

# Dover Warrant Committee

February 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; Joseph Mellican, Selectman; Joseph Griffin, Chief of Police; Craig Hughes, Superintendent of Streets; David Ramsay, Town Administrator; Greer Pugatch, Administrative Assistant

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

## 1. Review of minutes of January 28

Mr. Stapleton moved that the minutes be approved, seconded by Mrs. Hunter. The motion was approved by a vote of 8-0-0.

## 2. Review of Budgets

This session was dedicated to those budgets that fall under the Selectmen's control.

Chief Griffin introduced the budgets under his purview. Under Police, there is a request for the Town to share the cost of dress uniforms for those officers desiring them. Fuel costs for the Protective Agencies building are up due to price, although the two new boilers have reduced total fuel consumption.

Mr. Hughes introduced the budgets under his purview, beginning with Highway Maintenance. The overtime budget has been increased this year to reflect actual usage and to reduce Reserve Fund transfer requests. The item for Fencing in the budget refers to guardrail replacement, mostly along the river: old-style wooden post and cable barriers are being replaced with wood-faced steel, which is stronger and safer while retaining a traditional look. The Professional Services item is mostly line painting and catch basin cleaning. Replacement of street signs is almost complete. The Norfolk County Purchasing Group is trying to take advantage of low fuel prices by bidding out next year's rate now; if it comes in below the current guideline, the budget will be adjusted accordingly. In the past, major one-time repairs were budgeted under Professional Services, but the Selectmen have requested that they appear under Capital Outlay in the future; this will include repainting truck H-8 and refurbishing the street sweeper in the coming year.

Snow and Ice prompted a discussion of costs and benefits. Mr. Hughes detailed his resources (Town and contractor), his philosophy on timing and coverage, the provision of meals to drivers during their breaks at the Highway Garage, and the cost trade-offs between union employee overtime rules and contractor rates. It was generally acknowledged that the quality of Dover roads in winter is outstanding, and that you get what you're willing to pay for.

Under Street Lighting, it was noted that the Town is negotiating with NSTAR to convert to energy-efficient sodium lights where brighter mercury lights are not required.

Energy consumption at the Town Garage is down, thanks in large part to the provision of remote door controls in all the trucks, so that the bay doors do not stay open a moment longer than necessary in winter. Mr. Hughes explained the elaborate water collection/separation/recycling system and the maintenance it requires.

Tarvia and Patching costs are largely driven by the price of oil. The high price last year forced deferring two roads from the original repaving plan for the second year in a row. Mr. Hughes will provide the Warrant Committee with a copy of the current five-year plan.

Solid Waste Disposal cost is down, as the waste-to-energy plant is profiting from the sale of the electricity it generates from burning trash. The Overtime item in the budget is for coverage when the regular Transfer Station employees are on vacation. Tipping fees are returned to the General Fund and not netted into the Solid Waste budget. Mrs. Lisbon noted that recycling has plateaued, and the Recycling Committee will be proposing initiatives to increase it.

Mr. Ramsay then addressed the remaining Selectmen's budgets. He first passed around the pay-grade/step matrices for fiscal 2009 and 2010, and demonstrated how total salary costs are driven both by the annual base increase and individuals' advance through the seniority steps, resulting in a more than 6% cost increase in the coming budget. Other changes in salaries include a certification stipend for the Accountant and the hiring of a new Treasurer/Collector at a lower step than his predecessor. The budget contains funding for a second Custodian, necessitated by the increased use of the Caryl School building. Group Health insurance was discussed: cost increase is projected to be 13%. Dr. White asked if the Town has looked into joining the State GIC Plan. Mr. Ramsay noted that the multiple union contracts complicate switching plans, and that the current West Suburban Health Group plan has comparable costs. The Conservation Commission budget for Professional Services includes a consultant who makes site visits and assists with code compliance details. The Bank Charges budget is being reduced to reflect lower actual costs since leaving Bank of America. Law is difficult to budget as court cases and personnel issues are impossible to predict.

### **3. Prior Notices and Reserve Fund Transfer Requests**

Mr. Ramsay discussed the chronology of water leaks at the cemetery, repair progress, and the delay in presenting the Reserve Fund Transfer Request which has been pending before the Warrant Committee.

### **4. Consideration of Budgets Previously Presented**

Deferred due to the late hour

### **5. Revenue Projections**

Mrs. Hunter hopes to have projections next week.

### **6. Liaison Updates**

Mrs. Hunter (Regional Schools): The previous night's meeting was cancelled due to snow. The budget is still unofficial.

Mr. Stapleton (Chickering School): The budget as it stands now is 3.5% above fiscal 2009.

Mrs. Lisbon (Selectmen): The Warrant for Town Meeting appears to be small, with 26 articles. Two articles will address the Caryl School building: one to develop a master plan for gradual rehabilitation; another to authorize immediate masonry and hip rafter repairs. The leak in the new roof is under warrantee and will be fixed as soon as weather permits.

*Mr. Seidman moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Waugh;  
the motion was agreed by consensus at 9:45 pm  
the next meeting will be Monday, February 9 at 7:15 am*

Respectfully submitted,  
Peter Smith, Secretary

*approved February 11, 2009*

DRAFT