

Town of Dover
Long Range Planning Committee

Meeting Minutes
April 2, 2009

The meeting was convened at 7:35 am. Present were members Jerry Arnold, Jim Dawley, Rich Forte, Sharon Grant, Geoff Merrill, Mark Sarro, and Selectman Carol Lisbon.

The meeting minutes of March 12, 2009 were approved as amended.

Geoff has offered to build a database of equipment repair and maintenance expenses to assist in “repair or replace” decisions. Jim suggested a parallel system be put in place to back up requests for funding new equipment purchases, citing the likelihood of numbers being shifted to meet fiscal budget constraints. It was noted that problems could arise with comparisons of outdated or incomplete fiscal data. Carol suggested a standardized process requiring data to be compiled every two years via a Board of Selectmen request to committee chairs, perhaps for the All Chairs Meeting. Jim suggested that funding requests be made in a double presentation format to facilitate accuracy. This year, Warrant and CBC examined the cost of every line item – a painful process – although the town’s financial position is relatively “flush,” with about 10% of town budget in Free Cash and no town employee layoffs.

Geoff said other towns have changed their pension system from a defined benefits plan to an employee contribution plan. Dover currently is part of the Norfolk County plan, which is more conservative than the State plan. It was recommended to use the settlement dollars to fund Dover’s future pension liability.

It was noted that Dover’s overall tax revenues of \$30 million are distributed among the town’s population of 6,000 at the rate of approximately \$5K per capital. Mark noted, that although our town government works slowly, we are in sound fiscal condition and other communities’ perception is that Dover is a well-managed town.

There is a need to safeguard the “institutional knowledge” that runs the town and develop a system to pass it down through succeeding committee

members. ConCom and ZBA appoint two nonvoting associate members, who are in training to learn the ropes before becoming full members. Either by committee manuals or training sessions. Carol noted that it is hard to find volunteers to fill all the vacancies.

The Caryl building was discussed: the space is being used, except during the summer, but the town has never voted on its future. This year, Article 11 is requesting \$250K for additional maintenance .The DCC Committee will present a comprehensive plan at next year's Town Meeting.

Sharon recapped the committee's ideas:

Should we consider a standardized database for town equipment?

How do we pass on institutional knowledge to new committee members?

Should we develop a process to periodically review fees some town groups charge?

Should we recommend revamping the pension system?

The next meeting will be Thursday, May 7, 2009 in the conference room at the Town Garage.

The meeting was adjourned at 9 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerry Arnold
Interim Secretary