

Advisory Committee Minutes

Date: Wednesday, February 26, 2019

Present: All committee members

6:30 p.m. Meeting opens

School Department—account 301

District Superintendent Brooke Clenchy and Patricia Marone, business manager, addressed the committee on the regional school district's evolving budget and its potential impact on Bolton. Clenchy said the district budget as originally drawn up called for an increase of 7.01%. The budget will not be finalized until March, she said, however a number of costly capital items have been shifted from the annual budget to borrowing. These included the high school's leaching field and oil storage tank. The district is also planning to resubmit its request to the state School Bonding Authority for a new high school. Cuts from the original budget submission have totaled some \$90,000 so far, she said.

The increase in Bolton's assessment from the district was originally targeted at 3.14%, but was now at around 5.99%.

Treasurer—account 145

Kristin Noel, town treasurer/collector, discussed her budget request of \$173,718, explaining that her office was currently running short in the 'postage' line. She also said an increase in 'Tax Titling' from the addition of a new attorney would mean that the town could take a more aggressive stance in collecting back taxes.

Advisory Action: Approved unanimously

Debt Service and Various General Government/Employee Benefits Accounts:

Advisory Action: All these accounts received unanimous approval:

Debt Service—account 710

\$1,326,153

Worcester Regional Retirement Assessment—account 911 (Pensions)

\$472,043

Unemployment Compensation—account 913.

Currently empty

Health Insurance and OPEB—account 914

\$764,741 combined

Life Insurance—account 915

\$1,400 (no change)

Medicare tax—account 916

\$49,000 (increased because the town has more employees)

Town Administrator Don Lowe reviewed the accounts listed below with the committee. All received unanimous approval:

Board of Selectmen—account 122: level funded, but portico project is “running tight”

This was level-funded at \$19,620, although Lowe cautioned that the Town Hall portico project was “running tight.”

Town Administrator—account 123

This account includes a \$60,000 contingency fund to cover ongoing labor negotiations. Lowe said not having such a fund could require calling a Special Town Meeting when negotiations conclude. With the contingency fund, this budget totals \$278,922.

Legal services—account 151

\$50,000, which could include a small transfer request before the new fiscal year, Lowe advised.

Town Hall—account 192

Level-funded at \$29,135.

Building Insurance—account 194

\$55,960, which is based on actual quotes.

Town Reports—account 195

This year’s budget is \$3,700, down from previous years because the report is available on line.

Plumbing and Gas Inspector—account 243

\$18,104.76.

Wiring Inspector—account 244

\$20,008.30

Post-Secondary Vocational Education—account 303

Level-funded at \$16,464

440: sewer

8700—level funded

Unanimous. Connie/Craig

912: worker’s comp

Workers’ Comp.—account 912

The 2020 request of \$31,549 reflects a 6 percent increase based on claims volume.

Other Insurance—account 945
\$84,165

Human Resources—account 147
Marty McNamara, the new human resources director submitted a budget of \$20,084

Library—account 610
Robert Zak, chairman of the Library Trustees and Library Director Kelly Collins appeared before the committee to revisit their budget. Zak explained that increases in heat, telephone and copying all reflected the fact that these lines overran last year's budgeted amounts. The library has transitioned from owning to leasing a copier, he said. The library will also rent personal computers in the future, he added.

Boyle questioned the vacation coverage request of \$3,782, which would cover bringing in people to work extra hours when staff members are on vacation. Zak agreed to reduce that number to between \$1,000 and \$2,000 before submitting a final budget. Zak said the heat and electricity estimates were "just place holders," while the postage request was less than for FY2019 because the library uses email more. As of this meeting, the library budget stands at

Advisory action: deferred.

Advisory Committee Discussions

Benjamin said she contacted neighboring towns about command vehicles for the DPW and Fire Department. Stow provides vehicles for their two department heads, and lets them bring them home. So does Boxborough, which provides a vehicle with a plow. Lancaster, on the other hand, provides neither.

Selectman Stan Wysocki spoke out against buying a truck for the DPW director and purchasing a command vehicle for the fire chief.

Meeting adjourns by unanimous vote.
(Sorry, I didn't get the time.)

--Submitted by Secretary Joe Myerson