



TOWN OF HADLEY
SELECT BOARD
October 9, 2013
Meeting Minutes

Meeting of TriBoard: (Select Board, School Committee and Finance Committee):
Meeting convened at 7:00 p.m., Room 203, Town Hall.

Present: Chair Dan Dudkiewicz, Joyce Chunglo, John Waskiewicz, and Brian West, Guilford Mooring
Molly Keegan, Robie Grant (School Committee)
Howard Koski, Linda Sanderson, Frank Aquadro (Finance Committee)

Also in Attendance: David Nixon (Town Administrator), Peg Jekanowski (Administrative Assistant), Richard Trueswell (TV-5); Sue Glowatsky (Town Collector), Gail Weiss (Town Accountant), Dan Zdonek (Assistant Assessor); Joe Fitzgibbon; David Moskin; Paul Alexanderson; Zack Blake and Joe Markarian (Division of Local Services)

Approval of Minutes: *Motion to approve minutes of 10/02/2013 with changes to articles 7 and 8 as identified by Mr. Mooring: West Second: Chunglo Vote: 5-0-0.*

Appointment: 7:05 pm DOR Presentation Financial Management Report:

Zack Blake and Joe Markarian from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services presented an overview of the Financial Management Review performed in June of 2013. They summarized that overall local government for the Town of Hadley is well run. The report they provided is designed to be constructive, and provides three primary recommendations: (1.) That the Town develops a 5 year strategic plan; (2.) that the Town-wide strategy is linked to the Annual Budget and (3.) that a performance management program is developed to measure progress.

Mr. Blake stated that when compared to other Towns in Hampshire County, Hadley has a strong reserve rate, its bond rating is very good, debt is modest, and tax rate is fairly low. The question is how to move forward in to the future, and suggested the town needs to develop a list of priorities. Once priorities are established a plan is needed to actualize them, and how to link them to a budget. Discussion ensued regarding the need for accurate figures for forecasting, and what numbers should be used and how to forecast consistently and accurately. DLS representatives stated that the source should be the Town Accountant, and that each year a greater deficit in the budget will be seen. However numbers are always moving. Ms. Keegan stated that the struggle is not with the numbers from the Accountant but the presentation for management discussion and analysis. DLS suggested a subcommittee from all three committees be formed to decide an acceptable format that everyone can agree. Per DLS revenue projections are key, calculate tax revenues, local receipts (be conservative), and state aid, with a policy of how much Free Cash you are willing to use. He recommends having a cut-off date after which revenue projections will not be changed, and that department budgets are not back filled in the fall with Free Cash.

Mr. Nixon asked for an example of what a strategic plan might look like; different examples from various communities were given. Discussion ensued and Mr. Blake stated the goal is to schedule things out, put in a series of priorities over the course of years and come up with a funding schedule. Mr. West stated Mr. Nixon has provided the Select Board with 5 year financial projections every year that for Hadley many processes have been started, the Town infrastructure and the amount of capital expenses will be priority, as well as enterprise funds.

Discussion ensued about how to change Select Board meeting time in order to have time directed toward long range planning, yet still take care of all other business. Mr. Nixon suggested that Select Board meeting be reorganized to have an additional meeting on the 2nd Wednesday of the month and have small tasks groups reporting on one issue dedicated to a priority identified by the Select Board. Mr. Markarian also suggested streamlining meeting by setting up "Consent Agenda's" where routine items are taken care of with one vote, thus shortening meetings and being able to direct time toward priority items.



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Linda Sanderson asked how to get the process off the ground of setting goals and then funding them when forecasting shows deficits. The answer was that there a dialogue needs to be started, and in fact the Town has started this process.

Mr. Nixon stated that he gives economic analyses that feature trend lines, and policy boxes that are left blank. The analyses are an attempt to look at the variables. This could be a starting point for making strategic decisions. Discussion ensued about the role of the Select Board and Finance Committee, and that there will be conflicts and give and take on budget discussions, and that is the proper role for each committee.

