

## TOWN OF HARVARD

### Finance Committee Minutes

**Date:** January 28, 2012

**Place:** Town Hall

**Members Present:** Marie Fagan (chair), Alan Frazer (assoc.), Heidi Frank, Bob Thurston, Rudy Minar, Steve Colwell, Alice von Loesecke

**Members Not Present:** Laura Vilain (assoc.), George McKenna

**Others Present:** Tim Bragan, Town Administrator

The meeting was called to order at 9:15am by Marie Fagan.

**Minutes** - No minutes to review.

**Public comment** – None.

#### Review of Budgets

- School budget

A question was raised on the increase in the administrative assistant hours. This is to pay for attendance at required meetings (the position is an hourly employee). The committee agreed this is a level service request.

The question was asked regarding the funding Harvard receives for placements of students. Tim Bragan confirmed that Harvard receives \$13K for each Devens student and \$5K for each choice student.

The following are the questions for the school committee:

- Enrollment question – why the large increase in FY 13 enrollment in HES compared with the current number of enrolled students in the feeder class? Please break down the additions/subtractions for each grade by currently enrolled, choice, and Devens students.
  - Is the additional teacher position for grade four the one that is being monitored for need during the summer?
  - How reliable are the Devens projections of enrolled students, particularly in the out years of the budget?
- Is it the school policy to maintain a level number of students per class each year?
- Given the increase projected in Vicksburg Square housing, we need to be careful of the number of choice students we bring in now, since they are given a permanent spot. Has the school committee considered this in planning?
- Technology plans – what line items overlap between the capital request and the Technology plan so we can understand the total request?

- We need more detail on overall reductions and increases?
- It looks like there are savings of \$126K in the general budget and \$300K in the SPED budget that have been applied elsewhere. Was this amount used elsewhere to maintain level services or to provide additional services? Please provide the true level service amounts across the entire budget.
- The \$170K+ in the circuit breaker is a one-time only revenue source. This amount shouldn't be put into the budget for expenses expected on a recurring basis. Also, the circuit breaker will be declining in the future.
- Three items equaling \$148K that were included in the budget should be outside of the budget and listed on the "wish list" because these are beyond level service:
  - 2 teachers – Technology Instruction and Health/PE - \$75K (Can the existing Instructional Aide be certified? If yes, at what cost?)
  - Middle School Language-based program - \$57K (FinCom does recognize that this approach is less expensive than outplacement)
  - Library aide for HES - \$16K
- Transferring the cost of the Athletic Director from the "User Fee" revolving account to the budget adds an additional \$36,500 to the town's tax burden. Is the decrease in user fees equal to the increased cost to the town (i.e. \$36K)? Note: the town did vote not to use tax money to fund user fees in a previous override discussion. Does this shift in funding conflict with the town's vote?
- Please provide a by person FTE listing for every salary line

Items 5 and 8 on the wish list (World Language - \$20K and textbooks for TBS - \$38K) are lower in priority than the above.

### **Wish List discussions**

- Selectmen
  - No additional wish list; level services
  - Expenses
    - Town report line item will cover printed books, even with lower costs by not printing as many copies and by doing an e-book for FinCom
    - Monty Tech line item varies with the number of students attending
- Finance

- The MART dispatcher position is offsetting the finance budget by \$10K. If we move the dispatcher position to CoA, the offset moves to CoA.
- The current rate for the dispatcher is \$14.73 per hour to get a \$10K MART offset. The hourly rate for a new hire will be lower; thus the offset will be lower.
- MART drivers will have to bring money to Town Hall as well as go to Hildreth House—this is not particularly convenient.
- Recommendation – keep the MART dispatcher position at Town Hall; improve training, management, and communication; move the MART phone menu choice to position #1 on the Town Hall phone menu.
- Town Clerk
  - No increases – level services
- Police
  - The committee discussed that body armor is a required part of the uniform and should perhaps not be part of a warrant article. If the warrant did not pass, funding could be very difficult to obtain because a reserve fund transfer would not be allowed. No final decision was reached.

Meeting adjourned at 11:34am.

Respectfully submitted,

Alice von Loesecke