

**Board of Selectmen's Meeting
March 21, 2013, 6:00 PM
Senior Center
76 Oakland Street**

Present: Selectman Andrew Espinosa, Chair; Selectman Glenn Trindade, Vice-Chair (6:34); Selectman Richard D'Innocenzo (6:25); Selectman John Foresto, Clerk; Selectman Dennis Crowley and Suzanne Kennedy, Town Administrator.

Also Present: Melanie Phillips, Finance Director, Treasurer/Collector; Carol Pratt, Town Accountant; Tom Holder, Director, Department of Public Services; David D'Amico, Deputy Director, Department of Public Services; Richard Boucher, Director, Information Technology; Jeff O'Neill, Chair, Finance Committee.

At 6:07 PM Chairman Espinosa called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comments: None.

FY2014 Budget Review and Discussion – Department of Public Services and Information Technology:
At the meeting, the Board received a handout describing technology equipment.

Mr. Rich Boucher, Director, Information Technology, distributed a handout which shows the age of existing equipment and how the equipment is managed. The second page shows the disbursement of technology, i.e. where it lives, noting that the high school is the largest user with 48% of the inventory. The report was divided by device, and Mr. Boucher clarified that printers are not included but overhead projectors are. Discussion followed on staggering equipment replacement as well as additional software expenses connected with MCAS preparation and MCAS online, and report formulation skills necessary for the support technician. It was suggested that staggered equipment replacement will ultimately be a recurring annual expense that should be incorporated into the annual operating budget. Ms. Carol Pratt, Town Accountant, pointed out that funding will happen for this year through a Town Meeting article.

The direct impact of increased MCAS involvement has not yet been determined. Selectman Foresto suggested contacting elected representatives to bring the matter to their attention, as the Town has no say in the decision as it is mandated by the State. This particular set of expenses cannot be submitted as a CIPC request because it is not an asset to the Town that has a life of at least five years.

Included in the 2014 budget is the Novatime payroll package, MUNIS, Virtual Town Hall and other software packages such as foreign languages that are new this year. Some of the foreign language programs were very outdated. PeopleGIS, People forms and license/permitting software are also being considered. Discussion followed on how to include various software package costs.

Selectman Crowley asked for a breakdown of the green Capital bar on the graph that would split the school section and Town section to see how they break down. Brief discussion followed, focusing on criteria such as location, percentage of use, number of people using it, etc.

Mr. Boucher stated this report is an abbreviated version of a much larger report. Chairman Espinosa asked how Medway compares to the industry standard for support personnel. Mr. Boucher responded that the larger report has that calculation, though there is no real ratio as it differs between different kinds of businesses or entities. He indicated his staff has a 48-hour turnaround, often within 8-10 hours, but this typically postpones many maintenance issues that are critical to efficient operation. The additional staff person will be able to handle those tasks on a maintenance schedule that is necessary to keep the servers running properly.

Selectman Trindade asked if the IT Department is servicing the library. Mr. Boucher indicated the department handles the library and the Police Department. There are two officers who do a lot of support on each shift, as well as an outside consultant who comes in periodically, as well. There are programs tied to the state and FBI that require that the support person be a police officer. Selectman Foresto suggested that the capital requests for police communications should be built into their operational budget.

Selectman Crowley asked if the School Department has money in its budget for hardware, to which Mr. Boucher responded it did not. Selectman Crowley wondered if School Choice funds were always used for computers or was another policy used to make that decision. Mr. Boucher theorized that there was not a specific policy, suggesting that it was just something that has evolved over time.

Chairman Espinosa emphasized that technology equipment is ultimately a recurring expense that the Board needs to recognize and think about how to shift it over to operational expense. Selectman Foresto suggested that the Board needs to let staff know in December that it wants to build it into the budget process for the coming fiscal year. The schools have to agree to participate and implement budget forecasting to accomplish it as well.

