

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, January 17, 2018

7:00 PM

Town Hall – Selectmen’s Meeting Room

Members present: Brad Cote, Connie Benjamin, Ann Hurd, Ted Kirchner, Joe Myerson and Brian Boyle

Members absent: None

Call to order: Chairman Cote called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM. The entire meeting can be viewed by going to:

http://new.townhallstreams.com/stream.php?location_id=75&id=15194

Agenda Item #1: Planning Board (175) and Board of Appeals (176) budget

- Town Planner Erica Uriarte presented the Planning Board and Board of Appeals budgets.
- Planning Board (175)
 - This budget is essentially level-funded. The Wage line is increasing from \$54,063 to \$56,808.96 due to a step increase and a COLA adjustment. The non-Wages portion of the budget is decreasing from \$4,730 to \$4,720. This includes expenses for advertising, office supplies, in-state travel, membership dues, and meeting costs.
 - We asked Erica about the Green Communities grant. She explained that the grant funds are not reflected in the Planning Board budget, but rather are spread across various energy efficiency projects across the town and school buildings. For next year, we also asked Erica to consider reporting back to Advisory about the grant funding that she is able to secure over the course of the year.
 - **MOTION:** Ann Hurd moved to approve the Planning Board budget as submitted, for a total of \$61,529; seconded by Joe Myerson. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brad Cote, Connie Benjamin, Ann Hurd, Ted Kirchner, Joe Myerson, and Brian Boyle. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**
- Board of Appeals (176)
 - This budget is level-funded at \$200. \$100 is for 40B permitting, and \$100 is for advertising.
 - **MOTION:** Joe Myerson moved to approve the Board of Appeals budget as submitted, for a total of \$200; seconded by Brian Boyle. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brad Cote, Connie Benjamin, Ann Hurd, Ted Kirchner, Joe Myerson, and Brian Boyle. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**
- We also briefly discussed the Planning Board’s draft warrant articles and some of the general challenges facing the town.
 - Brad noted that we would like to schedule another meeting with the Planning Board to understand their sponsored warrant articles. Erica mentioned that

there would be an informational meeting on January 24th regarding the articles.

- Brad explained that we are trying to devote time this year to thinking about revenue. He asked Erica whether she could share any ideas related to revenue. Erica said that we are developing a Complete Streets policy. If the policy is adopted by the Board of Selectmen and accepted by MassDOT, that could make us eligible for about \$400,000 in grant funds to make improvements to our roads.
- Erica also mentioned that we were recently awarded \$25,000 to create an ADA compliance plan.
- Erik Neyland briefly described the potential financial implications of the Cottage Overlay District bylaw. He explained that, town-wide, we currently have a ratio of 0.61 children per household. However, in some of the newer single-family home developments, the ratio is 1.12 children per household. After consulting with the school district, Erik determined that the average net revenue (through taxation) of a typical 10-house subdivision is about \$55,000. By contrast, the proposed Cottage Overlay District bylaw creates a “density bonus” for developments that have an age 55 restriction. If all the units were age-restricted, the developer would receive a “4x” density bonus and would be able to create 40 units instead of 10. For such a 40-unit development, the average net revenue would be \$396,000 (vs. \$55,000 for a normal 10-unit development).
- Erik also mentioned that the Planning Board has a proposed bylaw that would increase the lot coverage for business-zoned lots.

Agenda Item #2: Economic Development Committee budget (182)

- Erik Neyland presented the Economic Development Committee budget. The \$1,000 budget is used to pay for a business breakfast (\$600), printing of the Bolton brochure (\$300), and marketing/social media (\$100).
- **MOTION:** Connie Benjamin moved to approve the Economic Development Committee budget as submitted, for a total of \$1,000; seconded by Ted Kirchner. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brad Cote, Connie Benjamin, Ann Hurd, Ted Kirchner, Joe Myerson, and Brian Boyle. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**
- We briefly discussed the possibility of instituting a 0.75% meals tax. Erik agreed that the EDC would do some research regarding the meals tax.

