

MEETING

ADVISORY BOARD

FEBRUARY 27, 2006

Approved 3-6-06

Present: Doug Boyd, Carol Fitzgerald, Timm Marini, Kathy Pessolano

Absent: Michael Crowley

Also Present: John D Flynn, Doug Farmer, and several residents.

The board reviewed new revised budget figures from the Town Accountant. These figures reflected about a \$154,000.00 decrease from what they had been given January 30, 2006.

Kathy gave each member of the board a copy of the working budget with draft recommendations that she had been working on for several months. This is just for the board to have a starting point, somewhere to begin to set the budget. Many of the departments draft recommendations are the same as to what they had requested. There are a few that are different:

Assessors: Line 4.8–Field Review–Removed \$14,000.00 due to the controversy regarding whether or not it needs to be a warrant article. Line 4.2-Clerical-Assessors requested for restored hours and Kathy felt the town is not ready to restore anything at this time.

Insurance: Line 7.2-Employee Benefits-Kathy received a different number from the selectmen so she included that number in the draft recommendations of \$192,000.00.

Doug Boyd said that his concern is that if we restore some positions, the benefit costs are going to go up, and probably more than \$2,000.00. Kathy agreed that that was a good point and that the board should note that line item. Timm said that you should look at the entire payroll and take 20% of that and add it to employee benefits. He asked Carol about that percentage and she said that 25% of payroll goes to employee benefits. John D Flynn said that funding for FY05 was at \$156,500.00 and if we bring our staffing back up to that level for FY07 than \$192,000.00 should be a good figure. Carol asked how much the premiums went up and John said it wasn't that bad.

Kathy also stated that on all the departments she did not include salary increases for any of the officials. She said she would like to wait until they see some harder revenue figures before giving any increases. In the past we have been able to wait until fall town meeting and then, if there was some money available, it could be done retroactive.

Park & Recreation: Kathy said that they do collect fees and they have been able to offset part-time salaries with those fees, so she is recommending funding a portion of the salaries and have park & rec make up the difference. Doug said he has a question regarding the requested amount under 30.2 operating expenses, \$15,000.00. He was wondering why they were requesting that much when the FY05 expended was only \$3,650.00. Kathy said that she felt that maybe given the fact that they had part-time help instead of a director, maybe they needed more money for operating expenses. If Park & Rec had been able to come in to the meeting she would have addressed this issue with them. Doug said he was a little uncomfortable recommending \$10,000.00 for this line item. John said that the operating expenses were for the power, lights, and things of that nature. Doug said he was under the impression that they used the sign up fees as a revolving fund to pay for the ongoing athletic costs. John said the fees have been able to keep pace with the sports costs but there have been no capitol improvements. It was agreed that this figure could be cut down some more unless Park & Rec could explain to us why they requested \$15,000.00.

Kathy said that the budget is going to be rearranged so that everything that the Highway department is responsible for will be under one section. This will give the residents a better idea as to what the highway department is responsible for.

Tree Warden: Line 33.1-Expenses- Kathy said we have had a lot of tree issues were we had to take money out of revolving to pay for them. Dana has given us a more realistic figure of \$6,800.00 and that is what Kathy would recommend that we put in that line item.

Street lighting: John told the board that he contacted the electric company and they told him by tariff they cannot wave the turn on fee, but that if the lights were out for at least a 12month period then there is no turn on fee. The lights went out in the end of august, so if we wait until the end of august to turn them back on we can save the turn on fee of \$3,000.00

Senior center: They wanted full restoration; Kathy budgeted for minimal hours of more than 20 and less than 37.

Highway Department: Kathy highly recommends that this department should be funded at what was requested and then some.

Board of Health: Line 56.2- They requested \$20,358.00 for clerks salary, she is recommending that it be funded at the FY06 level of \$17,760.00. She said she has not heard the reasons behind the requested increase of hours and pay. There may be some fee collection money that can be used to offset that; this can be discussed with the selectmen next week.

Police: Kathy said she is more inclined to go with the revised budget that Jeff & Scott presented to the board a few weeks ago with one difference. Instead of leasing 2 vehicles, lease 1 and buy 1 outright. Doug asked if a purchase of a cruiser has to be on a separate warrant. Kathy said she has to check with someone on that.

This brings the draft budget total to \$8,986,778.00. Our new revised revenue figures from Cliff are less than the previous figures he gave the board. He was not at the meeting so he will be invited to the next meeting to go over the new figures. Kathy said she was excited at the thought of bringing the budget in under \$9,000,000.00, but obviously the figures are just preliminary, they are not set in stone. We need to wait for the House & Senate to give us more information on the 07 budget for the commonwealth. Kathy also said that she has learned more about county retirement. She said that 2/3 of it is going to build up retirement so that it sort of becomes a self paying system, but the assessment is based on the current payroll. So anything that we add back is going to push up county retirement next year.

Kathy said she would like to leave anymore discussion on the budget until the board meets next week with the Selectmen.

Approval of the past 4 meetings minutes were postponed until next weeks meeting.

Next meeting scheduled for Monday March 6, 2006 at 6:15pm.

Doug motioned to end the meeting, Carol seconded.

Meeting ended at 7:16pm

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Murphy