

Town of *Dunstable*  
Joint Meeting of the Selectboard & Advisory Board  
March 30, 2015  
Town Hall, Dunstable, MA 01827

**Convened:** 7:00 pm

**Present:** Walter F. Alterisio, Chair, Kenneth J. Leva, members; Madonna McKenzie, Town Administrator; Dana Metzler, Chair, Harold Simmons, Kevin Welch, Christine Muir, Advisory Board members; Lorraine Leonard, Town Accountant

**FY 2016 Budget Review**

➤ *Debt Exclusion*

Ms. Leonard and Ms. McKenzie asked the boards to review the debt exclusion numbers on the overview tab of the budget spreadsheet. Ms. Leonard, the Town Accountant, wanted to confirm that the numbers were correct and included everything they should. Advisory noted that, although there was an error in calculating the debt (double-counting interest with principle, it was a wash in the end).

It was also noted that it should be further verified whether the non-excluded debt for the GDRSD Middle School Roof Project and the Greater Lowell Tech renovations are included in the revenue side. This is of importance because neither should be there since both are currently not excluded debt.

➤ *FEMA Reimbursement*

The application to FEMA for reimbursement of expenses related to the first significant snowstorm has been submitted. The expenses for that storm totaled \$171,710.95. Based on the expectation to receive 75 percent reimbursement, the town would get \$128,783.21. Mr. Metzler proposed adding \$85,000 to anticipated revenue for FY16 to balance the budget, based on the FEMA reimbursement. Ms. Leonard suggested that the town create a "grant bucket" to put aside the reimbursement amount, which would allow the town to get past the June 30 deadline for certifying free cash. The DOR will allow towns to run a deficit in this account without penalty as long as the FEMA reimbursement application has been submitted. Governor Charlie Baker is currently asking that towns be allowed to submit for reimbursement of expenses beyond the two days of the first snowfall.

➤ *Deficit & Gas Discussion*

The FY16 budget currently shows a deficit of \$12,800. The two boards reviewed the line items on which various attendees had questions. The police cruiser line item allows for two cruisers over two years, on a lease to buy basis. Mr. Leva asked about clarifying the differences among various "supply" line items in the police budget, suggesting that the town look for ways to consolidate purchasing. Mr. Simmons questioned the per gallon price used to calculate gas expenses noting that it is over \$3 in the budget but far less than at the pump. It was decided that line item be reduced by \$10,000, from a \$40,000 total to \$30,000. This would reflect the fall in gas prices. This change allows for prices to run an average of more than \$2.50 without emptying the account balance.

➤ *Fire Department*

The boards turned to the Fire Departments budget. Both boards determined that the communications line item should remain \$5,000 and that that number is firm. It was also determined that the Fire Chief's salary should be raised by \$3,000 to a total of \$50,000 per year. Mr. Mikol requested that an article be considered to allot \$2,500 to clean and coat the ceiling in the garage bay. The boards determined that the Chief could use money in his operating budget to do this instead of putting out an article.

➤ *Electrical Inspector*

The boards then turned to discussion of the Electrical Inspectors line item. The FY16 budget includes a \$2,000 increase from \$8,000 to \$10,000. The amount is based on 80 percent of revenue generated by permits taken out of the work inspected. Mr. Mikol questioned whether this includes the emergency calls on the town's behalf. According to the budget it does not. The boards jointly agreed that this needs to be confirmed and it should be determined how to pay for these calls.

➤ *Town Administrator*

The biggest change from the FY15 budget to FY16 is the \$85,000 allocated to a full time Town Administrator. The Board of Selectmen supports this line item, in position and salary. The Personnel Board has not yet reviewed the matter. With benefits, this line item is around \$100,000 in totality. It does not include a car or travel budget, although some travel expenses are provided for in the professional development/training line item.

➤ *River Street Survey*

The boards agreed that there is no need for immediate action on this project and that the funding for it should be reduced to zero.

The boards concluded the meeting which was ultimately adjourned by the Advisory Board at 9:00 pm.

Submitted by

*Christine Muir*