



**Acton Leadership Group
Acton Town Hall, Room 204
September 12, 2013 Meeting**

Presenters: Steve Ledoux, Steve Barrett, Janet Adachi, Steve Ledoux, Mike Gowing, Dennis Bruce, Don Aicardi, Pat Clifford, Steve Mills, Kim McOsker, Bart Wendell, facilitator

Audience: Brian McMullen, Assistant Assessor

Documents: Meeting Agenda, Minutes of August 14, 2013 Meeting, ALG Plan Version 1, and Minuteman Capital Assessment Models

Approve Minutes of August 14, 2013 Meeting

Minutes approved subject to minor changes.

Update on FY13 Revenues & Expenditures and FY14 Revenues (Steve Ledoux, Steve Mills)

S. Ledoux: FY13 revenues are about \$650,000 above expectation due to increases in excise, interest income, permit fees, etc.. Approximately the same amount will be turned back from savings in legal and health insurance expenses. There is nothing unusual to report at this point for FY14 expenses.

S. Mills: For FY13, both districts will turn back some. [did not get numbers]

S. Ledoux: It is too early to say anything about FY14 revenues.

Spreadsheet Format Discussion

S. Noone: Met with S. Barrett, Don Aicardi and Brian McMullen to put together three versions for your input, either now or later. Goal was to remove extraneous lines to incorporate one year of actual data. Version 1 takes out debt entirely. Actual data will be in as a memo item. The bottom half of the first sheet will contain estimates of future years. A major issue will be regionalization. In Version 2, the actuals will be a full column. Version 3 is more analytical and presents graphs at the bottom.

D. Bruce: The revenue and expenses columns go out 5 years: why the difference between 3 years and 5 years?

S. Noone: There is no magic number of years; the 5-year projection is standard with the FinCom.

S. Barrett: Would it help to look at what the format used in the past? A comparison with what has been done in the past may be helpful to assess a new format.

S. Ledoux: How will we handle debt since it does not show up as an expense?

Noone: Debt has never been shown as an expense. School Building [SBAB?] was important previously.

P. Clifford: It may be important at next year's Town Meeting due to the renegotiation of the regionalization agreements. She encouraged the use of the 5-year estimate of revenues and expenses.

M. Gowing: As we regionalize and transfer the debt from one entity to another, the details will need to be shown. All of the rest of the information (tabs) will be behind this summary sheet as in previous years.

J. Adachi: At the Regionalization Refinance Oversight Committee – the public will want to see the savings, and there are concerns about how the savings will be used. There needs to be an explanation of how this will benefit the taxpayers.

Capital Plans (Steve Ledoux, Steve Mills)

S. Ledoux: Staff is putting together FY15 requests, which are due in a couple of weeks. There may be some phases of the Space Needs Study in these requests. One wildcard may be Advanced Life Support capability in the Fire Department. The results of a study will be ready early next week looking at this. Training will be required to bring firefighters from basic level to advanced level. The Police Department may request more officers.

S. Mills: Capital plans were recently suspended. There are on-going needs as buildings age. JD has future vision about expanding Charter Road. Under one regional budget, there are savings projected in transportation. Overall, expenses may be \$150,000 less than if the districts had not regionalized. Inter-municipal agreements will be necessary due to regionalization. Transfer of assets includes buildings and stuff in buildings. Transfer of debt – the towns are not able to transfer debt, but can do reimbursements. The water source under Blanchard School needs to be protected in future documents.

S. Ledoux: The Town may be interested in keeping a parcel of school property on Arlington Street.

P. Clifford: Asked about Chapter 70 funds. Chapter 70 will be down.

S. Noone: Douglas and Conant sit on large pieces of property all of which doesn't necessarily belong to the school district.

Revenue Projections for FY 15 (Steve Barrett, Don Aicardi)

S. Barrett: 80% of revenues come from property taxes, and the collection rate is in the high 90%. 15% of revenue comes from State Aid; at present, the state collections seem to be going OK. One area of higher local revenues may come from the category that includes excise taxes, investments, fees, etc. In FY13, this category is up 15%, amounting to \$150,000 to \$175,000. This increase may be used to alleviate the tax levy.

P. Clifford: When might these extra revenues be able to alleviate the tax levy?

M. Gowing: Regarding State Aid. The sales tax on software may be repealed, and if it does get repealed, transportation costs may rise. This may cause the revenue projections to go down.

Preliminary FinCom Point of View (Pat Clifford, Steve Noone)

P. Clifford: Tuesday was the first of three meetings on the point of view; looking at strategies and what to do with the large reserves. S. Mills will be in next week to present the school side.

S. Noone: This discussion included mention of an under-ride – not taxing to the levy limit.

Minuteman Capital (Steve Ledoux)

S. Ledoux: Should the Minuteman rep have a seat at ALG? S. Ledoux has acted as the rep. Since there is a lot going on with Minuteman right now, it might be worthwhile to invite Nancy Banks, the Minuteman rep, to the ALG meeting when Minuteman is on the agenda.

B. Wendell: In the past, Dore Hunter was the Minuteman rep and attended the ALG meetings

P. Clifford: In support of asking N. Banks to attend. The more expertise on this the better; it also provides an avenue for communication.

M. Gowing: N. Banks can contact the ALG in case there is anything that needs to be on the ALG agenda.

All agreed to extend the invitation to N. Banks.

S. Ledoux: Capital Assessment Models. Town Managers are looking at a fairer way to assess capital. Spreadsheet shows two models. The first model has been voted by Minuteman and is recommended to towns. Assessments: decrease capital contribution (8%) and kept 4-year rolling average. Minimum of 5 students. This will have to be incorporated in a revised regional agreement.

Attached is an intergovernmental agreement for non-member municipalities. This agreement includes a "facilities fee" that non-member municipalities pay for capital costs. If not paid, students could not attend Minuteman.

This revised agreement takes a unanimous vote across all member communities, which are quite varied. The agreement is a work in progress.

P. Clifford: What is the time frame? S. Ledoux: not known.

P. Clifford: The revised assessment may be ready for voting in FY15 but probably not the capital.

M. Gowing: Capital improvements to go ahead for the students of member towns and/or non-member town students.

S. Noone: Is this the only option?

S. Ledoux: Many options are being discussed.

S. Noone: Where would non-member town students go if Minuteman does not accept them?

S. Mills: Vocational school facilities just not available in all schools, as they used to be.

Discuss Acton and Boxborough Joint Boards Meeting (Steve Mills)

S. Mills: Joint board meeting last year in the library was useful. Regionalizations may be a topic for the joint meetings.

J. Adachi: Enjoyed the joint meeting in the library and found it useful to have everyone at the table.

S. Noone: This was FinCom's idea.

P. Clifford: When we suggest things like this, the first question is what are we going to do? Make a substantive agenda.

B. Wendell: What is the next step?

S. Mills: Will take it to school committee

Public Comment

None

Adjourned at 8:30 am

The next meeting will be on October 10, 2013 at 7:30 am in Room 204.

Suzanne Shanahan
Recorder