

Devens Economic Analysis Team ("DEAT")

Minutes of January 26, 2011 Meeting

7:30am - 9:00am

Fireplace Meeting Room, Old Library

Orville Dodson, Clerk

Members Present: Orville Dodson, Duncan ("Sandy") Chapman, Steve Finnegan, Victor Normand, and Paul Green. Also present as an invitee was Steve Colwell of the Harvard Finance Committee and Ron Ricci.

Victor Normand called the meeting to order at 7:30am. The meeting opened with the approval of the minutes for the prior meeting (1/14/2011). Victor moved that we approve the minutes. Paul Green seconded and the members voted unanimously to accept.

Victor asked Ron Ricci about our ongoing wish to meet with MassDev about Devens appraisals, capital projects, and utilities. Ron said he has been told that we can call MassDev and get appointments with MassDev's assessor for Devens and the Utilities people at Devens. Ron said MassDev had told him that there are no capital projects under since MassDev is currently doing only essentials in the area of capital improvements. Victor said he would go through George Ramirez at MassDev to set up appointments with the Devens assessor and with the Devens utilities people.

Elaborating upon utilities, Victor said he'd set up an appointment for Paul and Sandy with the Devens utilities people and then pass the utilities baton on to them. He remarked about Devens' utilities that they are not regulated and that they do make a "profit". Diane Bevalaqua (sp?) was first director of Devens utilities and got them off to a good start. Jim Moore is current utilities manager and is easy to work with. The Devens utilities people are quite proud of their operation. Finally, Victor asked that Sandy and Paul investigate the eventual fate of Devens utilities. He said that MassDev did get them appraised – for eventual sale?

Victor said he had looked up the bond ratings for the towns in our spreadsheet. All ratings were some form of "A". None stood out and none were outliers. Harvard's rating is AA and Littleton's is Aa.

Steve Finnegan did find the breakdowns of budgets for the towns in our spreadsheet on their websites, all except for Maynard. He will distribute a CD with these breakdowns to members of DEAT.

Victor said we are still awaiting information from our school committee. He asked Ron Ricci if he could get us the town's estimated "Police for Devens" number and Ron said he could get us a number that the town is comfortable with. Victor asked Ron if we could put our spreadsheet online on the town's website. Ron said fine.

Victor then remarked that by our next meeting (2/11) we should have numbers for Devens police, fire, education, debt service, but not DPW, pensions, or health insurance. For the "nots" he said we could use the across-the-towns averages from our spreadsheet. Thus we should have our first cut at the expenses side of our Devens economic assessment.

Paul asked Ron when we should get our preliminary data out to the public and hold the one or two public meetings prior to Town Meeting. Ron thought mid-March would be good. Sandy suggested that we give Ayer and Shirley a heads-up about our activities prior to the public release of our preliminary data. Ditto our state rep and senator. There was general agreement that this was a good idea. Ron Ricci said he could give the JBOS a heads up by placing a mention of us onto its agenda.

It was then moved and seconded that the meeting adjourn. All members voted in the affirmative and the meeting did adjourn at 9am.