

BOARD OF SELECTMEN & SEWER COMMISSIONERS' MEETING MINUTES

Clerk

ROOM 126

Town Hall

Saturday September 29, 2007

8:00 AM



Present: Chairman Dore'Hunter, Selectmen Lauren Rosenzweig, Andrew Magee, Paulina Knibbe and Peter Berry
Temporary Town Manager John Murray and Recording Secretary Maryjane Kenney

I. CITIZENS' CONCERNS

No Concerns were presented to the Board

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND APPOINTMENTS

No Hearings or Appointments were held

SELECTMEN'S BUSINESS

The Chairman opened the meeting by restating that the ALG has requested each entity provide its final position on the 15th of Oct in regards to the need for a Capital Override. Historically, the staff will hold a meeting on the hill with the department heads and arrive at a needs-based capital plan. In January, a priority list edited by the Town Manager is presented to the Board.

FISCAL YEAR 2009 OPERATING BUDGET OVERVIEW/DISCUSSION

For the purposes of today's discussion Temporary Town Manager John Murray and Superintendent Bill Ryan sat down and went over a list of joint assumptions. Taking into account tax levy, excise tax, the uncollected and who owns it, the cherry sheet, fees that are not growing and the schools expenses going up 6-7 % per year they made assumptions and then put numbers to a unilateral derived draft ALG plan. With that information, Mr. Murray would like to reestablish the capital plan. Selectwoman Rosenzweig stated that understanding what is being asked for this year reflects not just on this year's budget, but projects 5 to 10 years out the path that the budget will take. Selectwoman Knibbe feels it is most important to decide about capital needs before getting into an overall budget discussion. Selectman Magee would like to understand where the various buckets of money are and where the capital needs are, and then decide about overrides. For example where does the NESWC fund stand in terms of what portion of it can be used for capital expenditures?

DISCUSSION OF THE APPROPRIATE USE OF EXCESS NESWC MONIES

Selectman Magee is in favor of making a decision on the NESWC funds. Chairman Hunter has made a personal decision that he feels it would be prudent to us some of the money the Town's capital needs. The monies had been held for future liability issues that might arise as a result of our NESWC contract. Currently Selectman Magee, Knibbe and Chairman Hunter are of the opinion that the entire fund does not need to be held and it would be wise to use some of it for capital expenses. They believe any liability would be

shared by all the towns connected to the NESWC contract. The Temporary Town Manager cautioned that the legislature may not step in if there is a liability; the state has not helped in past. The Temporary Town Manager stated that as a town we are not doing a full recycle program at the transfer station. He has proposed that 1M in the NESWC funds be reserved for improvements to the Transfer station and Recycling- Composting equipment.

Additionally, the Selectmen asked Mr. Murray to cost out environmental insurance before deciding to release the fund. Selectwoman Knibbe stated we are not a bank and do not need to accumulate the monies when there are capital needs. The Chairman feels it is a good course of action to pursue. Selectman Berry is concerned about counting on the legislature and that we should save some of the funds if there is no insurance.

Selectwoman Rosenzweig stated it is her opinion that if you let the funds go you must tell the citizens that if there is a problem we will need to go to them for the additional monies. Selectwoman Knibbe agrees with the plan to use some of the NESWC money for this year's Capital expenses and to reserve 1M to enhance our recycle plant. Chairman Hunter feels with the remaining money we do a reverse split 400K to municipal and 100K to the Schools over a 4 year period.

CAPITAL BUDGET OVERVIEW/DISCUSSION

Selectman Magee asked for the history of why the schools would get some of the NESWC funds. Mr. Murray went through a short history and explained at certain point in time taxation was used. Selectwoman Knibbe would like to use some of the NESWC funds to fund this year's capital needs, including the North Acton Fire Station. The ALG Plan devised by Mr. Murray incorporates the annual use of \$500K: \$400K to the municipal side and \$100K to schools. Such a use of the NESWC monies will provide extra monies to each side and allow a certain length of time for the Town and Schools to devise a plan to replenish this use of NESWC funds with a recurring revenue source. Selectwoman Knibbe stated that roofs and boilers are maintenance whereas the fire station is a long term capital need. Chairman Hunter wanted to do a single question override linking the schools and the town. Selectwoman Rosenzweig, Selectwoman Knibbe, Selectman Magee and Selectman Berry felt strongly that two questions are needed. All four believed the fire station needs to stand on its own and we will need to use NESWC monies to defray the cost. Selectman Magee agrees with the Chairman that if a menu override is presented, people will choose A or B and will choose the lesser costing option. He feels it is probably necessary to link them to pass both in an override, but the right thing is to have station stand on its own. Selectwoman Knibbe then proposed we move forward with design only and we delay the vote on construction for 12 to 18 months. The Chairman responded with an adamant no. He stated plans are to go forward for design and construction override at the April Town Meeting. The Selectmen have agreed on a single question for fire station as part of a double question on the ballot. The question could actually be a menu question concerning the North Acton Fire Station. Selectwoman Knibbe wanted to initiate a policy discussion on overrides. It is desirable to separate capital and operating overrides. It is also desirable to avoid having overrides two years in a row. If we adopt such a policy going forward, that means that we will have, at most, a capital override one year, two years later an operating override, two years later a capital override, etc. This would result in 4 years between successive capital overrides and 4 years between successive operating overrides. We need to be thinking long term about our needs. Further discussion on this matter was postponed due to lack of time.

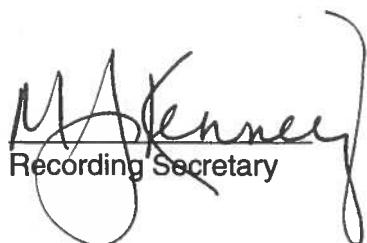
NORTH ACTON FIRE STATION DISCUSSION

Selectwoman Rosenzweig is very concerned about rushing and cutting items. What if citizens want to keep the center station open? Selectman Magee stated it is about getting the right station. Mr. Magee reiterated that it must also be a green building. The Selectmen decided to keep the physical training room open to all municipal employees as part of fire station to maintain firefighter fitness standards and reduce health care costs.

CONSENT AGENDA

All consent items approved.

5. Draft letter to Mass Highway regarding a curb cut to aid in the Development of the old Towne High School
6. Draft letter to Joint committee on Municipalities & Regional Government regarding Senate Bill 1199
7. Accept a gift of \$15,000 from the Friends of the Acton Nursing Service towards the cost of funding a "community Health Needs Assessment"



Recording Secretary



Andrew D. Magee, Clerk

19 Nov 2007
Date