

**MINUTES
SELECTMEN'S MEETING
OCTOBER 7, 2013**

Chair Wilson called the meeting to order at 6:00pm in the Planning Board's conference room. Members present were Sandra Wilson, Thomas Buckley, Dianna Provencher, Matthew Dennison and Douglas Belanger. Also present was Town Administrator Kevin Mizikar. School Superintendent Judy Paolucci and School Committee members Mark Armington, Tyler Keenan and Scott Francis were present along with Advisory Board member Dave Mero to hear budgetary workshop.

FY'14 Budget – Town Administrator

Mr. Mizikar laid out his plan to bring the FY'14 Budget into balance, now that the voters have disapproved the Override proposal. He distributed informational handouts as he spoke of the intent on his plan:

- Formatted budgets under general government direction into salary line and expense line, which he feels should be segregated moving forward to keep payroll line secluded. The Board agreed.
- Use level funded amounts adopted at May 2013 ATM as FY'14 Budget, and not use increased budget numbers derived from supplemental appropriations. The Board agreed. The baseline FY'14 Budget will be \$26,211,219.

Revenue Source – handouts included pie chart indicating the huge reliance on State Aid:

- Property Tax 47.44%
- State Aid 43.14%
- Local Receipts 5.62%
- Misc revenue 1.49%
- School Bldg Asst 2.31%

Categorized Expenses – handout highlighted major departments and shared services:

- General Government 3.91%
- Public Safety Depts 9.25%
- Public Works Dept 3.22%
- Health & Human Services .91%
- Culture & Recreation .66%
- Education 60.46%
- Intergovernmental 14.96%
- Debt Service 6.65%

Budget Analysis – handout indicates \$285,461 Deficit remaining after making budget reductions to those departmental budgets that repeatedly turned back balances to General Fund over past three years. In addition, Mr. Mizikar:

- Increased “new growth” revenues by \$20,000 per recent estimates
- Increased “local receipts” revenues by \$65,000
- Increased “ambulance receipts” revenues to more realistic amount of \$353,000
- Increased “general government” expenditures by net gain of \$6,150
- Decreased “interdepartmental” expenditures by \$84,000

(The Board moved over to the Selectmen's Conference Room for the rest of the meeting agenda.)

Chartwell's for Becker College – 1-day Beer & Wine Permit Request

Robert Wilder, Chartwells, was present to speak to request from Becker College for a 1-day Beer & Wine Permit for a counselors' dinner and reception to be held in the Campus Center Dance Studio on October 22nd from 4:30pm to 8:30pm. Ms. LeChasseur reported that all deliverables have been received.

MOTION: Ms. Provencher moved to approve 1-day Beer & Wine Permit for Chartwells on behalf of Becker College on October 22, 2013 from 4:30pm-8:30pm.
Mr. Buckley seconded. UNANIMOUS

Update from Economic Development Committee

Selectman Belanger introduced John Glowik, Prime Wellness of Massachusetts, who had attended their recent meeting with regard to their proposal to open Registered Marijuana Dispensary (RMD) within Leicester.

Mr. Glowik described his business plan proposal. It was noted that State regulations require security protections for the vendor and the community. The Board noted that this particular business may fall under agricultural zoning and limited local regulations, but the Board of Health may become involved should any food-related items be planned at the facility. It was agreed that the permitting process will be outlined as plans unfold.

MOTION: Mr. Belanger moved to endorse project as presented and offer a letter of support in concept. Ms. Provencher seconded. UNANIMOUS

Set Halloween Trick or Treat hours

Ms. Wilson noted that the change to daylight savings hours will allow for mostly daylight activity on October 31st this year. Also, fire stations 2 and 3 have parades beginning at 7:00pm. Lions Club hold annual Halloween Party on Sunday October 27th in the Town Hall.

