



**OFFICE OF THE
Advisory Board
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August 8, 2018

Present: Adria Fischer, Kieran Meehan, Bob Nelson, Harold Simmons, Leo Tometich

Absent: Eric McKenzie

Also attending: Joan Simmons, Fire Chief Brian Rich

Advisory Board FY20 Budget Cycle Discussion (Organization, Structure and Role)

Overview:

1. Mark Haddad helping as interim Town Administrator, but not involved in the Dunstable budget at this time.
 2. Hope to have one shared budget document with read only access except for one designated AB member (At this time - AB Chair).
 3. Any ethics and open meeting concerns should be checked for compliance.
 4. It will be helpful to get some narrative (or add our own) to support the Departmental budget proposals.
 5. Departmental budgets include categories for personnel salaries and wages. To get a clearer picture of departmental costs, we may ask Lorraine Leonard (part time Town Accountant) to add the cost of benefits to each departmental budget. Or at least the percent of the benefits cost per department.
 6. To help gain a broader perspective on individual departmental budgets, we plan to have individual AB members focus on different town departments and bring relevant information back to the Advisory Board.
 7. Initial goal is to get preliminary departmental budgets in September, maybe at least a list of large budget items and significant changes.
 8. The police department contracts are negotiated by the Selectmen, with limited AB role.
 9. Note that the Board of Selectmen authorize all budget expenditures.
- This AB organization is evolving and can be modified as needed going forward.

Highway Department representative - Kieran

Some highway department topics:

1. Focus on the highway department's mission or Duties & Responsibility statement on the town website.
2. Road assessment report and road quality goal.
3. Repair and maintenance of highway department equipment.
 - 3.1. May need to separate road trucks and heavy equipment.
4. Completion of highway department tasks using highway personnel versus alternatives.
5. Joan asked, that since the highway department has previously required an override for snow removal and is often underfunded, should we consider a permanent yearly override for road maintenance?

Some broader long term topics that involve the highway department:

1. Advantages and disadvantages of creating a Dunstable DPW.
2. Advantages and disadvantages of combining road maintenance with town property maintenance.

Water Department representative - Harold

Some water department topics:

1. Due to concerns with the Dunstable municipal water system storage, water quality and monitoring, it is currently operating under a MA DEP consent order with potential fines for non-compliance with municipal water standards and a historical lack of action on a plan to resolve these issues.
2. MA DEP is currently driving the water department reporting and upgrade requirements.
 - 2.1. Prefer an atmospheric water storage tank (water tower).
 - 2.2. Chemical feed upgrades to improve stability of water quality.
 - 2.3. Use of a certified water system operator to monitor water supply system. Currently being implemented with cooperation with the Pepperell water department.

- 2.4. A water system upgrade plan is being finalized for approval at the spring town meeting.
3. What percentage of the water system upgrade debt service should be paid by water users and overall town taxpayers?
 - 3.1. What is the water department's opinion on this?
 - 3.2. Apparently the water department has significantly increased (approximately doubled?) water rates.
 - 3.3. Maybe compare water rates to other towns.

Selectmen representative - Bob

It is worth noting again that the Board of Selectmen are the approving body for all budget expenditures.

GDRSD and Florence Roche Elementary replacement building committee representative - Adria

Some water department topics:

1. Typically, approximately 60% of new revenue goes to funding the school district.
2. The school committee also monitors and has often used town free cash for school district expenses, especially for capital expenditures.
3. The AB should review the GDRSD five-year capital plan when making the Dunstable town budget.

Fire Department and Board of Health representative - Leo

Some fire department topics:

1. Chief Rich indicated that it will be very difficult to prepare a budget for next year by October 1st.
2. Funding to maintain and/or replace equipment as recommended. More details needed.

Some Board of Health topics:

1. Work to get more accurate Nashoba Board of Health assessment.
2. Consider more alternatives and improve marketing and communications for curbside trash and recycling.
3. Joan indicated that the first curbside trash pickup is scheduled for Sep. 6th.
4. Maybe get BOH or town counsel synopsis of contract for curbside pickup to better understand town requirements.

Approval of Minutes

Discussion and review of the July 10th Advisory Board meeting minutes.

- Motion to approve the July 10th meeting minutes - Kieran, - 2nd Adria. Vote: Unanimous to approve.

Miscellaneous

To more easily identify revenue and expenditures Bob would like to consider the following FY20 budget reporting changes:

1. Move trash and recycling curbside pickup to a revolving account.
2. Separate GDRSD debt and operating budget.

Some FY19 budget discussion:

1. FY19 budget estimates, like new growth, are set in September or October.
2. Actual FY19 Dunstable tax rates are certified by the MA DOR around November.

Future AB meeting schedule (typically the first Monday of each month):

1. Sep. 17th, Oct. 1st, Nov. 12th, and Dec. 3rd.
2. There may be a GDRSD finance committee meeting Sep. 26th.

Motion to adjourn at 8:05 p.m. - Kieran, - 2nd Harold. Vote: Unanimous

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.