



**OFFICE OF THE
Advisory Board
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October 5, 2017

Present: Harold Simmons, Christine Muir, Leo Tometich, Bob Nelson
Absent: Kieran Meehan, Pam Crocker
Also attending: Town Administrator Tracey Hutton

The meeting opened at 7:00.

Minutes

The meeting minutes of September 7 were unanimously approved.

Board/Committee Updates

Tracey provided the following updates:

- Water Department: There are two notices of non-compliance from DEP; they are related to engineering the new tank and staffing levels. The Water Dept is working with a new engineering firm to meet the DOE deadline and create two options for replacing the current tank system. One option should use an atmospheric tank and the other should use hydro pneumatic. DEP will assist the town in choosing the best option. As far as staffing goes, we are supposed to have a licensed operator who is available at least four hours per business day to respond to any situations and to handle testing. The current operator cannot obtain a license because of the hours requirement. The cost of fulfilling the right staffing level is expected to exceed the department's entire current budget.
- Board of Health: the board is still considering various alternatives to the transfer station. They have a grant and are working with Irene Condon from the state to determine what might be the best option moving forward. There are still a few years left on the current transfer station contract, so we are locked into that unless we close the station. The board meets the first and third Tuesday of each month; Christine invited any Advisory Board members who would like to attend, to do so and become a liaison for us.
- Public Safety: The agreement for the donation of land on which to locate the public safety building is complete and ready to sign. The acceptance of the land is on the Special Town Meeting warrant. One board member asked if the donor will still pay taxes, and he will do so on the land that stays with the house. The "lost" tax revenue is approximately \$3300.
- Affordable Housing: The RFP is ready to send out to look for developers. The project is contingent on the Water infrastructure improvements.

Special Town Meeting Warrant Review

The Board voted to recommend support for articles 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12 and 13. Note that Harold Simmons abstained from voting on article 8 because of a family connection.

Alan Chaney notified the board that he submitted an unpaid bill for the Cemetery department, of \$24. Tracey noted that the town expected to receive a bill of approximately \$2100 but the provider hasn't submitted the bill on company letterhead so it will not be included in the STM.

Regarding Article 2, the board would like additional information on the details of the agreement reached with the Collective Bargaining unit for the police department. There was so specific opposition to the article, just a request for more detail.

Article 5 is a “housekeeping” article that is typically on the Annual Town Meeting warrant. Because we can handle it in the STM, it will not appear again in the spring.

There was significant discussion around Article 6, to create a district stabilization fund for GDRSD capital costs. School Committee members Marlena Gilbert and Jennifer McKenzie attended the meeting to advocate for the fund, and to answer questions and provide more information. The general consensus was that the Advisory Board would support the creation of such a fund, but would not be likely to add any money into the account. Creating the account allows the school district to move E&D funds into this one, and earmark the money for capital expenses. Although this means that no money would be turned back to the towns once E&D reaches its maximum, it is expected that having money in the capital stabilization fund would reduce those assessments to both towns. Marlena Gilbert also noted that the School Committee plans to approve a (non-binding) resolution not to assess towns more than the capital plan calls for in any given year. State law also prohibits the school district from increasing assessments by more than 5% of the previous year’s assessment.

The board also spent some time discussing Article 11, regarding a Market Analysis to inform future economic development decisions. Christine wanted to confirm that the report would be substantial and of good quality for the cost. Others questioned whether the report would actually provide any useful information. The board decided not to vote on this article tonight.

Old/New Business

Free cash: Accountant Lorraine Leonard notified the board that DOR had certified free cash at \$868,603. She provided a breakdown of the contributing factors, as follows:

Free Cash not spent (7/1/16)	\$171,859
Free cash applied to tax rate	\$200,000
Town Meeting article error	\$118,003
Revenue surplus	\$224,076
Expenditure closeout	\$159,250

There were also identified deficits of \$609 and unspecified deficits of \$3976. The biggest contributing factor is the revenue surplus, which comes from local receipts and new growth. The Advisory Board and the Town Administrator will work closely with the Town Accountant to adjust these projections for FY19.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.