

ADVISORY BOARD

MEETING

JANUARY 23, 2006

Approved 3-6-06

Members in Attendance: Doug Boyd, Michael Crowley, Carol Fitzgerald, Timm Marini, Kathy Pessolano

Also in Attendance: John D Flynn(selectmen's liaison to the board), Duane Mosier, Dana Pixley, Rita Vail, Pat Clark, Becky Moriarty, Cindy Bailey, Bill Olmstead, Mr. Collins and several other residents.

Kathy shared with the other members of the Advisory Committee that the group "A Better Hampden", of which she is a member, had a panel discussion last week. They fielded questions from the audience. Kathy mentioned the attendance wasn't as good as they had hoped but felt that the inclement weather had an impact on attendance. At this forum Selectmen James Smith reminded Kathy that he would like to have a philosophical discussion with Advisory regarding which direction the budget is going to go in. Kathy said we do need to get input from the selectmen on this matter. Kathy said she is not sure whether they want to have a joint meeting to iron out whatever differences they feel we may have, she doesn't know if there are any differences. Kathy did say that when she has been in Jims' company at various meetings that he keeps referring to an override scenario, and Kathy doesn't feel that we are going to be in one of those, or that we can be in one of those. Kathy said that given the fact that the announcement that came from the Governors Office said that the Governor expects cities and towns to get a 25% increase in their aid. We also have Chapter 70 and what happened last year and the Transportation reimbursement that came in at the last minute, etc., Kathy thinks the school district is positioned to maybe get more money than they did, especially in regional transportation, for fiscal 2007. So having said all of this, Kathy said that when Jim mentions an override, she usually tries to precede her comments with the fact that this is her opinion, that we have not discussed this as a board. Last week, Cliff had given us a revenue sheet with a figure of \$9,217,532.00 and the new sheet that we just got tonight have a figure of \$9,320,961.00, that new figure is with a \$237,000.00 tentative school increase. Michael Crowley wanted to know if Dr. G is aware of that number and Kathy told him that Dr. G is the one who gave her the figure. These figures are, the fiscal 2007 requested, everybody's wish list. Kathy said she has another budget that she has been working on but that she hasn't given it to Ann to input because she wants to make sure that everybody is on the same page. So this is just a draft budget to give us a starting point.

Kathy, along with Doug Boyd and John D Flynn, went to a budget forum last week with the members of the Wilbraham Selectmen and their finance committee members. Wilbraham initially is giving the school district 2%, if they get more money available they will see what they can do. Kathy told Dr. G. and those at the meeting that Hampden would give 2 to 2 1/2 % which is approximately \$148,000.00, which is \$132,000.00 less than what they wanted. We still have \$40,000.00 to \$50,000.00 in local revenue and whatever additional money may come our way from the Governor, which Michael felt we should start budgeting for, if we want to. Kathy said that this is where she has been going with this whole thing, she would like to turn the street lights back on, fund the library and the senior center but not the maximum amount that they are looking for. Kathy also mentioned that with the result of these two departments closing last year, we have seen an influx of volunteers. The Friends of the Library have sort of reinvented themselves and are very actively fund raising. One of the women who is very involved with this shared with Kathy last week, that most cities and towns only fund up to 80% of their libraries and they leave it to the fundraising component of the library to make up the difference. Kathy said she would like to budget the libraries budget along that line, in addition to the senior center, somewhere between what their bottom figure is and what there wish list is.

Timm Marini asked Kathy what are we doing about infrastructure, roads , ect and the other members of the board were also interested in that issue. Kathy told the members that she had a lengthy conversation with Dana Pixley, and found that they were both thinking along the same lines. Kathy said she would like to fund 4 full-time employees on the Highway department, but then give them some extra money so that they could hire someone part-time when they have a project that they need some extra help with. Unless

Dana gets some more funding in other areas, he doesn't need more than 3 people. The highway department is lacking, so Kathy would like to keep his "wish list" as funded as much as we can. Kathy said that Doug Boyd had had a conversation with one of the selectmen about putting any extra money into the stabilization fund, maybe buy the truck (\$55,000.00) for the highway department because the truck they have now is falling apart, maybe buy some capital equipment or make capital improvements, with the extra money that is supposed to be coming from the Governor's office. Kathy asked Jeff, the police chief to do yet another budget for us that would reflect the hiring of 1 full-time police officer so we can see what other line items would be affected by that.

