this that we could look at?

### **Additional Business**

- Next was discussion on the library waiver. Tracy, Dana and Christine discussed if we had ever submitted a waiver before. The consensus was no. Can we show what other departments had to cut vs. the library?
  - Tracy will continue to work with library director on this.
- Town clerk requested a \$3,000 transfer request to cover November election help, early voting and post election, December vacation and February surgery.
  - Early voting needs certain hours to be covered by law. i.e. halloween, some Saturdays etc. beginning October 19th- November 18th.
  - The clerk mentioned there may be a fund that she receives roughly \$864 every two years from the state for election needs. This account should have over \$7,000 in this account.
    - The board was not aware of this account. Tracy will investigate how to classify this money going forward, i.e. is it a reserve fund etc. Can we use these funds to cover the extra help the town clerk has requested.
  - The clerk clarified that she will be having a surgery in February. Tracy will look closer into the details surrounding the leave.
- Harold brought up that the high school is having water issues and it might cost upwards of \$100K-\$200K. Tracy to keep the committee updated on this issue.
- Christine is going to Mass association of town finance committees on October 15th at devens. Christine asked the committee if anyone else could go. Amie will try to attend with her.

Dana made a motion to adjourn, Harold seconded, all approved. Next meeting will be 11/7/2016 at 7:00PM.