



**OFFICE OF THE
Advisory Board
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April 13, 2020

Present: Marie Gamache, Jake Lewon, Kieran Meehan, Bob Nelson, Harold Simmons, Leo Tometich; Town Administrator Brian Palaia, GDRSC members Ryan McLane (vice-chair), Whitney Healey

This virtual meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. via Zoom Meeting ID: 621 320 987.

FY2021 Budget Town Administrator Update and Discussion

Brian reported that the BOS have decided not to support or propose a proposition 2½ override this year citing the impact of COVID-19, economic fallout from the COVID-19 shutdown and being up for re-election.

1. The override ballot question has been removed from the annual town meeting warrant. Budget and annual town meeting timeline discussion.

1. Dunstable needs to have an election by the end of our fiscal year, June 30th. If there is no election by June 30th due to the COVID-19 emergency, then the terms of existing elected officials are extended for one year.
2. If Dunstable does not have its annual town meeting by June 30th to approve a FY21 budget, then we will operate on 1/12th of the current FY20 budget for each month after June 30th until a FY21 budget is approved by town meeting.
3. Note that in the past Dunstable has used a school district facility, Swallow Union school, to hold town meetings. If Swallow Union is closed, it may affect town meeting date and/or location.

Discussion about how to reach a FY21 balanced budget without new revenue or an override.

1. The 1/12th budget will likely impact the police collective bargaining agreement negotiations.
2. Non-union municipal employees pay should be equitable.
3. Will need to work with the school district to close the Dunstable assessment gap. Ryan and Whitney indicated that the school committee understands that these are unique and difficult times, and will do their best to bridge the GDRSD budget for one more year.
4. Massachusetts emergency legislation has given the BOS more authority to use free cash and stabilization funds without town meeting or election.
5. It is possible that some COVID-19 emergency reimbursement money will be available from FEMA via the state, but it will be closely tied to emergency spending by the town and reimbursement will not arrive until the next fiscal year.

Summary and next steps.

1. There are plans for a Groton multi-committee meeting (BOS, FinCom, GDRSC) that may help provide more guidance on school district FY21 budget.
2. Work with the school committee to close the Dunstable school assessment deficit.
3. Review options to balance the Dunstable FY21 budget without an override.

Since the Dunstable proposition 2½ override is not moving forward, the AB received a motion to pause support of the previously supported override, with the intent to support it in the future.

Motion made - Kieran, - 2nd Bob. Vote: Unanimous to support

Motion to adjourn - Leo, - 2nd Kieran. Vote: Unanimous to adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.