Kathy asked the board members if they had any questions as to how she has been constructing the budget so far, do they feel that she is going in the wrong direction or are we in agreement to see where this takes us. Michael said he would like to see the proposed budget that Kathy is contemplating and how it affects the departments, mainly the library, senior center, highway, and police, and then here from the department how the budget is going to impact them. Timm said that one of his concerns was the infrastructure, the highway department and the roads. Doug said that his concern is this potentially substantially higher state revenue may be here this year and not here next year and by building that into the operational budget, next year we may find ourselves right back where we are if they pull the funding away from us again. If this additional funding comes through from the state, maybe we should let it go towards a one-time expenditure, for example the truck for the highway department. The entire board was in agreement that the future years have to be kept in mind when planning the budget and not leaving the worries of next year to be dealt with next year. Doug said that maybe we should divert any extra funds into a savings account so that we have money to plan with for the coming years and Kathy said she agreed.

Dana Pixley arrived at the meeting at this point to discuss the highway departments budget. Kathy told Dana that we have been discussing the budget and that every member of this committee recognizes that there need to be some drastic changes to the highway departments budget. Dana said that he and Kathy discussed 3 or 4 accounts that he level funded to the FY06 amounts because that was what we were requested to do, but they are sadly under budget. We need to get real with the budget, and with the restoration budget that was submitted Dana put back the 2 employee's position that he lost. But he needs additional money to do some work, and without that there is no reason to put the 2 positions back on the budget if there is nothing for them to do. Dana said that he discussed with Kathy the possibility of leaving the funding in there for the two positions, but giving Dana the authority to see how that money is spent. If we go forward with a bond for major improvements of the roads, some of that money or some of Dana's state aid could be used for actual payroll and derive his money for materials out of Chapter 90. There is a need for an enormous amount of money, and one of the things that Dana did at both Jim Smith and Kathy's request, if the town decide to take a position that they recognize that lack of funding of our infrastructure and if we were going to bond for some money, around \$3,000,000.00 to \$5,000,000.00, if it comes up to the people, they are going to ask the question, Where can we expect this money to be spent? What type of work are we anticipating? What does it cost? This came about last week and Dana is working on coming up with a 5-year infrastructure improvement plan, including drainage, paving, and reconstruction. A lot of our roads are in need of total reconstruction, we have lost a lot of curb height due to overlaying roads 2 and 3 times, and that loses storm water control. There are some roads that have a high probability of failing in the next 5 years. There are a lot of drainage projects that need to be looked at, a lot of culverts need to be replaced. Dana is working on putting together a list of the projects that need to be done and he will get that to the Advisory board as soon as he has that completed. Dana said there is some good news in that we were able to follow our overlay plans from last year with Chapter 90 money. We accomplished what we wanted to accomplish last year. The storm damage totaled around \$75,000.00 or which Dana expects to get 75% from FEMA and possibly 12% from another state bill, which means our out-of-pocket expenses would be 12 1/2% of that. The good news is that with Dana's equipment reimbursement cost, by cracking the equipment and submitting that for reimbursement, he is actually going to recover 100% of what our out-of-pocket expenses were. Doug asked Dana if he thought there could be any state funding for the paving projects. Dana said that they receive money every year from Chapter 90 and that can be used for any project that they approve, Dana could request that that money be used for paving and typically they always approve it. Doug asked Dana how does the state aid work, what do they look at. Dana said they look at population, the # of miles of road, # routes (we have none), and the average income (per capita income). The state aid typically has gone up, some years when it goes down you have to suffer through that year, and then the following year you may get an extra

aid, and they give you a time limit on it. Doug said that basically we are on our own for the reconstruction of the roads. Dana agreed. He also mentioned the bridge situation in town and the repairs needed for them to be brought up to weight limits and the reports he gets from the state telling us that the bridges, that we are responsible for maintaining, need these improvements. If the bridges continue to deteriorate, they can close the bridge and it is still our problem to repair the bridge. There are many issues with the bridges including weight limits, lead paint, and general condition of the bridges, which make them very costly to repair. Dana said he has not put the bridge work in the report that he is working on, and he did not include it in his budget, in fact his submitted budget includes nothing for maintenance. Doug said we have to do something; we have to build some of this in as a debt exclusion or an override, because these issues are just going to increase. Michael said that the Advisory board has brought this issue to town meeting before and it failed. Doug felt that people are paying more attention to the town issue now and that there are a lot of unmet needs and the money has been stretched so thin, but the need for these issues at this point, maybe aren't urgent, but definitely pressing. Timm said that last year Dana gave a 10 year plan and this year he has given a 5 year plan, which tells him that it's getting urgent. Michael said that we need to wait and give Dana a chance to give us his finished report and then we can react to it. Kathy said that the highway & infrastructure is most important and at the head of the list in the Advisory's mind. Dana left at 7:10pm.

Kathy mentioned that the School Committee asked the 2 towns to approve the borrowing for the architectural fees for the building of the Minnechaug High School, and both towns have called a special town meeting, Hamden's' is on March 4, 2006, at 10:00am. This requires the advisory committee to hold a public hearing at least two weeks prior to the vote and we also need to be at the town meeting. So are we in agreement to have the public meeting on Monday February 13 at 7:00pm at the Town Hall Auditorium, and we will meet at 6:45pm in the Melville room? All members were in favor.