Selectman Crowley stated he has no issues with the operational portion and expressed concern about the capital requests. Chairman Espinosa suggested adding a base amount of money to the departmental budget which would reduce the dependence on free cash. If there is no free cash some year, difficult decisions might have to be made. Selectman Crowley suggested the Board go forward with this the way it has been presented for FY14, then make a policy change during the budget process for FY15. Chairman Espinosa theorized that choosing to put it into the operational budget indicates a commitment while relying on free cash is just an optimistic band aid measure. Discussion followed.

Selectman Trindade moved that the Board approve the Information Technology budget as presented with \$107,582 on the Town side of operations and a total of \$275,495 including salaries; Selectman Foresto seconded. No discussion. VOTE: 4-1-0 – Espinosa oppose.

Department of Public Services:

At the meeting, the Board received a spreadsheet of DPS expenses and revenues.

Mr. Holder briefly reviewed the departmental budget, which is a level funded one with the same head count as last year and no additional positions proposed (same FTE as FY14). Most challenges are due to lack of staffing to manage parks and field maintenance, roadside mowing, street signs, etc. He added that the department utilizes a very functional work order system using electronic dispatch via laptop computers which enables the crews to get out quickly.

Chairman Espinosa asked if the department can function well on this budget. Mr. Holder responded that he believes they are not doing enough but they are doing the best they can with what they have. Responding to a question from the Board on who defines their level of service, he stated that their own opinions as well as comments from residents and mandates from regulatory agencies combine to give them a great deal of direction. He said he wished the department could do better. DPS will provide efficiencies by making sure things don't fall into cracks, and managing and closing out work orders. Regarding productivity, aside from recent injuries sustained off site, they have a low absentee rate, and discourage vacations during winter when plowing could be necessary. There is a good balance of new and tenured employees. If DPS programs remain the same, an additional person could be very helpful with roadside mowing, parks, etc. Some work could be contracted out so DPS could focus on things like repair of benches and other tasks that often get put off.

Chairman Espinosa stated that, a few months ago, there was a discussion about consolidating field maintenance under the DPS umbrella. Mr. Holder confirmed that they would not be able to do all that additional work within the confines of this budget. Additionally, the scope of services from Gale Associates was going to come out as a recommendation to the Town. There is a draft version that has been issued that outlines each maintenance component cost including the level of staff. It would be staggered. He has asked for a level service agreement. There is still discussion on whether the work should be on high school fields or all high school programs. The \$30,000 from the schools has been included in the budget that is being presented.

Selectman Crowley suggested separating Department of Public Services and Parks, at least for discussion purposes. Chairman Espinosa stated it is difficult to do as the manpower is the same workforce who would handle both. Discussion followed.

Selectman Crowley noted that there are telephone poles with all sorts of stuff hung on them with grass up to the knees along the side of the road as well as rusting signs, and other matters of seeming neglect. He stated this makes Medway look like a lower class community. Selectman Trindade asked Mr. Holder what the extra person would do during the rest of the year as mowing is only during the summer months. He suggested putting some pressure on Verizon to do what it should be doing. Shouldn't the Zoning Enforcement Officer be the one enforcing the sign bylaw and dealing with the rusty signs? Selectman Trindade offered to contact three companies to handle the mowing. Discussion followed. Chairman Espinosa summarized that appearance boils down to money and expectations. Beautification of the community has not been made a priority of the Town.

Selectman Foresto asked if we know how Medway's best practices compare to other communities. Mr. D'Amico responded that Medway is always way below any other community when it comes to staffing. Selectman Trindade asked if, even at prevailing wage, the Town would get more productivity out of a private vendor than using town staff. Mr. Holder responded that, especially for the summer hires, the Town is bound by unemployment laws to hire for only twelve weeks, the definition of seasonal hire. If DPS can bring in six seasonal helpers for twelve weeks each, it eliminates payroll tax issues and other things.

Selectman Crowley suggested considering the regular budget before reviewing Mr. Holder's wish list. He asked that someone determine what it would cost to bring another person on full time to the department, as well as the advantages of an additional staff person. It could be considered toward the end of the budget process in a couple of weeks.

