

Dover Warrant Committee

March 4, 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; Geoffrey Merrill, Long-Range Planning Committee; David Melville and Dickson Smith, Capital Budget Committee

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

1. Review of minutes of previous meetings

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

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

2. Budget Authorization for Snow and Ice

The Highway Department requested an increase of \$50,000 in the Snow and Ice budget. The previously increased budget stood at \$487,498. Expenditures through February 24 were \$450,612 leaving a balance of \$36,886 while holding invoices totaling \$31,376. Mr. Smith moved that the increase be authorized, seconded by Mr. Stapleton. The motion was approved by a vote of 6-2-0.

3. Invitation by Long-Range Planning Committee

Mr. Merrill addressed the Warrant Committee, explaining that the Long-Range Planning Committee is hoping to act as a clearinghouse and consolidator for town board information. They are offering to collect and package historical financial and usage information from the many town sources and make it available. The Warrant Committee thanked Mr. Merrill and will approach LRPC with suggestions after Town Meeting.

4. Review of the Capital Budget

Mr. Melville passed out hardcopies of the Capital Budget requests for fiscal 2010-2014. He agreed to send an electronic copy to Mr. Stapleton to be distributed to the rest of the Warrant Committee.

There are several items for the Police Department. Two cruisers are being requested this year. This is in keeping with a pattern of replacing two vehicles one year and one the next, as opposed to the previous practice of replacing two every year. There is not yet any data to indicate whether this plan has increased maintenance costs or hurt resale value. The radio tower is dangerously close to end-of-life and must be replaced. There were funds in the FY2009 budget for this, but

the costs were underestimated and an additional allocation is required in FY2010. The replacement of the dispatch area radio console is also being requested. While this is not a dire need, Capital Budget considered it wise to proceed while reimbursement funds are still available

The cost of library window replacement is not under the Library Trustees' budget because building maintenance falls under the Selectmen's authority. The Library request for laptop computers was explained, along with their plans for securing them.

The highway department's request for a new 10-wheel truck with plow to replace a failed unit is being deferred. The department is currently contracting out the work that the failed truck used to perform at a comparable cost. Capital Budget will re-evaluate next year.

Mrs. Lisbon and Messrs. Melville and Smith pointed out the difficulty of budgeting capital items, since firm bids cannot be solicited until funds have been appropriated. Thus, items are bid twice: once as an estimate, then again "for real". Sometimes this can lead to unpleasant surprises when actual bids come in appreciably higher than estimates. On the other hand, we are hoping that the Transfer Station containers will come in lower than estimated last summer when the price of steel was sky-high.

5. Blue Book Assignments

Dr. White passed out assignments for the members of the Warrant Committee in preparing the Blue Book text. Mr. Stapleton will send around an electronic copy of last year's book so that boilerplate language can be cut-and-pasted.

6. Liaison Updates

Messrs. Stapleton and Kinder (Chickering School): Met with Superintendent Spriggs and School Committee Chair Springett to discuss the budget. Some savings have been identified, but they were encouraged to look for additional opportunities.

Mr. Smith (Board of Fire Engineers): The Board, acting on the Warrant Committee's request, voted a cut from the combined Fire and Ambulance budgets.

Ms. Hunter (Regional Schools): At its latest meeting, the Regional School Committee received a memo from the Sherborn Advisory Committee directing an additional reduction in the budget to cover Sherborn's anticipated deficit. The requested \$200,000 reduction in Sherborn's share would, by the regional allocation formula, require a total budget cut of approximately \$425,000. After some discussion, the Warrant Committee agreed that this reduction, on top of cuts already made, is excessive; and that it would not support a total reduction exceeding \$200,000. Ms. Hunter moved and Mr. Stapleton seconded a motion that she be instructed to convey this sentiment to the Regional School and Sherborn Advisory Committees. The motion was approved by a vote of 8-0-0.

Mr. Seidman noted that the Dover Community Center Building Committee will be presenting its plans at the same time as the next regularly scheduled Warrant Committee meeting, and suggested we reschedule. It was agreed to move our next meeting up to 6:00 pm to allow attendance at the DCCBC meeting.

*Mr. Stapleton moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Kinder;
the motion was agreed by consensus at 9:10 pm
the next meeting will be March 11 at 6:00 pm*

Respectfully submitted,
Peter Smith, Secretary

approved March 11, 2009