

Town of Dunstable
Joint Meeting of the Selectboard & Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
June 29, 2015
Town Hall, Dunstable, MA 01827

Convened: 7:02 pm

Present: Kenneth J. Leva, Daniel F. Devlin, Walter F. Alterisio, members; Madonna McKenzie, Town Administrator; Dana Metzler, Chair, Christine Muir, Harold Simmons, Ronald Mikol, Pamela Crocker, Amie Stevens, members of the Advisory Board; Anthony Lively, Chair, Robert Jacobson, Harold West, members of the Capital Planning Committee

Selectboard Reviewed & Signed the Following:

- Pathways Grant

End of Year Transfers for FY15

Greetings and Salutations from the Selectboard to the Advisory Board

Following greetings from the Boards to each other, both Boards focused on the end of year transfers being brought before them. Mr. Metzler started this discussion off by addressing the various requests. The first was for \$8,000 to come out of the Selectmen's Professional and Technical Account and related to the hiring of a consulting firm to assist the Towns of Groton and Dunstable in updating the GDRSD regionalization agreement to conform to current law. Ms. McKenzie noted that this request has to do with Dunstable's portion of the cost and that there is \$27,510 in the reserve account presently that could cover the expense. Mr. Metzler asked Ms. McKenzie to give a broader update on where the two towns stand in relation to the hiring of this consultant. Ms. McKenzie explained that the bid was completed and approved with two contingencies, both of which concerned the wording.

The group negotiating will be a BOS from each community, one at large, one member for finance, and one school committee member. Whoever is chair won't vote unless a tie occurs. Originally the bid was put out as the GDRSD, but it was asked by Dunstable that the bid be re-done as the two Selectboards. The party chosen during the bid process is one that already knows the GDRSD. Mr. Devlin then explained that the consultant is based out of Winchester, and they have expertise in this kind of update to a school agreement. He further elaborated that they have actually helped many new regional school districts write their agreements as well as many others complete updates. Ms. Muir inquired as to the process. Ms. McKenzie explained how they go through the process and how they help the communities work through what they need/want and then write it out. Once the work is completed it goes back to each town for approval. Ms. McKenzie then elaborated on the cost noting that the original cost was anticipated to be \$30,000 with each town paying \$10,000 and GDRSD paying \$10,000. Instead the total cost was \$15,000. As a result, the plan was for each of the three to allocate paying \$6,000, but Ms. McKenzie is asking for an extra \$2,000 to cover unforeseen exigencies.

Mr. Metzler suggested making the transfer after July 1st and taking it out of FY16s free cash. Ms. McKenzie suggested that the town take it now saying that the town will need its free cash for next year. Mr. Metzler had a few questions and asked Lorraine Leonard, the Town Accountant, about how it would affect free cash. Ms. Leonard said it could be a reserve fund transfer and then encumbered. Mr. Metzler said that as long as we have the money it shouldn't be a problem. Mr. Alterisio noted that the thought all along was to try and fit it into this year's budget. Mr. Metzler is concerned, he reiterated with the encumbering. Ms. McKenzie stated this was a commitment made in FY15. She further elaborated that as long as it is paid by July 15th it should pass without issue. Ms. Leonard stated that this shouldn't be an issue so long as the town can get a statement saying the work is in process. It was further clarified that the plan is to spend "up to" \$6,000. Mr. Devlin noted that the consultant feels confident that the amount they

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bid will hold. It was, he noted, the Chairman of the Groton Selectboard that wanted to cushion with the extra \$2,000.

From there it was noted that at some point in the year the Advisory Board will need to be in discussion with GDRSD. There could be some adjustments to the agreement as a result of this process. Ms. McKenzie explained that the school department has determined that there may be no impact on the plan being put in place for the next year. So there may be no impact next fiscal year. However, while there will be no impact on FY16, and is it unlikely that an impact will occur in FY17, it is expected that an impact there will be an impact on the FY18 budget. From there the Boards discussed and agreed to various other minor transfers between accounts and resolved that they would have to return to the issue of end of year transfers later in the year. Ms. Leonard again reminded the Boards that they have until July 15th to conduct end of year transfers. Ms. McKenzie recommended holding another joint meeting closer to that date so that the Boards could conduct a final series of transfers.