MOTION: Ms. Provencher moved to set Halloween Trick or Treating hours for Leicester on October 31st from 5:00pm-7:00pm. Mr. Buckley seconded. UNANIMOUS

Correspondence

1. Memo from Town Administrator implementing spending freeze along with no overtime allowed effective October 2nd after defeat of Proposition 2½ Override proposal at ballot box. Any purchases or overtime must first be approved by the Town Administrator. He has already spoken with department heads in this regard. FILE

2. Memo from Police Chief requesting appointment of two part-time dispatchers for the Police Dept.

MOTION: Mr. Dennison moved to appoint Kyle Gibbons and Jason Hanbury as part-time dispatchers, subject to all Town hiring policies and procedures.
Ms. Provencher seconded. 4-1, Ms. Wilson opposed.

Mr. Buckley asked if funds were budgeted for these positions. TA stated yes, and it will offset further overtime costs.

3. Letter of resignation from Parks & Recreation Committee member Mark Thompson.

MOTION: Mr. Belanger moved to accept resignation with regret and thanks for time served the Town. Ms. Provencher seconded. UNANIMOUS

4. Letter of appreciation from Giguere Gymnastics regarding the Board's involvement in their recent anniversary celebration. FILE.

Late – memo from Highway Supt regarding FY'14 bid for road salt through a regional collaborative with the Town of Oxford. Mr. Wood recommends the bid be awarded to Cargill Deicing Technology at \$72.97/ton delivered. Mr. Mizikar noted that the price is actually lower than last years, yet this was not the lowest bidder, but the lowest responsible bidder.

MOTION: Ms. Provencher moved to award bid for FY'14 road salt product to Cargill at \$72.96/ton.
Mr. Belanger seconded. UNANIMOUS

Special Town Meeting - Draft Warrant

Members noted that we must change the draft Warrant on some of the articles that have been requested, because the Override proposal was not approved by voters. Mr. Mizikar felt we may be able to use some Free Cash to fund article requests.

#1 Bills too late for payment – three different invoices from three departments equaling \$629.29 total.

#2 FY'14 Budget adjustment – administrator continues to work on this proposal.

#3 LPD – request for equipment \$17,002 - The Board discussed what other costs might be related to purchase of electronic control weapons aka tasers; training, maintenance, insurance coverage for any alleged victims, hospital trips and the like. Mr. Dennison wondered if we could buy fewer weapons due to possible staffing cuts that might be implemented. Mr. Buckley felt the people have spoken; no added staffing and no added funding. Mr. Belanger felt this is an easy one; better than cutting personnel. Mr. Dennison wondered when we were going to decide to protect our police officers. They put their lives in jeopardy to keep the Town safe. He does not believe the public wanted any cuts to public safety departments. Ms. Wilson wasn't so sure. She also noted that State Police officers do not use taser weapons. Ms. Provencher asked if the Police Dept currently has this type of equipment. Ms. Wilson stated no, this is a new program. She wondered if we might be able to consider them at the annual town meeting instead.

MOTION: Mr. Belanger moved to remove Police Dept request for article to purchase electronic control weapons equipment. Ms. Wilson seconded. 4-1, Mr. Dennison opposed.

#4 Establish revolving fund for Police Dept training – will allow for continued firearms safety classes, revolving fund not to exceed \$5,000.

#5 Landfill monitoring - \$12,700 proposal to help qualify us for 3-year inspections vs. annual. Mr. Buckley noted this must be done or we will be fined again.

#6 Transfer DEP grant funds to Town Clerk for record preservation – we accepted grant administration program with agreement that funds will be used to provide records retention in the Clerk's Office. Request to transfer \$20,000 to begin the process.

#7 Stretch Energy Code bylaw – approval will have us prepared for FY'15 application grant round. Our third try at presenting this bylaw, much of which will be law eventually anyway while at this time we could still be awarded green communities grant funds. The hope is to replace current boiler in Town Hall to improve our green energy footprint. If that is realized, it would help toward long-term goal of moving School administration to this building. Mr. Mizikar noted that a MGL process allows for review of current heating systems. Hopefully any energy cost savings realized would go toward equipment upgrades.

