



APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, March 14, 2013

7:30 p.m.

Selectmen's Meeting Room

Present: Chairman, Elaine Kelly
Rick Nieber
Tony Poteete
Janice Hight
Dan McInnis

Absent: Bob D'Amico

Also present: John Coderre, Town Administrator
Richard Smith, Financial Planning Member
Mary Jo Nawrocki, Assabet Valley Regional School Superintendent
Pat Collins, Assistant Superintendent
Jean Langley, Library Director
Dan Nason, DPW Director

Meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

Approval of February 16, 2013 Meeting Minutes

J. Hight moved approval of the Meeting Minutes of the February 16, 2013 meeting; D. McInnis seconded; approved unanimously.

Assabet Valley Regional Technical School Presentation

The Superintendent distributed an informational packet to the Committee. The FY14 budget totals \$17,794,000 which is a \$194,000 increase, or 1.12%. Northborough's share is \$646,939 for the operating assessment and \$1,044 for the debt assessment (6.96%). There are 46 Northborough students enrolled at Assabet out of a total of 1,105.

Due to the ongoing building renovations, there will not be any summer programs held in the facility. Pat Collins distributed a renovation project update. Northborough's debt assessment will be \$1,044 in FY14, \$15,660 in FY15, and \$39,413 in FY16. The debt assessment will peak in FY17 at \$166,934.

Library Department Budget Presentation - Jean Langley

The Library Director distributed a handout with detailed circulation statistics and service benchmarks.

Overall, the FY2014 Library Budget is up 1.47%, or \$10,007, due primarily to increased building expenses. During FY2014, staff transitions provided an opportunity to move all Library Assistants to either 19 hour/week or 40 hour/week positions. While this action resulted in a slight increase in the FTE count for Library Assistants, it also effectively reduced the number of benefit-eligible positions by one.

The budget as presented does not reflect any FY2014 wage increases, which have been budgeted centrally pending settlement of collective bargaining agreements and wages for non-union personnel.

In FY2010 the Library reduced its hours on Monday mornings and Thursday evenings. The reduced schedule will continue by necessity during FY2014, with the Library open to the public 53 hours per week.

DPW Department Budget Presentation – Dan Nason

Dan Nason reviewed the DPW and the Water and Sewer Enterprise budgets.

Overall, the DPW budget is up \$43,535, or 2.93%. The majority of the increase is in the purchase of \$30,000 of capital equipment in the cemetery, parks, highway, and snow & ice budgets. The equipment includes a zero-turn lawn mower and replacement tires for a front-end loader. The mower is necessary to continue the care and maintenance of the public spaces (parks, cemeteries, monuments, etc.) throughout Town. The budget as presented does not reflect any FY2014 wage increases, which have been budgeted centrally pending settlement of collective bargaining agreements and wages for non-union personnel.

The budget continues to rely upon seasonal help in the parks and cemetery divisions. The temporary help has continued its importance in the DPW because staffing remains at reduced levels.

During the last five years, the DPW has undergone numerous changes and experienced significant staffing impacts due to the recent recession. The formal structure of the department and some of the position classifications no longer represent the day-to-day operations and structure. With the hiring of a new DPW Director in March 2012, the time has come to formally reorganize the department so that form follows function and the department can effectively meet its growing service demands. The proposed reorganization includes moving the Town Engineer under DPW and creating a Highway Superintendent position and a Water/Sewer Superintendent position. If approved, no additional staff will be hired in FY14. The full DPW analysis and reorganization plan is available on the Town's website.

Water/Sewer Enterprise Budget

The most important initiative for the DPW Water Division Enterprise Fund will be the reactivation of the Lyman Street well. Since there is a significant cost to the water currently purchased from the MWRA, by pumping and possibly treating our own well water in the future, the Town can minimize the amount of water purchased from MWRA and thereby reduce our Water Enterprise Fund expenses.

The most critical issue facing the DPW Sewer Division Enterprise Fund continues to be the acquisition of the NPDES permit modifications necessary for additional capacity at the Marlborough Westerly Plant. Currently under construction, we are continuing to plan for both the additional capacity as well as the potential for a significant sewer rate impact for Northborough's share of this \$30 million expansion project. Our current estimate is that sewer rates may need to double in coming years in order to finance the project. The Town is aggressively seeking all possible alternative funding sources.

Any other business to come before the Committee

Following a brief presentation by the Town Administrator, J. Hight moved to approve a transfer from the Reserve Fund of \$50,250 to the Fire Department for repairs of the ladder truck in advance of receiving insurance proceeds and Town Meeting appropriation; R. Nieber seconded; unanimously approved. The transfer is necessary to have the repairs done now to the ladder truck so it is not out of service.

Overview of Annual Town Meeting Warrant

The Town Administrator reviewed the draft Warrant of the 2013 Annual Town Meeting Warrant that will be voted on at the March 25th Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. The Town Administrator noted the addition of three home rule petition articles.

Next Meeting Dates -

Thursday, March 21st at 7:30 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room with the Town Planner and the Community Preservation Committee and a Police Department Presentation.

Monday, March 25th at 7:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room, joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen.

Adjournment

9:40 p.m. – D. McInnis moved to adjourn; R. Nieber seconded, approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

John Coderre

Documents used during meeting:

1. March 14, 2013 Meeting Agenda
2. February 16, 2013 Meeting Minutes
3. Assabet Valley Regional Technical School Budget and Student Performance Profile
4. Library Presentation
5. DPW Presentation
6. Transfer Request for Ladder Truck
7. Optional Local Revenues Documents