Ms. Keegan summarized that going forward decisions need to be made in the context of a longer view rather than a shorter view, and that it is critical to get the right information in order to make informed decisions. Mr. Mooring reiterated that the Department of Revenue report reflects that Town staff worked well and do a good job for the Town.

Mr. Zdonek and other Town Hall staff commented that some items in the report were not correct and asked that DOR give an avenue for a Town response to items that are erroneous. DOR responded that there is no room for that type of response but the Town could publish something on their own website for rebuttal.

The Select Board thanked the DOR for their review and taking time out to come to Hadley for the presentation.

Other Business: Special Town Meeting Fall Town: Warrant – Review and Sign Line of Sight Bylaw

The Board reviewed language of a line of sight bylaw for inclusion on the Town Meeting Warrant.

A fence, hedge, wall or other enclosure may be maintained on any premises. In order to preserve and promote the safety of the public, any fence, hedge, or shrub or other growth or enclosure wall on the corner lot, boundary on a public way, driveway, or curb obstructing the view of motorists and situated within 15 feet of a public street or curb or side line thereof shall not be permitted by the owner or occupant of the premises to exceed the height of three feet above road grade, and any and all trees within said fifteen-foot area (shade trees to be subject to the provisions of MGL Chapter 87, Section 3) shall have limbs trimmed to the height of six feet above road grade, provided that on a corner lot no structure or vegetation shall be over three feet in height.

Motion to open Special Town Meeting Warrant: West Second: Chunglo Vote: 5-0-0.

Motion to add line of sight bylaw article to Town Meeting Warrant for 10/24/2013: West: Second: Chunglo Vote: 5-0-0.

Motion to close the warrant: Chunglo Second: West: Vote: 5-0-0.

The Board next reviewed article one, budget adjustment. Fire Salaries were decreased to reflect the fact that no Fire Captain has been hired as yet and eliminating over time for that position. The Board would also like to have the Fire Chief in at a future date to review his plan for the department.

Other adjustments were Senior Center wages due to difference in salary due to retirement; retirement was reduced due to a discount for early payment, and OPEB increased.

Motion to recommend Article 1: West Second: Mooring Vote: 4-0-1 (Waskiewicz abstaining)

Article 2, funding the union contracts, was not acted on as the Police Union have not yet taken their vote.



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Article 5, discussion of taking sander out of capital and funding through snow and ice. **Motion to take sander from capital and place Sander in snow and ice for funding: West Second: Mooring Vote: 1-2-2 (Chunglo, Dudkiewicz dissenting: Mooring, Waskiewicz abstaining) Motion fails.**

Article 6 – change wording from \$180,000.00 to \$192,000.00.

Article 7 – dump truck for DPW. **Motion to recommend: Mooring Second: Chunglo Vote: 3-1-1 (West dissenting: Waskiewicz abstaining.)**

Article 8 – DPW vehicle. The Board decided to keep it on the warrant for Town Meeting to decide. **Motion to recommend against purchase of vehicle: Chunglo Second: West Vote: 4-0-1**

Water Tank Mixer Bid Award

Motion to accept bid for water tank mixer project in the amount of \$47,495.00 from Solarbee: Chunglo Second: Mooring Vote: 4-0-1 (Waskiewicz dissenting) The article will be adjusted for the new amount.

Article 20 has been withdrawn by the School Committee

Article 21 (Benefits Stabilization Fund) **Motion to withdraw this article: Chunglo Second: West Vote: 5-0-0.**

Mr. Joe Fitzgibbon asked why the petition did not appear as separate articles, and why it is the last article on the warrant. Mr. Nixon spoke to legal and was advised that it has to appear on the warrant as written, word for word. If the intent is to separate out the buildings it must be amended on Town Meeting Floor (in written form.) Mr. Mooring offered to move Article to the place behind the Town Hall CPA article, the rest of the Board concurred.