#8 Waite Pond feasibility study – Mr. Mizikar is comfortable that we have enough funding currently available to get us through until spring season and May special town meeting. The thought is to have a plan in place to be "shovel ready" for grant application. The State dam safety offices have agreed to this approach and the possibility of another extension to our deadline to repair Waite Pond dam.

MOTION: Mr. Belanger moved to remove request for Waite Pond funding for dam repairs.
Ms. Provencher seconded. UNANIMOUS

#9 Forest Cutting Bylaw amendment – Conservation Commission has been working toward this goal of revising old regulations. No cost involved. Bylaw Committee has been informed.

#10 Hillcrest Country Club boiler repair – transfer funds to upgrade heating system with lease payments rolled into Hillcrest CC Stabilization Account. No cost to the town.

Add-ons:

- Lease of Town owned property – request to install solar arrays at Town landfill site by vendor would require town meeting approval. Mr. Mizikar recommended we first put this type of proposal out to bid through an RFP (request for proposals) process and be ready for May annual town meeting. The Board agreed that timing would be better in the spring.
- Sale of Town owned property – some parcels on list may be ready; the Board agreed to place article on Warrant in an attempt to bring in additional revenues.

- Elected Officials pay – Mr. Belanger wanted to consider withdrawing all elected officials' paid stipends. Mr. Mizikar felt that, unless there is a bylaw in this regard, we should be able to take care of this within FY'14 Budget adjustments article.

MOTION: Mr. Dennison moved to place article on STM Warrant to remove elected officials pay.
NO SECOND WAS OFFERED – Motion dies.

(Article #3 and Article #8 were removed from the Warrant.)

MOTION: Mr. Dennison moved for the Board to sign the Special Town Meeting Warrant for October 29, 2013. Ms. Provencher seconded. UNANIMOUS

Town Meeting location – Mr. Belanger noted that the Town Clerk and Board of Registrars would prefer the town meeting be held in Town Hall, as it is better for their workers, the equipment, and allows for the voter registration checkers to be involved in the doings. The Moderator prefers it be held at the High School. Mr. Mizikar noted, either way, if more than 500 people turn out, we must be prepared for overflow crowd with the ability to broadcast to another room while allowing their involvement in the process. Mr. Belanger felt the Town Hall would be better suited to that type of production, as we have live cable access in the auditorium and this room here. Mr. Mizikar noted that two-way communications would be required, and there would be a cost to do so. Ms. Wilson wondered how School Supt felt about having it at the High School.

MOTION: Mr. Belanger moved to allow the Chair, the Administrator, and the Town Clerk to figure out internally where the meeting will be held. Mr. Dennison seconded. UNANIMOUS

FY'14 Budget discussions (continued)

TA Mizikar explained that he did an exercise in which he reviewed 3-years of appropriations vs expended budgets. He was able to reduce several budgets that repeatedly turned back funds along with adjusting a few that repeatedly came up short. The deficit that remains, which he will continue to work to eliminate, is \$285,461. He is hoping that Free Cash funds will not have to be used at all.

Advisory Board member Bonnie Layden entered the meeting, expressing her concern that Advisory Board was not made aware of the 6:00pm budget session. TA noted that his intent was to first run his approach by the Board of Selectmen before he distributed information to others. Some AB members did attend, having seen the meeting notice. TA apologized for any miscommunication.