Chairman Espinosa asked if the budget was prepared by just sliding last year's requests into the new budget. Mr. Holder responded that each year is assessed separately, noting that programs change, and some of the tasks the department did last year do not have to be done each year.

Directing the Board's attention to the spreadsheet, Mr. D'Amico stated that level service funding is what it would take to continue that service as it is currently being performed. "Level fund" means analyzing how the service was delivered and adjust accordingly to available funds. Ms. Carol Pratt, Town Accountant, explained the basis of the financial forecasting each department was asked to do, noting that it is generally based on each group's revenue stream. It was noted that maintenance for electric and other items associated with the Thayer House were not included in the budget.

The Board suggested starting with level service, then considering where cuts could be made to get to that number. Road maintenance, patching of potholes, repainting stop lines and crosswalks, stop signs, are some of the items mentioned. Selectman Trindade wondered what was involved in the replacement of signs that have been hit or damaged, suggesting that traffic signs should be treated as a capital item.

Selectman Crowley moved that the Board approve the Department of Public Services budget as presented; Selectman Trindade seconded. Selectman Foresto asked Selectman Crowley if it was his intent to revise this budget in a couple of weeks. Brief discussion followed. VOTE: 4-1-0 – Espinosa oppose.

Chairman Espinosa stated he opposed the motion on the basis that the Town is increasing its budget by 5.66% and the level of service is going to go down. He could not approve this budget as it does not meet the standards of where the Town should be, meaning that money has to be pulled from other places and moved into DPS. This budget will give the Town less service. Selectman Foresto disagreed, stating that, due to system efficiencies, the level funded budget will accomplish level service.

Mr. D'Amico asked the Board to compile a list of things they would like to see happen, whether or not there is an additional staff person. Would that be town beautification or roadside mowing? Chairman Espinosa reiterated that the Board should have rejected the budget, forcing them to come back with a more definitive request that they need X amount of funds to deliver level service.

Parks Department:

Selectman Crowley pointed out that, looking at the Gale Report, \$400,000 per year is needed just to maintain the fields. If some of the fields are done, but not all, it would be around \$350,000. If funded from the Parks budget and user fees, only \$130,000 would remain for allocation within the budget. Selectman D'Innocenzo stated that it also boils down to what the schools want to do, how many programs they want to run, and so on. Mr. Holder suggested that a few items should be identified, priced and funded. Perhaps add a couple more items next year, see how it goes, and add them into the DPS budget. Selectman D'Innocenzo stated that while there are certain fields that belong in the discussion for the high school, there are other fields that also should be part of the discussion, noting that he would like to implement field rotation, which is currently not done. Mr. Holder stated those fields would be maintained as they are now. Mr. D'Amico point out that, while the discussion has focused on fields, the Parks Department also includes things like playgrounds, maintaining memorials, and other areas totaling 350 acres.

Some fields will never carry a rating of 8 or 10 because they have flaws such as little or no drainage, or poor top soil. There would be an investment amount to get them upgraded before the annual

maintenance cost can be determined. Selectman D’Innocenzo noted that the cost of those short-term upgrades is unknown. Ms. Kennedy asked if the report delineated what the \$350,000 would cover at each level. Mr. Holder indicated it did, including such things as soil sampling and other things each baseball field would need.

Mr. Holder suggested the Board give him a list of items and services for FY14. If the Board waits until July 1, by the time he hires someone it will be fall and almost too late to do the summer work. The time to do capital improvements on fields is in the fall. Brief discussion followed.

Selectman Crowley recommended that Ms. Kennedy, Mr. Holder and Mr. D’Amico meet and put something together, noting how much is needed and where it will come from, revenue sources, etc. and arrive at a number with which to begin a fruitful discussion. Selectman Foresto suggested separating the list into categories, i.e., warrant article money vs. other sources, to just identify the buckets. Is it a one-time allotment (warrant article) or from operational funds?