Motion to sign the Warrant for October 24, 2013 Fall Town Meeting: West Second: Chunglo Vote: 5-0-0

Senior Center Steps: Change Order: A price proposal of \$3,000.00 for a change order to complete the Senior Center Step project was received, there is enough money to cover this and the Building Inspector has approved it: **Motion to approve the change order: West Second: Mooring Vote: 5-0-0**

Certified Free Cash: Mr. Nixon presented the Certified Free Cash amount as \$1,014,338.00. This is the amount of cash available that has not been earmarked for another purpose in the Town. Discussion ensued as this is higher than expected, and whether there is any way to get more accurate numbers earlier. Mr. West stated that at the time of the budget the Town was comfortable with a lower number, and decisions are made based on the best information available at the time. Mr. Nixon stated that there are many variables that factor in to the higher number, including that uncollected taxes were reduced, department returns were higher than expected, school variability was not as great as had been thought, and that it is very difficult to predict in April.

Mr. Aquadro suggested taking the dike settlement fund out of the budget, and discussion ensued about what to do with Free Cash. It will be further discussed by the TriBoard during budget season.

The Three/Five Year Financial Forecast: Mr. Nixon stated that revenue is beginning to climb. PILOT properties will increase revenue once solar projects are built. He further stated that historical numbers in the DOR forecaster are wrong and he cannot explain them. Ms. Keegan asked why the numbers would be wrong, since the forecaster tool is populated by the Schedule A submitted by the Town Accountant. Mr. Nixon stated that he uses numbers that reflect Town Meeting history. Discussion ensued regarding the need to come to consensus about which set of numbers need to be represented, which report of numbers is more useful for forecasting, and how to organize reports to reflect the maximum information. It was decided that a subcommittee of members from each Board represented will meet with Mr. Nixon to decide on an acceptable means of reporting: Howard Koski with



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Linda Sanderson as an alternate; Guilford Mooring and Molly Keegan or a representative from the School Committee. Mr. Nixon will schedule meetings of the subcommittee.

Mr. Mooring also stated the need to speak to Department Heads about their budgets, especially if they have asked for increases.

Capital Plan: Capital Planning Committee recently met and will be updating their information for the TriBoard to review.

Vote by the Finance Committee and the School Committee to hire a Financial Consultant: (Discussion) The Boards discussed a recent vote by the School Committee and Finance Committee to hire a financial/business consultant. Ms. Keegan stated that the intent is to expedite the information the TriBoard needs to make decisions, that they view it as a one-time consult to determine best practice and how to put together a management report.

Discussion ensued as to whether this type of position is needed. Mr. West stated that in order to have meaningful discussions, everyone needs to be comfortable and be able to understand the numbers, and since there is question it is necessary to have an independent person come in to put a financial report together. Mr. Mooring stated that it would need to be someone who is totally objective in order to bring a comfort level to those who are reviewing the numbers.

The next issue is how to pay for this service. A reserve fund transfer was suggested, and a municipal assistance grant program was also suggested. Mr. Nixon asked for clarification on what is being asked for in terms of service. The answer was the need for consistency in reporting and agreement on what numbers should be used for reporting out to committees for forecasting. **Motion for the established subcommittee to look at a plan to hire an independent financial consultant: Mooring Second: Waskiewicz Vote: 3-2-0 (Chunglo, Dudkiewicz dissenting.)**

Announcements:

Ms. Chunglo congratulated the Hopkins Academy golf team on their continued undefeated season.

The Hopkins Academy 350th Committee is having a gala on October 18th at 6:00 pm, at which time they will be unveiling a new mural.

The North Hadley Sugar Shack is holding its annual Fall Festival on October 19th at 2:00 pm, complete with tractor parade.

10:00 PM - Motion to adjourn: West Second: Waskiewicz Vote: 5-0-0

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret J. Jekanowski
Administrative Assistant