

Advisory Committee Minutes

Date: Thursday, February 14, 2019

Present: All committee members

7:00 p.m. Meeting opens

General Government—accounts 161, 162 and 163

Town Clerk Pam Powell and Assistant Town Clerk Jennifer Marquis appeared before the committee to review these accounts:

Town Clerk—account 161

Salaries and a stipend make up the largest portion of this budget of \$105,371. Powell said software support, which is level-funded, would be used for bylaw updating. Web services, which shows a slight increase, covers coding the town's codes and code database.

Advisory action: Unanimously approved. (Benjamin, Kirchner)

Elections—account 162

The largest single item in this proposed budget of \$11,120 is a capital outlay for purchase of a new vote-tabulating machine. The existing device, purchased in 2002, has been out of production since 2007. The new tabulator takes a photographic record of every ballot, Powell said. The tabulator has a two-year warranty on hardware and software. With a presidential primary coming this year, supplies and wages show an increase over last year. Early voting, which has helped increase voter turnout, also adds to election expenses. Marquis said she hopes this new equipment will enable early voters to process their own ballots.

Advisory action: Approved unanimously. (Benjamin, Lauer)

Street Listing/Registrars—account 163

A \$200 increase in purchases of services has raised this budget request to \$2,355.

Advisory action: Unanimous approval. (Myerson, Benjamin)

A brief discussion followed on the feasibility of establishing some kind of electronic voting system for the Annual Town Meeting. Powell said there was some talk about developing an app, or possibly purchasing a system from another town. She suggested forming a committee to explore the options.

Town accountant—account 135

Ninotchka Rogers, the town accountant, discussed her department's budget request of \$89,503. The largest increases in this account are for salary increases and a \$1,000 stipend. Rogers said the stipend is for taking the Certified Government Accounting exam.

Advisory action: Unanimous approval. (Benjamin, Hurd)

Moderator—account 114

This account remains level-funded at \$50.

Advisory action: Unanimously approved. (Hurd, Kirchner)

Advisory Committee—account 131

After unanimously approving a shift of \$5 from the 'supplies' to the 'dues' line, the committee unanimously approved its level-funded budget of \$180.

Advisory action: Unanimously approved. (Lauer, Kirchner)

Advisory Reserve Fund—account 132.

Rogers cautioned the committee that at least one town department would need a large part of the \$40,000 remaining in the current reserve fund. She also suggested inserting an article in the Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting to add an additional \$25,000 to the reserve fund. The Reserve Fund's current requested level is \$100,000.

Advisory action: Approved unanimously. (Lauer, Kirchner)

7:45 p.m. Mike Gorr and Chris Lineberry from the Capital Planning Committee arrive for a joint meeting on capital funding requests and priorities.

Starting with Nashoba Regional School District (NRSD) capital requests, Gorr told the committee that the district would fund repairing the flooring at Emerson School. He also discussed the district's requests for enhanced security-camera coverage, adding that the NRSD would prefer installing the infrastructure for cameras in the first year and adding cameras later. A security audit of the schools suggested six cameras at Sawyer and Emerson and 82 at the high school. Most would be exterior cameras. The funding request for a DVR and network switches is for \$33,265. Boyle suggested bringing up the issue at a Tri-Town Meeting.

Reviewing the Department of Public Works (DPW) request for \$500,000 to repair and replace the culvert at Wattaquadock and Manor roads, Boyle and Rogers questioned this estimate. Rogers said it the request would be the town's largest capital item.

DPW liaisons Kirchner and Hurd said they would talk to Joe Lynch to see how the department sets its priorities and how the half-million-dollar estimate was calculated.

The priority of purchasing a new supervisory vehicle for DPW, and the Fire Department, was also questioned. The possible purchase of used vehicles was discussed.

Advisory and Capital Planning members questioned the advisability of the DPW request for a two-way radio system.

The Fire Department's request for a "command vehicle," complete with snowplowing capabilities, came under scrutiny as well. The new fire chief had given that request a high priority rating.

Gorr said his committee could reduce the DPW capital requests by at least \$180,000.

When Rogers informed the meeting that certified free cash was at \$829,000, Boyle cautioned that capital requests would have to be pared by \$1 million.

9:06 p.m. Meeting adjourned unanimously. (Lauer, Benjamin)

--Submitted by secretary Joe Myerson.