



**OFFICE OF THE  
Advisory Board  
TOWN HALL  
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February 27, 2017

Present: Amie Stevens, Harold Simmons, Christine Muir, Ron Mikol

Absent: Pam crocker, Dana Metzler

Also present: Tracey Hutton

Christine opened the meeting at 7:10.

- The discussion opened with the police budget. The police chief discussed a change in leadership which will be a cost savings to the town.
  - The department will now consist of a Chief and 3 sergeants, no lieutenant. Current costs are \$500K, new structure would see a savings of over \$25K.
    - The Chief is confident that this will be a better leadership with this model. They will also help manage the 8 part time officers.
  - Ron asked about the CBA contract, the collective bargaining agreement. If there are increases, Tracey confirmed this would be a special town warrant article.
    - This article would be drafted without a number and would be approved at town meeting. The number would be stated when the warrant article is read at town meeting.
- Tracey noted the police overtime budget at \$125K. The reserve fund could be there if needed. Last year overtime came in at \$126K.
  - We should have a new officer coming out of the academy in July which should decrease over-time expense.
  - Current overtime is being worked more by part time officers which results in costs savings.
- Ron asked where we are with the police enterprise fund.
  - Tracey confirmed that the enterprise is funded and working properly.
- The meeting moved to the operations budget
  - Cruiser maintenance doubled.
  - Increased gas by \$1500 to account for rising gas prices.
  - The \$53K represents the second payment of the lease and purchase of a cruiser. 2019 should go down by about \$16K due to a lease expiring.
    - Amie asked the chief how many miles per year do we put on each cruiser. The chief stated that we average 25K miles on each cruiser per year. The town typically retires a cruiser at 100K miles.
  - We have moved from leasing cruisers to buying cruisers.
  - A new cruiser tends to cost on average \$33K-\$34K.
  - Dues for NEMLAC is going up about \$2K.
    - They offer additional services, i.e. internal affairs, SWAT, etc.

- An officer on the Dunstable's force is SWAT trained etc.
    - There is a lot of reciprocity for Dunstable by being a member of NEMLAC.
    - For a small town such as ours there is a lot of value in the services they offer
  - "Other supplies" increased by about \$6K, due to consolidation of other line items.
  - Ron asked about police expense communication.
    - This is misc office supplies.
  - Police radio communication is budgeted at \$68K. This is the dispatch services through Groton.
    - The Chief confirmed this is a good price for these services.
    - We receive grants from the State because we have a regional dispatch system. The State looks favorably on this type of set up.
  - Ron asked if we could start charging the person in lockup a "lockup" fee.
    - Chief will explore.
  - Christine mentioned that the board appreciates how often the department communicates with the Town Manager on the department and that he is welcome to reach out to the finance board as well if he ever has a budget question.
- Tracey moved the meeting to an update for capital planning.
    - Uncertainty around the new fire engine and how to present it. They meet again on March 14th, the finance board should have an update after that.
    - The Board will also be updated on inventories from other departments at the same time.
    - There was not much discussion with the capital planning on the proposed ATV.
    - Ron was concerned that we are near our levy capacity and is worried about the future engine and water borrowings.
    - Storm water management number may be slightly lower than budgeted.
    - Library, a lot of discussion on the issue with the doors and ice damage. Adding Saturdays back.
    - Water department project
      - Discussed putting the tanks in the MUD district.
      - Rehabbing well one and putting new power lines onsite.
      - It was discussed that the 4 pipe replacements discussed in the engineering report do not need to be done.
      - Full engineering quote came in at \$145K, Tracey thinks it will come in \$125K.
      - Ron was concerned their won't be a scope of work for the well replacement
        - Tracey confirmed that a scope of work will be sent out with the RFP. She does not think an engineer is needed and would save \$20K.
    - Harold expressed concern that the finance board is not being presented with final information in time to craft warrant articles.
      - Ron concurred that he is concerned that we are running a deficit, and that we may not be able to borrow the necessary funds for these projects. He would like to know if we are running up against our levy limit.
  - Ron expressed concern about using free cash to cover deficit. Christine contended that the number we are considering using from free cash is much less this year that previous years and that the town is moving in the right direction.
  - Christine and Ron asked Tracey if she could send preliminary drafts from the capital committee and water before the March 6th meeting.

- Ron expressed concern that we are coming to close to the deadline to review the warrants.
- Tracey stated that we will be looking at draft warrant articles on 3/20. There are 35 articles to review. A joint meeting was suggested in March to go over the articles.
- Harold asked why we can lease highway equipment but we can't lease the cruiser.
  - This was a business decision.
- Harold expressed frustrations that we are running up against the town meeting deadline again. Why have we been so close to deadline the last few years.
  - Capital planning starts in August, budgets in September etc.
  - Ron stated that we should set a firm date for capital planning to submit their proposals next year.
- Other Business:
  - Next meeting of the advisory board will be on 3/6.
  - No minutes to approve.
  - Public safety committee is still leaning toward a one story structure. All minutes are on the selectman's page.
  - Affordable housing is on hold pending further water department discussion.
- Ron makes a motion to adjourn, Amie seconded, all approved.