Agenda Item #3: Human Services and Safety budget (590)

- Laura Roberts presented the Human Services and Safety Committee budget. The \$1,000 budget is used to pay for public forums (\$375), printing of handouts and a resource guide (\$300), supplies and postage (\$175), and Thanksgiving groceries for Bolton seniors (\$150). This will be Laura’s first year as Chair of the committee, and she said that she intends to meet with other groups in town with similar missions (e.g., the Council on Aging) to explore potential ways to consolidate.
- **MOTION:** Brian Boyle moved to approve the Human Services and Safety committee budget as submitted, for a total of \$1,000; seconded by Joe Myerson. **VOTING IN**

FAVOR: Brad Cote, Connie Benjamin, Ann Hurd, Ted Kirchner, Joe Myerson, and Brian Boyle. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**

Agenda Item #4: Council on Aging budget (541)

- COA Director Sheila Chmielowski presented the Council on Aging budget. The Salary/Wages portion of the budget (totaling \$69,548) includes the salaries for the Director, Outreach Coordinator, and Program Coordinator. This portion of the budget also includes wages for the MART (Montachusett Regional Transport Authority) Van Drivers. For FY19, the hours worked by the Outreach Coordinator will increase from 19 hours per week to 20 hours per week.
- The town gets reimbursed for MART services. For FY19, we are anticipating reimbursement of the following costs: \$9,000 for MART van drivers; \$2,000 for gasoline; \$3,000 for dispatcher reimbursements (total of \$14,000).
- **MOTION:** Connie Benjamin moved to approve the Council on Aging budget as submitted, for a total of \$85,960; seconded by Brian Boyle. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brad Cote, Connie Benjamin, Ann Hurd, Ted Kirchner, Joe Myerson, and Brian Boyle. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**

Agenda Item #5: Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical School District budget (302)

- The town's Minuteman school committee representative, David O'Connor, presented the preliminary FY19 assessment for Bolton. Minuteman is a regional vocational school district that includes 10 member towns as of July 1, 2017: Acton, Arlington, Belmont, Bolton, Concord, Dover, Lancaster, Lexington, Needham, and Stow. The district has approval to build a new school, and each town's assessment is partially devoted to the associated debt costs.
- Every town in Massachusetts is required to make vocational educational services available to residents. If Bolton were not part of Minuteman, we would have to pay the "school choice" cost of sending that student to a vocational school.
- For FY19, Bolton's total assessment is projected to be \$582,375, which is a 21% increase over our FY18 assessment of \$480,287. These numbers are preliminary and subject to change.
- Bolton will be sending 12 students to Minuteman in FY19. Therefore, the average per pupil cost will be approximately \$48,500 per student. Brad Cote asked what the optimal number of Bolton students would be, *i.e.*, what is the maximum number of students we could send without increasing our assessment. Mr. O'Connor said that he would get back to us about that.
- We asked about the "Middle School Assessment" in the amount of \$122,121. We wanted to know why Stow's Middle School Assessment is only \$68,176. Mr. O'Connor said that he would also get back to us about that.

Agenda Item #6: Advisory Committee business

- As of this meeting (1/17/18), we had reviewed and voted on the majority of the departmental operating budgets. The big departments still remaining include education, health insurance, fire, and capital projects. We agreed that we would want to meet at least once more with the fire department because of their

substantial staffing and capital requests. A number of people expressed the view that the current structure of the fire department – which relies heavily on “call firefighters” – might need to be revisited due to changes in town demographics. Brad and Joe agreed to reach out to the fire department to get additional information about its needs.

- We discussed the fact that we still need to meet with the Capital Planning Committee to review all FY19 capital requests.
- The committee expressed a desire to gain a strong understanding of the Planning Board’s proposed bylaw articles. The bylaws have the potential to have long-term consequences for the town’s financial condition.

Adjourn: **MOTION:** Connie Benjamin moved to adjourn at 9:05 PM; seconded by Ted Kirchner. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brad Cote, Connie Benjamin, Ann Hurd, Ted Kirchner, Joe Myerson, and Brian Boyle. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (6-0).**

Documents Referenced

Departments’ FY19 budget submissions

Handouts from David O’Connor regarding Minuteman’s preliminary FY19 assessment

Handouts from Bob Zak regarding the Library’s budget proposal with supporting data

Approved by the Advisory Committee