



Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Date: March 17, 2014

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Place: McCourt Social Hall

Present: Vice Chair Berthiaume, Clerk Stevens, Members Fritze and Pepe.
Chair Woodbury and Administrator Gaudette were absent.

At 6:08 p.m. Chairman Woodbury called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Hearing:

Chairman Woodbury opened the hearing at 6:10 pm. He announced that he filed a "Disclosure of Appearance of Conflict of Interest" with the State. His wife, Pam Woodbury, will be presenting an overview for the Council on Aging (COA) budget & tasks, in her role as COA Director.

Municipal Services Review with Staff

Adam Gaudette - Town Administrator: Purpose and Procedures

Mr. Gaudette announced this is the second night in a series of budget hearings. A Municipal Services Review is being conducted by each department, with the knowledge of a major budget deficit leading to a determination on a Proposition 2 ½ Override and which services to include. One of the FY14 reductions removed funding was for the Senior Center to take over the Maple St. School.

Pam Woodbury - Council on Aging

Pam Woodbury, Council on Aging (COA) Director presented her written narrative; attached as part of this record (to original minutes). Ms. Woodbury has been in this position for 11 years. She said the COA serves as the Town's only social service agency. She assists seniors with applications for a wide variety of benefits including food stamps, health insurance, social security benefits, HIPAA, health care proxy, and others.

Ms. Woodbury read a letter of support from Mrs. Mary Madden, Grant St., asking the Board to fully fund the COA.

The budget numbers were reviewed. Ms. Woodbury asked to have FY14 reductions restored.

Mr. Pepe said he was disappointed in FY14 at the cost to utilize the Maple St School building and said there is again nowhere to reduce in this budget. Mr. Berthiaume asked about creating a revolving account and utilizing funds from potential income derived from renting space in the building.

Administrator Gaudette noted that the \$100,000 budget for the Maple St. School building is an estimate only. There is a potential for revenue through renting the second and third floors of the building and the Senior Center.

Ms. Woodbury said all program expenses are paid for through the use of Formula Grants.

Mr. Fritze estimates it will cost \$60,000 to design and install a new boiler to heat the entire building. Capital funds are currently in place to cover the cost.

Mr. Stevens mentioned the possibility of creating a larger department to include community and social services for all residents, not just for seniors.

FinCom member Mary Braney, 15 Pine Acres, asked about looking into regionalizing services with other communities. Ms. Woodbury said transportation would be an issue and noted this is not a priority where the State is concerned.

Bob Cirba, 23 Summit St. asked the Board to perform due diligence and take care of the seniors.

Mr. Stevens pointed out there is a genuine desire by the Board to see this go through during this budget year.

Pat Corsen, 6 Meadowbrook Rd., said it's time the seniors had a place of their own.

Mary Baker-Wood – Richard Sugden Library

Mary Baker-Wood, Library Director, presented her written narrative; attached as part of this record (to original minutes). Ms. Baker-Wood has been the Library Director since 1990 and reports to a three member Board of Trustees. She is on call 24/7 and is present on scene for all emergencies related to the Library. She also handles all of the IT support internally at great cost savings. There is currently a staff of nine, which includes three fulltime and six part-time people. The library operates at minimal staffing levels and all are cross-trained.

She addressed 3 myths about the library. Myth 1: Internet service is no longer needed; in reality the library is the sole source of Internet Service for many people. Myth 2: People no longer use the library; in 2013 over 40,000 people utilized the library. Myth 3: libraries don't bring in revenue; in 2013 the library received over \$900,000 in books and movies, and offered free and reduced admission to a variety of museums.

The budget line items were reviewed. Ms. Baker-Wood noted the library is staffed the way it was 10 years ago. There is a minimum staffing requirement of 3 employees in the building at one time for safety and security and they cannot be volunteers. Volunteers are used mainly for shelving and assisting with clerical tasks.

Mr. Pepe asked what would be lost if the hours of operation went below 40. Ms. Baker-Wood said the full State Aid would be lost for anything below 40, and if the hours were less than 30, it would result in decertification.

Mr. Pepe asked to see specific details on the impact to services if one or two positions were cut.

Mr. Berthiaume noted there are currently 225 library hours and asked about the impact if the hours were reduced to 120. Ms. Baker-Wood said it takes 225 hours, at minimum to maintain the current services. Mr. Berthiaume would like to see the specifics to provide strong numbers to voters at Town Meeting. He asked for a copy of forms that track library use, and the results of the library survey.

Peter Rock – Veterans Services

Peter Rock, Veterans Agent presented his written narrative; attached as part of this record.

Mr. Rock reported that benefits & expenses are all in one line item. The \$5,000 request is to provide additional benefits to veterans. All benefits are determined by a computer formula. The State reimburses 75% of the cost. The amount of people being helped has increased substantially, at this time there are a total of 34 Veterans receiving benefits.

Mr. Rock noted that he will be retiring in June and recommends his replacement continue with community outreach and maintain the same office hours.

FinCom member Mary Braney said Mr. Rock has come before them for supplemental aid in the past. At this time Fincom has a budget of only \$5,000 in supplemental funds.

