



**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**

March 15, 2018

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

Minutes

The board unanimously approved the minutes of March 1.

Tour of Highway Garage

The board was given a tour of the equipment in the garage, which is helpful because it provides visuals for items discussed in budgeting. The department currently has the following trucks:

- a 2011 Mack used for everything
- a 2008 Ford 550 used for general tasks and plowing, which the dept hopes to replace
- a 1999 Ford L8000 that used to be a fire truck, now is used for sanding
- a backhoe that is on the capital plan for within the next five years
- a front end loader that puts salt and sand in trucks, and is also on the capital plan within five years
- two Freightliners, the newest trucks, used for sanding, salting and plowing

Highway FY19 Budget Request

Road Commissioner Paul Dalida presented data supporting a request for a higher hourly wage for all highway employees. However, the Advisory Board cannot act on this request because the hourly wage is already set by the Personnel Board's wage and classification chart, which was adopted by the Board of Selectmen two years ago. The Highway Dept is requesting two additional employees this year, but the budget request doesn't reflect the true hourly wage as set by this chart (it is the average of what current employees are earning). The benefits for these employees are not included in the benefits line items, so the true cost of adding new employees is not clear in this budget. The work that isn't being done, that could be handled by new employees, includes cleaning drainage more frequently, getting organics off the side of the road, and trimming brush. The highway dept has the equipment and materials that these employees would need, so there is no need to add to those line items.

The other significant increase in the highway request is \$500,000 for paving. Dalida said this still isn't enough to do all that the department wants to do, but it would make a good start. There is a paving management plan in progress, which would help identify the projects and costs each year moving forward. C. Muir noted that this request puts the overall budget into serious deficit and would require an override. There was talk of trying to come up with a number or a plan that would increase the paving budget but reduce or eliminate the need for an override.

Water FY19 Budget Request

The Water department budget for FY19 includes an increase of nearly \$170,000 in professional services to pay for a licensed operator to inspect the system more frequently. The department is not self-supporting at this time, so the Advisory Board is asked to consider moving this account out of an enterprise fund and into the general fund. It is expected that additional revenue from increasing the water rates will cover the cost of the inspector. The Advisory Board isn't clear on why the fund needs to move and whether there are distinct advantages or disadvantages.

The infrastructure project is ongoing. The system has been sized down from previous requests and still allows for some growth. The engineering report is likely to be done in June and there will probably be a special town meeting in the fall to request construction funds.

Meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.