Reviewing budget analysis document, the Board was very pleased with the numbers and excited that we may survive FY'14 without devastating cuts to departments. Issues remaining and discussed:

- Regional Dispatching – regroup on this pending matter; finalize Worcester's contract documents according to TA and Police Chief, 8-months minimum to get facility up and running when approved, include Fire and Highway in dispatching discussions with Mr. Buckley and Mr. Dennison as liaisons.
- Issues such as implementation of ePermitting, demotion of sergeants, and some hours being cut may help overall.
- Hire more part-time police officers vs continued overtime costs and full-time personnel costs.
- No raises have been included on Town government side of budget, and that should remain the case. Cautioned that we must negotiate in good faith with bargaining units. Unions could offer cost savings plans.
- Fire Dept cuts may include loss of training programs, hydrant repairs, flooding assistance, or manning of stations during emergencies.
- Senior Center can be cut about \$10,000 due to available salary funds no longer used.

TA Mizikar stated that his next step will be to meet with department heads. He would like to present the Board with his resulting budget proposal as soon as possible. The Board agreed to meet next week on Wednesday, October 16th. Agenda will be limited to budget and town meeting discussions.

Ms. Wilson noted that initial budget cuts have been discussed and department heads made aware. Mr. Mizikar will work with School Supt in an attempt to reduce that budget as much as possible.

William Boss, resident, noted that the Board outlined \$518,000 in budget cuts during the Override discussions, should the proposal fail. Ms. Provencher noted that the School Dept had already cut six employees. She understands that now there are seven additional cuts planned, asking for confirmation. School Supt. Judy Paolucci stated yes. Mr. Boss felt that those crying "scare tactics" may be validated if the Selectmen do not cut per list they created. Ms. Wilson explained that the lists of possible cuts were our worst case scenario; we don't want to close the library or cut other departments that were talked about if we can avoid. Newspaper reporter, David Dore, asked what cuts are still on the list. Chair Wilson stated that everything is still on the table and all will be considered under Mr. Mizikar's research.

Mr. Dennison noted that these budget reductions realized through TA's review will give us a clear picture of our actual budget, which the Dept of Revenue listed in their report concerning the Town's need to redefine some of our financial procedures.

Town Administrator's Report/New Business

- Week full of introductory meetings and financial planning work as a result of voter rejecting Override.
- Met with all but two department heads and the majority of staff.
- Scheduled meetings with BOH Chair, Fire Chief, Highway Supt and Town Counsel this week.
- Implemented spending freeze and overtime restrictions on discretionary uses without permission of this office.
- Will prepare his own budget documents and financial plan for consideration by the Board of Selectmen and Advisory Board prior to October 29th STM.
- Highway Supt has received \$35,055.99 in FEMA reimbursement funds for February 2013 Blizzard.
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) group met last week and, under the advice of our consultant, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), decided to pursue and apply for CDBG funding in FY'14.
- Thanked staff for warm welcome and their assistance, especially noting our administrative assistant, the Town Accountant and the custodians.
- New business subjects: educational forums on budget prior to town meeting, plan of entry.

Board Reports/New Business

Selectman Belanger:

- God Bless America
- Go Red Sox

Selectman Dennison:

- Welcome Kevin, he is already pleased with performance, your preparations, and your enthusiasm.

Selectman Provencher:

- Volunteer day of caring to be held at Memorial School, she will check on the date.
- CMRPC's legislative fall breakfast to be held at Union Station on October 25th at 8:00am.

Minutes:

MOTION: Mr. Belanger moved to approve 8/26/13 Regular & Executive Sessions.
Ms. Provencher seconded. 4-0, Mr. Buckley abstained.

Appointments

Ms. Wilson noted that Board of Health has agreed to have their clerk serve on Community Development Block Grant program, to replace outgoing member. Town Administrator will serve as ex-officio.

MOTION: Mr. Buckley moved to appoint Eileen Dyson-Alexander as CDBG member, an adhoc Group; and further moved to appoint Kevin Mizikar as ex officio.
Ms. Provencher seconded. UNANIMOUS

MOTION: Mr. Belanger moved to adjourn. Ms. Provencher seconded. UNANIMOUS

Meeting was adjourned at 9:35pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan LeChasseur, Administrative Assistant