Minutes of November 14, 2005 were reviewed. Michael Crowley motioned to accept them, Carol Fitzgerald seconded, all were in favor.

Minutes of December 12, 2005 were reviewed. Timm Marini motioned to accept them, Michael Crowley seconded, all were in favor.

Minutes of January 9, 2005 were tabled until all members could review them.

Mr. Collins received a copy of the November 14, 2005 minutes.

Council on Aging representatives Rita Vail, Pat Clark and Becky Moriarty. Kathy went over the "wish list" budget that the COA had submitted. They budgeted for the director to be back at 37 hours a week and for 2 clerks and no money for expenses. Rita said that they were told to submit exactly the 2005 budget and in 2005 the advisory board had cut out expenses, so that is the budget they submitted. Kathy said that this budget that we are working with is the requests from all departments, so if COA would like to amend their requests we can do that now. They agreed and said they would like at least \$1000.00 for expenses. So Kathy recapped the budget lines for all present: line 37.1 - directors' salary -\$35,275.00; line 37.2 - clerk - \$19,306.00; line 37.3 - expenses - \$1000.00; and 37.4 - temporary help - \$0.00. Also line 38.1 - custodial - \$9,824.00; line 38.2 - utilities - \$13,770.00; line 38.3 - building maintenance - \$6,300.00. This gives us a total of \$85,475.00. Now the COA has submitted 2 budgets, one with the "bare bones" budget total of \$59,923.00 and the other one is full restoration of \$85,475.00. The difference in the 2 budgets is the amount of hours that they are open, how many hours the director will be employed for (35 vs. 37), and the clerical staff (15 vs. 25). Kathy asked what grants were in place. Rita said one grant funds their outreach worker and another grant funds the activity director, but that money is now being used for Becky to have a few hours a week to oversee the outreach worker, because the outreach worker can't get her grant without supervision. The hours are being spaced per week over the current fiscal year. Rita, Becky, and Pat stated that they very much would like to reopen the senior center, we are working hard to get this done, we have lots of dedicated volunteer staff of hundreds of hundreds of hours to get this done. Doug said that the difference between the 2 budgets comes down to 9 hours more in the restored budget. Rita said that the reason is that they are trying to be open 5 days a week (10am - 2pm) or (9am - 3pm with the restored budget) because the lunch won't function on 4 days a week. Carol Fitzgerald asked what the difference in the programming would be if the center is only open the shorter hours what would be missing without the extra 9 hours. Becky said a lot of the nonessential services, such as, the exercise program would be eliminated; they couldn't play cards into the afternoon, painting, shuffleboard. Becky said that the shortened hour budget really focuses on the lunch schedule. The activities that we say are nonessential are very much essential to the seniors. Doug Boyd said the

restored budget says that it allows for programs and services to be restored 100%, but that is 100% as of the FY05 budget, which was a reduced schedule. So this is a restoration of a reduced budget, not a full restoration.

John D Flynn asked Becky what her thoughts were now that the 5 year window is coming to an end, what are her thoughts on revenue generation. Rita said that they have been working on a policy that they were going to present to the selectmen for their input and they have been getting suggestions and we have to do considerations of all sorts of things. Kathy said if it's the communities building now, because there were restrictions with the grant that it could only be used for seniors, wouldn't they be revenue to the town and not necessarily revenue to the Council On Aging. John said that you have to look at the fact that the expense is wear and tear on the building as well, and you should have some type of revolving that reflects those costs to keeping it open, such as, heat, electricity. Michael asked if there was any update on the \$100,000.00 in committee and Rita said that she didn't think that definite yet, but she has been having people call all the senators offices that are involved on that committee and she has been told that the calls do make a difference. They had hoped that the conference committee would make its recommendation by the end of January, but as of today nothing has happened. Michael asked if they had thought how they would spend it if they get it. They said they were hoping that it could go into 2007, 2008 and whatever is needed for the budget and whatever is left let it roll over into the next years budget, because that would free up money for the rest of the town. John mentioned that Doug had brought up a good point that there are still debts with the senior center, wouldn't a good use of that money be to retire any left over debt on the construction which is only about \$40,000.00 or \$50,000.00. Rita said all of that had been rolled into one bond, so the town debt will be completed in November of 2007.

Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 30 at 6:30 with Conservation 6:40pm, Library 7:00pm, and Treasurer 7:20pm.

Meeting on Monday, February 6 at 6:00pm with Police at 6:10.

Carol Fitzgerald motioned to end meeting, Timm Marini seconded, all were in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Murphy