

Dover Warrant Committee

February 25, 2009

Members in attendance: Caroline White, Chair; David Stapleton, Vice Chair; Peter Smith, Secretary; James Dawley; 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 of past meetings

Mr. Stapleton moved that the minutes of the February 9 meeting be approved, seconded by Mr. Seidman. The motion was approved by a vote of 5-0-1 (Mr. Kinder not yet present).

Mr. Seidman moved that the minutes of the February 11 meeting be approved, seconded by Mr. Dawley. The motion was approved by a vote of 5-0-1 (Mr. Kinder not yet present).

2. Consideration of Budgets

Dr. White addressed the Overlay Summary. The Assessors have agreed to release some funds, but are retaining a substantial balance, feeling it would be dangerous to release more in this uncertain fiscal climate.

Dr. White next brought up the Revenue Sources and Expenditures table put together by Mrs. Hunter. It shows a substantial deficit for the coming fiscal year. The estimate for new growth in the tax base was discussed. Mrs. Lisbon explained that it is based on building permits, both new construction and renovation.

There being no evident source of additional revenue, the question of a Proposition 2½ override was brought up. The consensus was that it was unlikely to pass and that the Committee should propose a non-override budget.

It was agreed that simply asking all departments to make the same percentage cut in their expenses is difficult. Some departments' expenses hinge mostly on salaries, others on consumables, others on exogenous demand. Nor was it felt that the Warrant Committee was in a position to micro-manage each budget by dictating specific reductions. Better to allow the bodies to which the departments report to direct the process. Mr. Smith produced a summary rolling the 55 Town departments up into the 13 bodies which have budgetary authority over them. The top six — Regional School Committee, Dover School Committee, Board of Selectmen, Board of Fire Engineers, Library Trustees, and Park & Recreation Commission — together account for 98% of the Town's operating expenses. Each will be asked to find significant reductions or identify significant increases in revenues (i.e., increased rental fees, user fees, etc.).

Finally, in light of changed market circumstances, the Warrant Committee changed its previous fuel cost guidelines to \$3.00 for motor fuel and \$3.50 for heating oil. This will allow those departments with direct fuel costs to reduce their budgeted expenses accordingly.

*Mr. Dawley moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Seidman;
the motion was agreed by consensus at 8:45 pm
the next meeting will be March 4 at 7:00 pm*

Respectfully submitted,
Peter Smith, Secretary

approved March 4, 2009