

**Town of *Dunstable* Selectboard**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**June 14, 2016**  
**Town Hall, Dunstable, MA 01827**

**Convened:** 6:32 pm

**Present:** Daniel F. Devlin, chair, Walter F. Alterisio, Leah D. Basbanes, member(s); Tracey Hutton, Town Administrator; Bob Nelson, Town Moderator

**Budget Discussion & Strategy**

Ms. Hutton started off by explaining how the proposed budget will be adopted. This included some discussion regarding the procedure as explained by Town Counsel. Mr. Nelson noted that currently, as we stand at this time, the Town does not have a budget. Ms. Hutton agreed stating that what the Town will do tonight is adopt a budget. There was then further discussion regarding the motions as written by Town Counsel and how the budget will work both in the absence of the override and with the override. There was also discussion regarding CPA funding for multiple CR's which will be done by motion. Discussion then returned to the mechanisms relating to the budget.

Mr. Nelson had some detailed questions regarding how the no override numbers would function. He was concerned about the differences between the override and no override figures and how the motions will be made in regards to this. Ms. Hutton elaborated on the process and why Town Counsel has written the motions the way they are and why the budget is functioning in this manner. There was discussion regarding Article 2, which relates to the Snow Deficit. These funds are coming from the salt surplus from FY16. So last year's deficit will be paid with this year's surplus, and this is to the amount of approximately \$40,000. Ms. Hutton has verified that these funds are unspent and consulted with the Town Accountant in regards to this. There was some discussion of the differences between this budget and the budget passed at the Annual Town Meeting. Ms. Hutton highlighted numerous changes. From there the Board made inquiries as to the possibility of a Super Town Meeting. This included what would happen if Dunstable or Groton disapproves and how a Super Town Meeting would work. A Super Town Meeting is a meeting between two towns where the majority rules. Discussion then turned to the debt exclusion. After the budget is discussed, the meeting will take up the debt exclusions. It is essential that the public understand the debt exclusions being asked for. The vote appears to indicate some mixed results on public understanding. Discussion pivoted to the regional school district agreement.

The GDRSD Agreement Amendment Committee is a joint committee between the two towns and the school district. The purpose of the committee is to address necessary updates and modifications to the regional school district agreement. The Board had some concerns regarding the committee's progress. There has been some discussion regarding the continued viability of the regional school district. Some in Groton have shown little interest in controlling cost, with an emphasis on paying for what is needed in the view of the school. Dunstable now faces whether the option of de-regionalization should be considered. Ms. Hutton explained the research she has done on this so far and believes the cost of exploring the option would be about \$5,000 from FY16 funds that are available. The assessment formula is part of the agreement, and there is an obvious problem with this formula and the agreement amendment committee should take up this issue. There has been some discussion in Groton about the issue of de-regionalization, but it has not come to this point. Unfortunately the Town cannot determine what the option will mean without doing due diligence. This led to discussion of what the costs will be for the Town and how the Town can handle things. Ms. Hutton assured the Board that the consultants that would be hired would be those who understand MGL and the Mass Dept. of Education. The Board reiterated that we are in a difficult position and we need to at least understand what the options fully are and what the costs will be. There was some concern about the unfunded mandates from the Commonwealth and what the impact would be on Town. It boils down to the need to understand what all the options are. The Board concluded that \$5,000 is pennies on the dollar considering the size of the school budget. The Board determined it would discuss this matter further at its next meeting including the issue of authorizing the Town Administrator to explore de-regionalization further.

*Approved and adopted on 6/29/16*

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Alterisio at 6:56 pm. The motion was seconded by Ms. Basbanes and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jakob K. Hamm". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

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

*Approved and adopted on 6/29/16*