

**Board of Selectmen's Meeting  
April 25, 2011, 7:30 AM  
Sanford Hall, Town Hall  
155 Village Street**

**Present: Chairman Dennis Crowley, Selectmen John Foresto, Selectman Glenn Trindade, Selectman Dunne, Selectman Andrew Espinosa and Town Administrator Suzanne Kennedy.**

Also present: Carol Pratt, Town Accountant

At 7:38 AM Chairman Crowley called the meeting to order, and the Board recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Public Comment:** None

**Discussion – FY12 Budget:**

*The Board reviewed revised budget information.*

*Norfolk Agricultural – This line item changed due to a revised assessment.*

*Assessors Office – A consultant has been hired to serve as an expert witness and may be able to increase utilities valuations by \$15 million for gas and electric. The tax bills would be adjusted following a valuation. Discussion followed. Selectman Espinosa suggested the consultant be available at Town Meeting to answer questions. The Board asked to see the proposal. Ms. Kennedy stated this would be a one time cost that will help for years to come. Selectman Dunne wondered if legal fees would be included in this amount.*

*Legal Fees – There is a \$25,000 increase, mostly due to expenses for appellate tax court on June 7. Ms. Kennedy stated the original fees did not include the expert witness fee. She also stated there is an annual contract with Barbara Saint André as Town Counsel, but labor litigation expense is separate. Selectman Dunne suggested a separate counsel for labor issues. Chairman Crowley stressed the importance of having the same firm as the School Department uses. Ms. Kennedy commented the School Department is not particularly pleased with their present counsel. Discussion followed. Chairman Crowley suggested waiting until School Committee changes leadership and then approach that person to revisit the matter.*

Brief discussion followed on health insurance and unemployment allotments.

Snow and Ice Removal -- The budgeted amount was increased to \$ 425,000. Selectman Trindade commented that once a budget line item is increased, it cannot be lowered (state law). If a budgeted amount is not used, the remaining funds fall to free cash. Discussion followed on use of stabilization funds, Town Meeting processes and storm reserve funds.

Veterans Agent -- Ms. Kennedy stated Medway, Holliston and Hopkinton and possibly Ashland are trying to become a Veterans District. There is a requirement of communities over 12,000 in population to hire a full-time Veterans agent. Staff requirements for a four town district would include a full-time director, part-time agent and part-time clerical. She clarified that because Medway's current Veterans Agent retired, new rules come into play.

Final page – Changes on the final page reflect offsets to cherry sheet amounts.

The Board then entertained questions on other departments/line items not previously discussed today.

School Department – The Board was optimistic that this was now finalized. Brief discussion followed.

Norfolk Agricultural – It was noted that the state gives them aid, and the school receives revenue from leasing out portions of the building it does not need for school purposes. Brief discussion followed.

Conservation Commission – It was clarified that there was change in staff versus consulting fee expense. Initially the commission shared a staff person with Holliston via contract. The decrease in the budget reflects the elimination of the night board secretary. It was noted that the Board will need to appoint another person to the commission due to a resignation.

Enterprise Accounts – Ms. Kennedy recommended postponing a decision on a new ambulance until the fall Town Meeting as the Town does not have the cash flow to fund the purchase at this time. Chairman Crowley expressed concern that the unit price at \$195,000 does not include particular equipment.

Regarding the format of the budget report, Selectman Espinosa stated he would like to see the report formatted so that the proposed budget amounts appear next to actual expense amounts. He stated he is not fond of letting unused amounts fall to free cash, and would instead like to operate within the limits of the budget. He asked Ms. Pratt if the proposed budget gives a free cash amount of \$500,000. She responded that the Town did well on excise tax and investments. Discussion followed.

Discussion followed on remaining allocations, free cash, economic recovery, budget transfer process, road projects, capital expenditures and fiscal responsibility. Regarding \$145,000 left in reserve, a show of hands indicated that Selectmen Dunne, Foresto and Trindade would opt to leave the money in reserve. Selectman Foresto suggested waiting for recommendation from the Facilities Committee before deciding how to spend excess money.

Regarding \$30,000 remaining in the operating budget, Ms. Pratt suggested putting it into the Road Repair Fund. Chairman Crowley suggested putting it into the Finance Committee Reserve Account, where it would be readily available as free cash.

There was general discussion on levy capacity, salary increases for both town and school employees, and increase in cost of benefits.

**At 9:27 AM Selectman Dunne moved to adjourn; Selectman Trindade seconded. No discussion. All ayes, 5-0.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeanette Galliardt  
Board Secretary