

# Dover Warrant Committee

April 1, 2009

Members in attendance: Caroline White, Chair; David Stapleton, Vice Chair; Peter Smith, Secretary; James Dawley; Robyn Hunter; James Kinder; Scott Seidman; Andrew Waugh

Others in attendance: Carol Lisbon, Selectmen Liaison

*Dr. White called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm*

## 1. Review of minutes

Mr. Stapleton moved that the minutes of March 23, 2009 be approved, seconded by Mr. Dawley. The motion was approved by a vote of 7-0-1.

Mr. Waugh moved that the minutes of March 25, 2009 be approved, seconded by Mr. Dawley. The motion was approved by a vote of 7-0-1.

## 2. Procedure for Setting General Salary Increase for Non-Union Personnel

Dr. White opened the discussion by soliciting opinions as to who has the final say on setting the increase. The written procedure (approved 4/27/00, revised 11/7/02) describes roles for the Warrant Committee, the Personnel Board, and the Selectmen, but is not clear as to which body has the final say. Consensus came down to the importance of the phrase “the Warrant Committee shall finalize the guidelines”. Further, Ms. Hunter and Mrs. Lisbon reminded the Committee that it is solely responsible for the final warrant (the “Blue Book”). It was agreed by all that the procedure needs to be discussed and re-written before next fall to clarify responsibilities and sequence of events.

There followed a discussion of the Warrant Committee’s March 25 decision to reduce the recommended general increase from 4.1% to 3.2%. In favor of the reduction, Ms. Hunter, Mr. Kinder, and Mr. Seidman stressed the principal of fiscal responsibility in a volatile economic climate; the need to use data as input to the decision process, not to be slave to it; and a perception of profligacy by the taxpayers. Dr. White and Ms. Hunter reminded all that the Committee’s recommendation in October was at the time explicitly conditional on coming fiscal events. Against the reduction Mrs. Lisbon insisted on sticking to an objective procedure; that the small dollar amount involved (less than \$20,000) is inconsequential compared to the size of the total budget (over \$30,000,000); and that affected employees deserve clarity and certainty in the salary process.

The Warrant Committee will stand by its March 25 vote and adjust all affected budget line items to reflect the smaller increase.

## 3. Update on the Fiscal 2010 Budget Gap Between Revenue and Expenses

Ms. Hunter reported no change since the last meeting.

#### **4. Consideration of Outstanding Warrant Articles**

Mr. Dawley reported that the Capital Budget Committee had voted on the outstanding items, reducing the amount for the Chickering School's computer technology refresh from \$48,500 to \$38,183. As to replacement of the Police radio tower and the possibility of relocating the antennae to the cell tower, Chief Griffin strongly desires to keep the installation under direct town control to eliminate service delays in the event of a problem. Also, at the Protective Agencies Building there is already a generator to guarantee electric power during an outage.

Mr. Stapleton moved that the Warrant Committee endorse the Capital Budget Committee's recommendation of \$38,183 for the Chickering School's replacement of computer technology equipment, seconded by Mr. Dawley. The motion was approved by a vote of 8-0-0.

Mr. Dawley moved that the Warrant Committee endorse the Capital Budget Committee's recommendation of \$70,000 to replace the radio tower, seconded by Mr. Stapleton. The motion was approved by a vote of 8-0-0.

Ms. Hunter calculated that this brings the total for Article 5 to \$390,183.

The wording and intent of Article 11 ("maintaining and repairing the Caryl School building") was discussed. It makes no mention of a Community Center, but only asks for funds to repair the Caryl building. Since the Dover Community Center Building Committee's Article 12 is being withdrawn, this places Town Meeting in the position of voting funds for a still-uncertain purpose. Mrs. Lisbon stated that the intention is to get the town to buy into the Community Center concept, and stressed that the presentation will be unambiguous. However it was reiterated that the actual article up for vote is the only binding text. Ms. Hunter questioned whether funds already allocated might be sufficient to stave off any dire consequences until the future direction is set.

Mr. Stapleton moved that the Warrant Committee recommend that \$250,000 be raised and appropriated for Article 11, seconded by Mr. Dawley. The motion was deadlocked on a vote of 4-4-0. Statements pro and con will be included in the Blue Book.

Mrs. Lisbon notified the Committee that the reclassification of the Selectmen's Administrative Assistant position is complete and the Personnel Board has voted in favor of the change. This will affect the Board of Selectmen's budget (#122).

#### **5. Blue Book Material**

Mr. Stapleton requested all outstanding write-ups be sent to him as soon as possible. He will combine the texts and circulate to the Committee members.

#### **6. Liaison Updates**

Mr. Stapleton (Chickering School): At the most recent meeting, the committee discussed possible consolidation of positions, a candidate for the vacant Assistant Superintendent position, and locking in the price of heating oil for next winter. There will be a meeting in June to present their IT plan. They are investigating ways of enhancing school revenue in the future. Teachers' contracts are up in 2010.

Mr. Seidman (Park & Rec): They are building dugouts at the ball fields, using privately raised funds. Field reconfiguration was discussed. They also refined the wording of their statement on the Community Center article.

*Mr. Stapleton moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Dawley;  
the motion was agreed by consensus at 8:35 pm  
the next meeting will be April 8 at 7:00 pm*

Respectfully submitted,  
Peter Smith, Secretary

*approved April 15, 2009*