Selectman D’Innocenzo asked for Mr. Holder’s thoughts. Mr. Holder suggested that the list be generalized to include all high school programs, not just the fields. Focus would remain consistent with the fields that are used the most. Right now, the department does not have that information. Mr. D’Amico added that lighting is a big issue, meaning if a field has lighting it gets used more, and requires more money be put into it. Without the report, the usage is unknown.

Mr. Holder reiterated that there are projects, plus regular operation and maintenance. He wants to know what they want DPS to in FY14. He is still waiting for the schools to tell him what their maintenance needs are. Selectman Trindade pointed out that the Board members have jobs, while the DPS staff talks to the schools all the time, implying that Mr. Holder should just phone the schools. Mr. Holder responded that he has been reaching out to the schools in a variety of ways, none of which get any results. Chairman Espinosa confirmed that he has been pressing for the same information in Leadership meetings. Selectman Trindade then asked the Town Accountant to supply the amount the schools are spending on field maintenance for FY13; Selectman Crowley asked her to include the FY12 costs for comparison purposes.

Discussion followed on drainage issues at the field behind the Memorial School, noting that \$62,000 was earmarked for that field and was included as part of the Gale report.

Selectman Trindade reminded the Board that Family Day in conjunction with Medway 300 celebration is scheduled for June 23 at Choate Park. People would like a break in the stone wall so they can easily get up to the field. Selectman Foresto pointed out that there is a buffer zone around a construction area near the Thayer homestead and people will not be allowed to walk through there.

Chairman Espinosa opted to postpone any discussion on parks and recreation until Monday’s Board meeting.

Enterprise Funds:

Mr. Holder clarified that the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund includes the recycling center which is under contract for one more year with Waste Management. Fees are based on the consumer price index and costs associated with the Wheelabrator contract.

In all three funds, he is proposing quarterly billing instead of semi-annual. There will be reductions in postage and photocopying based on that action. Mr. David D'Amico indicated that it is easier for residents to pay their bills quarterly. Revenue collected at the gate at the recycling center goes to the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund. He indicated they are close to the breakeven point of revenue vs. expenses.

Discussion followed on the capped landfill and general matters.

Selectman Trindade moved that the Board approve the Solid Waste Enterprise budget as presented; Selectman Foresto seconded. No discussion. VOTE: 5-0-0.

Sewer:

Mr. Holder noted that there are more contracted services reflected in the Sewer Enterprise Fund, and pointed out that one is reduced, while the other is increased. The most prominent increase is the assessment from the Charles River Pollution Control District, specifically increasing from \$363,000 to \$437,000. He plans to meet with the consultant, Abrams, and the commissioners to get an update, and hopes to have a new report by June.

Selectman Trindade moved that the Board accept the Sewer Enterprise budget as presented; Selectman Crowley seconded. No discussion. VOTE: 5-0-0.

Water:

Selectman Crowley suggested taking \$220,000 out of the reserve to maintain current rates for FY15. FY14 had an increase in rates of 4%. There was discussion about water main replacement, mainly Highland and Village Streets, and revenue projections as extrapolated by Abrams and what the Town anticipates.

Selectman Trindade moved that the Board approve the Water Enterprise Budget as presented; Selectman Foresto seconded. No discussion. VOTE: 5-0-0.

The Board expressed concern that Route 126 was not cleared well during and after the last big storm and asked if there was any truth to a rumor that contractors do not show up. Mr. Holder responded that there were a couple of contractors whose vehicles broke down and the department was down a couple of people.

Miscellaneous Discussion:

The Board would like to confirm with Claire O'Neill, Economic Development Specialist, that there will be a meeting to present her Oak Grove report to residents. It should be a joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen and Planning and Economic Development Board with Town Counsel present. April 11 has been selected as a tentative date for the meeting.

At 8:55 PM Selectman Trindade moved to adjourn; Selectman Foresto seconded. No discussion. VOTE: 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanette Galliardt
Night Board Secretary