Laura Torti – Town Clerk & Elections

Town Clerk Laura Torti presented her written narrative; attached as part of this record (to original minutes). Ms. Torti noted that the Town Clerk's Office has the highest public contact rate in the Town Hall and in a recent survey received a 95% satisfaction rate. All tasks performed in the Clerk's Office are per State Statute, therefore there is nothing they can stop doing.

Mr. Stevens asked if the State mandates hours or accessibility. Ms. Torti said they do not; it's up to the discretion of each town. Mr. Stevens asked if people could go to one central window for improved efficiency. Ms. Torti explained that each department is tasked with specific duties and there is no duplication of effort. Taxes, abatements, permits, and other services are all very different and each processed accordingly.

Mr. Pepe asked about the impact if the part-time clerks were cut. Ms. Torti said it would make it difficult and result in a significant loss of customer service. She noted that all clerks are cross trained.

Mary Williams, Mary Barrell, Alaine Boucher – Finance Department

Mary Williams, Principal Assessor, presented her written narrative; attached as part of this record (to original minutes). Ms. Williams noted that confidentiality is a major factor for the Assessor's Office. She lost a clerk's position in FY14 and the office has suffered the impact by having to close during normal business hours. With a total of 2 people in the office, if one is out sick, or on vacation, the other is left to cover. The ability to go out and assess

properties is also hindered. Mr. Stevens asked if there is a State requirement to inspect properties. Ms. Williams said there is and noted a safety concern with having only one Assessor out on an inspection. Mr. Gaudette pointed out the pressure placed on the Assessor and Treasurer/Collector Office's due to being short staffed.

Alaine Boucher, Town Accountant has been employed by the Town for the past 30 years. The Accounting Office is not a customer service department. They are responsible for payroll warrants, processing bills, and ensuring there are no fraudulent charges. Receivables are balanced monthly with the Treasurer/Collector and Assessor each month.

Mr. Pepe asked about outsourcing the accounting duties. Mr. Gaudette mentioned outsourcing or regionalizing some of the finance responsibilities will be researched in the future.

Treasurer/Collector Mary Barrell presented her written narrative; attached as part of this record. She began her career with the Town in 1988 and was elected as Collector in 1998 and as Treasurer/Collector in 2007, when both positions merged. Ms. Barrell pointed out that the office is going through a transition period and given all the responsibilities, there is a strong need for training. They are already feeling the pinch with losing one clerk which makes it difficult.

There is a \$12 fee per bill paid to Jeffrey and Jeffrey Tax Collectors. Mr. Gaudette noted it is well worth it; they have a high rate of collection and help the Town cut down on printing expenses.

Bill Shemeth – Parks & Recreation

Bill Shemeth, Chairman of the Parks & Recreation Commission, presented his written narrative; attached as part of this record (to original minutes). He reviewed additional budget requests in the amount of \$6,704 which includes salary and expenses. There are also requests for additional funds to open Luther Hill Park. If the budget is level funded, Mr. Shemeth explained that many of the improvements and maintenance needs will not get done and will likely become capital requests next year.

Mr. Berthiaume asked Mr. Gaudette to restore the \$17,000 in cuts that occurred with the FY14 budget. The goal is to prevent additional maintenance costs in the future.

Adam Gaudette – Town Administrator-Town Counsel, IT, Employee Benefits & Insurances

The Board agreed to skip over the Town Administrator and Town Counsel budgets since both are basic and straightforward.

- \$5,000 was restored in the IT budget for the purchase of equipment on a rotating basis.
- EBS Foran handles benefits coordination, replacing a part-time Human Resources position.
- General insurance has increased 10% increase per year on average.

A motion to close the public hearing at 10:50 pm passed (Berthiaume/Fritze) 5/0.

Discussion: FY15 SEBRSD Budget Development Update

The Board received a copy of the SEBRSD Budget. More discussion will take place at the School Committee meeting next week.

Discussion: List of Warrant Articles

A list of 18 Warrant Articles was reviewed. Additional details will be provided at the next meeting. Per Mr. Berthiaume's suggestion, Mr. Gaudette will verify pricing received from a private appraisal company with the Assessor's Office for the portion of land to be purchased by Charlie's Diner.

Action Item: Approve Collective Bargaining Agreement - Police Association

A motion to approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement for the Police Association (Pepe/Berthiaume/) passed 5/0.

Action Item: Approve Collective Bargaining Agreement – Dispatchers Unit

A motion to approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement for the Dispatchers Unit (Pepe/Berthiaume/) passed 5/0.

Action Item: Approve Collective Bargaining Agreement – Utilities & Facilities

A motion to approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement for the Utilities & Facilities Unit (Pepe/Berthiaume/) passed 5/0.

Action Item: Approve Collective Bargaining Agreement – Town Hall Clerks Unit

A motion to approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement for the Town Hall Clerks Unit (Pepe/Berthiaume/) passed 5/0.

Mr. Gaudette thanked the employee groups noting they all agreed to the same COLA increases in the amount of 1%; 2%, & 2% over a 3year period.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 p.m. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Savoie
Administrative Assistant

Referenced Materials:

Narratives for the COS, Library, Veterans Agent, Town Clerk, Finance, & Parks & Rec
FY2015 SEBRSD Budget
Draft Warrant Articles