Update on Negotiations with Tracey Hutton

Mr. Leva updated the Advisory Board on the situation with Tracey Hutton and the resulting contract negotiations. The starting salary will be \$65,000 with an additional \$5,000 to be spent on the procurement officer training as a condition of her contract. Mr. Metzler elaborated to the Advisory Board about who Ms. Hutton is and some of her bio as he was on the screening committee. Mr. Leva noted that some things due to her moving will be included in the contract, as well as goals and expectations. Mr. Metzler responded that one of the things he'd like to see come out of this process would be a goal to have a 5 year rolling budget moving forward. Ms. McKenzie agreed, noting that there is still work to be had on wages. She further elaborated on the wage and classification plan that will need to be setup.

Mr. Alterisio informed the Advisory Board that he would like to see support for the transition, including potentially keeping funds to continue to pay Ms. McKenzie for some continued consulting work. There remain some left over funds in the account created to pay her that could be used for this purpose. This would primarily take the shape of continued working on the DOR requirements and would reflect a continuation of some of Ms. McKenzie's earlier consulting work. The Selectboard was unified in its desire to see that too much pressure is not placed the new Administrator and would like to have the ability to encourage Ms. Hutton to be able to lean on Ms. McKenzie when and where necessary. Ms. Leonard informed the Boards that the funds in question would need to be carried forward, but stated that they could be carried forward as long as it is to complete work started in FY15. So no transfer would be necessary, the funds can remain in the current account.

Capital Planning Update to Advisory

The Capital Planning Committee presented its recommendations to the Advisory Board, which are the same as the ones they discussed with the Selectboard at its most recent meeting. These recommendations included discussion concerning the Library issue with its emergency exits and the possibility that the Library could be shut down because of this issue during winter months. Ms. McKenzie noted that in many communities it's been discovered that in the winter many seniors go to the Library to stay warm and as a result the Library can end up being a kind of shelter which underlines the importance of keeping the building open to the public. In response to all of this, Mr. Metzler sated that the intent of the report form Capital Planning is fabulous because it helps the community wrap its head around what needs to be done. He did, however, have some specific thoughts about the Fire and Police recommendations including the construction of a combined safety complex. Ms. McKenzie responded that Capital Planning is planning for the future, and this does include planning for possible future complexes. Mr. Leva noted that the focus right now is obvious safety priorities.

Ms. McKenzie also told Advisory that the Selectboard will be going to CPC for funds to work on the Town Hall roof. She also updated the elevator problem. There was some question from Mr. Metzler about the repair to the elevator floor and work done on it in the past. It appears, Ms. McKenzie noted, that it was not done right or to the full scope of the problem which may not have been apparent at the time. However, it needs to be repaired so the elevator can pass inspection with the Commonwealth. She also noted the problems with the

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elevator control room. From there a question arose as from Ms. Muir as to the appointment process of this Committee rather than having it be elected. She noted a concern that there could be high turnover. Ms. McKenzie responded that this is a good group that while it is an ad hoc committee right now, will eventually be a standing committee with a by-law. The Selectboard also informed the Advisory Board that their intention is for this committee to be led by the Town Administrator going forward and kept on task. From there Ms. McKenzie suggested a multi board committee that will comprise of someone from the Selectboard, Advisory Board, and so forth, that will address these sorts of matters.

