



**OFFICE OF THE  
Advisory Board  
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**May 14, 2020**

Present: Marie Gamache, Jake Lewon, Kieran Meehan, Bob Nelson, Harold Simmons, Leo Tometich; Town Administrator Brian Palaia, GDRSD members Marlena Gilbert (Chair), Ryan McLane (Vice chair), Whitney Healey; Public: Joan Simmons

This virtual meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom Meeting ID: 816 4064 7264.

**FY2021 Budget Town Administrator Update and Discussion**

Brian provided a summary of the proposed Dunstable FY21 budget followed by discussion with some highlights outlined here.

1. Dunstable had around \$160K school budget deficit in the May 6<sup>th</sup> proposed FY21 budget.
2. With recent adjustments, the current May 14<sup>th</sup> FY21 budget has an approximately \$147K deficit in GDRSD funding.
3. Dunstable Selectman Ron Mikol along with Brian and Bob, plan to have a joint meeting with the Groton select board Chair, Groton Town Administrator and Groton finance committee Chair to try and reach a consensus on the FY21 GDRSD budget.
4. It is expected that any GDRSD teacher COLA will apply to all district personnel, union and administration.
5. Marlena provided additional context surrounding the GDRSD FY21 budget and stated that it may be possible to postpone some GDRSD capital expenditures so those funds could be reallocated to the operating budget. Keep in mind that this reallocation really only helps for FY21 and does not diminish future year needs.
6. Discussion about use of any GDRSD FY20 savings for FY21. Still some unknowns in the current FY20 expenditures, like COVID-19 and remedial services over the summer, but up to three months of outsourced education services could possibly be paid in advance. As with any other year, GDRSD fiscal year end excess funds are swept into E&D after being approved by state auditors. This state audit is typically completed around the end of the calendar year.
7. Ryan noted that ongoing interaction with the school committee is helpful and asked what GDRSD FY21 assessment reduction is needed by Dunstable?
8. After some discussion about COLA fairness for all employees and budget options to get past this year with the numerous unknowns surrounding the COVID-19 State of Emergency, some Dunstable municipal budget changes and reductions were proposed to reach a possible compromise on the \$147K GDRSD deficit.
9. Ryan also inquired about the longer term funding plan?
10. Given that the Dunstable budget has been increasing by more than 2½ percent per year, and will likely continue to do so for the foreseeable future, a proposition 2½ override is the longer term funding plan.

**Miscellaneous Topics**

1. Due to large public meeting restrictions during the COVID-19 State of Emergency, the select board has decided that Dunstable will not have an interim annual town meeting in FY20 (by June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020).

Motion to approve meeting minutes from March 3<sup>rd</sup>, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, April 13<sup>th</sup> and May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

Motion made - Kieran, - 2<sup>nd</sup> Marie. Vote: Unanimous to approve

**Summary**

Given the economic impact of the COVID-19 State of Emergency on Dunstable citizens and town revenue, the AB received a motion to recommend a 1% Dunstable employee COLA for FY21 to the Dunstable select board.

Motion made - Bob, - 2<sup>nd</sup> Leo. Vote: Unanimous to support

Since a Proposition 2½ override has been postponed resulting in continued budget constraints, the AB agreed to close the FY21 \$147,000 budget deficit with a combination of municipal reductions and GDRSD assessment reduction. To formally pass this information on to the authorizing body, the AB received a motion to recommend that the select board ask for a \$75,000 reduction in the Dunstable GDRSD FY21 assessment. Motion made - Jake, - 2<sup>nd</sup> Kieran. Vote: Unanimous to support

1. Marlena and Ryan noted that this \$75K reduction in the Dunstable assessment may not be attainable due to school committee concerns about incurring additional COVID-19 costs, plus that a \$75K reduction for Dunstable results in a \$326K reduction of the overall GDRSD budget ( $\$75K / 0.23 \leftarrow$  the percentage of Dunstable students in the district), but that the appearance of funding the schools at the expense of municipalities is also a concern.

Motion to adjourn - Kieran, - 2<sup>nd</sup> Jake. Vote: Unanimous to adjourn  
Meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.