

Dover Warrant Committee

October 20, 2008

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

Others in attendance: Carol Lisbon, Selectmen Liaison; David Heinlein, Selectmen; Joseph Melican, Selectmen; Mary Carrigan, Personnel Board; Peggy Hughtart, Personnel Board; David Ramsay, Town Administrator

Dr. White called the meeting to order at 7:15 AM

1. Presentation by the Personnel Board

The reason for this meeting with the Selectmen and Personnel Board representatives was to discuss the general increases for non-union town employees for Fiscal Year 2010.

Mrs. Hunter began the discussion by noting that the Warrant Committee's concern is the deteriorating economic outlook and likelihood in reduced town revenues, especially state aid. Mrs. Carrigan, speaking for the Personnel Board, agreed, but noted that their goal is to maintain salary levels at least at the median of comparable towns to allow the hiring and retention of quality employees. Mrs. Lisbon stated that the selectmen are adamant that the non-union employees be treated with no less respect than the union employees. Mrs. Carrigan reminded the Committee that last year, in addition to a general increase, Town Meeting was asked to provide an additional increase to bring the non-union employees up to the median of comparable towns, which they had fallen below. Mr. Ramsay noted that Town House employees were originally quite disappointed with the bare cost-of-living increase, but morale was buoyed significantly by the additional catch-up proposal. Mrs. Lisbon described the fiscal 2010 increases anticipated for several union departments. Mr. Heinlein explained that like most comparable towns, Dover has a ten-step seniority system for non-union employees; at present about half are at the top step.

Mrs. Hunter explained the methodology used by the Warrant Committee last year, to determine the general increase. She noted that the recommended increase was derived by taking the median point between the 12-month average of the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U Boston) and the 12-month average of the Employment Cost Index (ECI Northeast). Mr. Heinlein noted that it is unfortunate that this guidance must be given so far in advance. He asked that the Warrant Committee not rule out an override just yet. He further asked that, absent better financial projections for the next eighteen months, the Committee stick to methodology in good times and bad. Mrs. Lisbon gave the example of the Capital Budget, which strives to keep a smooth progression of spending without extreme peaks and valleys.

General discussion moved to a consensus that if financial prospects deteriorate, it is not simply the salary line items that will have to be cut: all departments will be required to find savings across the board. We should not view this guidance as the fulcrum of the entire budget.

The Warrant Committee members were polled, and all agreed to base the fiscal 2010 guidelines on the CPI & ECI as before. The exact number will be set at the next meeting.

2. Budget Template FY 2010 Draft 3 (as of 2008-10-19)

Discussion deferred until next meeting

3. WC FY 2010 Budget Guidelines and Review Procedure Draft (as of 2008-10-19)

Discussion deferred until next meeting

4. Liaison Updates

Mrs. Hunter (Regional Schools): The Excess & Deficiency total was certified. The athletic director provided an overview of the athletic programs offered at the Region.

Mrs. Lisbon (Board of Health): The board heard a presentation on bow hunting to reduce deer population.

Mrs. Lisbon (Library): The previously mentioned proposal to move utility costs from the library budget may be more difficult than hoped.

*Mrs. Weinstein moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Kinder;
the motion was agreed by consensus at 8:15 AM.*

the next meeting will be October 29, 2008 at 7:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Peter Smith, Secretary

approved October 29, 2008