Ms. McKenzie then moved the discussion to the report from MIIA about fixes and recommendations that need to be addressed to improve things like the fire station. The immediate priority Mr. Alterisio noted is to address things that will shut us down. Things like the elevator and so forth. The Library and Town Hall have the most immediate “shut down” exposure. Mr. Metzler asked if the Selectboard sees a Special Town Meeting as likely for this fall. Ms. McKenzie responded that there will probably need to be one in October or November. Advisory then asked Capital Planning what involvement it has from the Library. Mr. Lively noted that the Fire Chief has been a helpful person for much of what needs to be done, but he has also consulted with the Mary-Beth Pallis, the Director of the Library who he commended as frugal and very aware of the needs and challenges faced by the Library building. Advisory noted that there may be more going on at the Library including an eventual need for a whole new roof. Ms. McKenzie stated that some architectural work will need to be done and that they will likely be coming back to Advisory for the funds. She further elaborated that it’s likely this process could be done in time for a Special Town Meeting if one occurs in the fall.

From there the Advisory Board had some questions about the process of a five year plan. Mr. Lively noted that the plan is a wish list. Mr. Leva stated that the idea is to look at the plan and pick priorities. Ms. Muir again reiterated that this is why we have to see what is mandated and what has to be done, while still taking care of emergency type things. Ms. McKenzie suggested that this process could help move the town away from simply responding to emergencies and shut down problems. Both Boards agreed that now is the time to begin to address things, because too often in the past we’ve not gotten to things and end up paying a premium to prevent shut down. Ms. Muir said that the balance also needs to include talk about, “does it make sense to repair this building or build a new one?” and other similar questions. Ms. McKenzie turned the discussion to the things that will be done immediately. This would include work this year on getting the AC units repaired and getting the furnace repairs done. Mr. Lively finished by noting that the money should be done outside of the Library’s operating budget because of certification issues that the Library would incur otherwise.

The Boards then concluded the joint portion of their meetings, separated, and continued on with other business in accordance with their respective posted agendas.

Contract

Ms. McKenzie informed the Board that she hopes to have a contract signed by Wednesday. She noted as well that Ms. Hutton will be present at Wednesday’s meeting. The contract has been reviewed by Marc Terry the towns Labor Counsel. The Board suggested a meet and greet to introduce the community to Tracey more fully. Ms. McKenzie noted that she’s holding a Department head’s meeting in the morning Wednesday to introduce Ms. Hutton.

Appreciation & Recognition Day

Ms. McKenzie then stated we need to get letters in for special accommodations to our representatives in the General Court. So we need to decide when recognition of service people will be done as well. From there they went back to the contract and discussed a few items. This included discussion about the healthcare issue. Ms. McKenzie explained the particulars and how it would be resolved if Ms. Hutton decided to go on the healthcare plan later. This revolved around how she was offered \$62,500 but got \$65,000 due to the healthcare matter. If she changes status the only thing the Board can take back is the \$2,500. The Board discussed some of the changes made by Marc Terry. Finally, the Board determined it was ok with the contract. Ms. McKenzie stated she would send the contract to Ms. Hutton that evening for her review.

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Pathways

Mr. Leva reviewed and signed the contract for the Safe Pathways grant.

For July Meetings


The Board determined that Peter Georges and Joe Dean should be put on the agenda for July. Mr. Leva noted he cannot make it to the July 15th and will probably be gone the whole week. Mr. Alterisio also noted that he will be gone from 18th. Ms. McKenzie then reminded the Board of a few other things that will need to be addressed at its next meeting.

Water Project

Ms. McKenzie asked the Board to decide on an amount so that she can have the Treasurer/Collector work on the numbers. The Board stated it does not want to put too much on the water users, they did not ask for this and the town hasn't kept up as well as it should. Ms. McKenzie noted that there are different methods for how to do the betterment and the Treasurer/Collector has pulled the actual law concerning this for the town. The Board is concerned about the impact. Ms. McKenzie informed the Board she can present numbers that can help the Board find a starting place. Board consensus is that the betterment fee will have to be assessed, but the Board wants more information before it makes a final decision or presents any kind of numbers to the public.

A motion to adjourn was made at 8:22pm by Mr. Leva, seconded by Mr. Alterisio, and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by



Jakob K. Hamm
Admin. Assistant to the Selectboard & Town Administrator

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