

Warrant Committee

Jan. 12, 2015

Seventeenth meeting

Present: T. Hays, D. Turner, P. Pasquerella, J. Schindler, K. Sorgi, B. White, S. McCurdy
M. Maholchic, LM. McLean, R. Boehler, P. Mathews, C. Karimbakas

Absent: J. Potter, J. Eckner

Reserve Fund: \$450,000, of which \$317,225 is set aside for potential demolition of Zero Central Avenue property, leaving available balance of \$132,775.

1. Chair Hays called the meeting to order at 7:39 PM in the Blute Conference Room and distributed paper copies of departmental budgets to those who requested them.
2. An internal review of some departmental budgets was undertaken. The Historical Commission budget was discussed with few issues.

Member Boehler arrived at 7:43 PM

3. Town Reports budget: municipal audit and printing costs for Town Report and differential between Warrants discussed; Warrant printing is now covered by the Selectmen's E & R budget.

Member Mathews arrived at 7:55 PM

4. Group Insurance budget: the separation of employee insurance benefits between departments, as well as the possibility of transfers between departments (3% was transferred to snow and ice last year) debated. It is difficult to predict who will be enrolled. Alternative insurance policies such as HMOs and GICs were discussed as well as the Fire Dept., job security, raises, and unions. Questions to be directed to Town Administrator Annemarie Fagan.

Member Karimbakas arrived at 8:00 PM

5. The Planning Board budget: Request for full-time Administrative Assistant discussed. Inspectional Services in relation to licenses and fees discussed, as well as the hiring of a new Assistant Town Planner.
6. The Selectmen's budget (General Govt.): The Town Administrator and Assistant Town Administrator responsibilities, IT study, contract and licensing position discussed.
7. Central Business Office budget: Reorganization plan discussed.
8. Cemetery Budget: same level of general expenses. Perpetual care, new land acquisition, sick leave buy back, surveying, historical assessments, liners, gift fund, overtime, rental

property, one-time expenses, demolition of building and one-time grants from last year discussed.

9. The Big Picture: Chair Hays handed out a budget spreadsheet with scenarios A-F regarding overrides to increased use of free cash and opened the floor to discussion. Points made: use of free cash to avoid an override is not sustainable; override was predicted last Spring and previous years; last October a \$2M shortfall expected. Firefighter Pickens medical care requires override or \$300,000 FY 16 expense. Suggestions made that free cash be used for DPW and other capital projects; timely overrides maintain operations. Query discussed: Does the abundance of free cash three years in a row make overrides impossible? Debt service, affordable housing, one-time expenditures for capital items, equitable allocation of resources addressed. Contracts to honor, roads, sidewalks, trees, storm drains, and jobs in balance. More than half of Warrant Committee favors override scenarios A or B; agree E is best option if override not supported until next year.
10. On a motion to adjourn by Member Pasquerella and seconded by Member McLean, Committee is adjourned at 11:05 PM; vote is unanimous.

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Respectfully submitted,
Julia Getman
Warrant Clerk