

Dover Warrant Committee
Open Hearing
Minutes of the March 19, 2012 meeting

Members in attendance: David Melville- Chairman, Andrew Waugh, Bob Cocks, James Stuart, Kate Bush, Rich Forte, John Cone, Maureen Arkle, Kathy Gill-Body

Location: Dover Town House, Great Hall

Mr. Melville called the meeting to order at 7:31 PM.

Mr. Melville introduced the members of the committee to those in attendance and provided background of the committee's purpose and process. Mr. Melville provided a general overview of the budget.

Before reviewing the individual articles, Mr. Melville opened the floor to questions.

Mr. Jerry Clark had several questions:

- Will the slides of the presentation be posted? Mr. Melville replied yes (all PowerPoint presentations and distributed materials will be included as part of the minutes).
- How is the pension liabilities determined? Mr. Melville replied actuarially.
- Are we under estimating the pension liability? Mr. Melville stated that the committee and Town offices rely on experts in the field to calculate the number.
- Does the Town expect lower state reimbursement? Mr. Melville replied that we do not expect a lower reimbursement

Mr. Melville began the review of articles.

Articles 1-3 are boilerplate, allowing the Town to operate.

Mr. Melville introduced Ms. Carolyn Ringel, Chairwomen of the Dover School Committee to present article 4, Chickering School Budget. Ms. Ringel highlighted the variances within the budget:

- Decreased the number of classrooms based on declining enrollment
- Language based classroom provides in-house special education, resulting in savings from not having to go out of district for services
- The reduction of one teacher salary does not offset the contractual increase in salary for the remaining teachers. Long-term reduction in enrollment over time will have a more meaningful effect on the salary expense portion of the budget. Much of the infrastructure and fixed expenses remain, regardless of enrollment
- Full-Day Kindergarten will affect salary by increasing a kindergarten teacher from 0.8 teacher to 1.0 teacher equivalent.

The floor was opened to questions.

Mr. Jerry Clark asked if there was a comparison of the class size for full-time kindergarten for the surrounding communities. Ms. Ringel stated that the the committee will get the information and post it prior to Town Meeting.

Ms. Shelly Poulsen, Vice Chairwoman of the Regional School Committee presented the Regional Budget.

Highlights included:

- Property insurance had a big jump. It was discovered that the Region was underinsured. That has been corrected and now accurately reflects the cost to insure the Region
- Changes to E&D
 - \$200,000 increase due to child rearing leave (last year had a higher number of teachers out on unpaid leave. A substitute costs less.)
 - \$100,000 savings due to changes to the teachers health insurance plan
- Dover's total assessment is slightly higher this year due to increased enrollment.
- No increase to the number of teachers

The floor was opened to questions.

Mr. Jerry Clark asked about the discrepancy in the total assessment of \$25,000 between slides in the presentation. Ms. Paulson replied that the OPEB liability was not included and will be reported correctly at Town Meeting.

Mr. Mike Asceti, Chairman of the Capital Budget Committee presented article 5. Mr. Asceti did a budget review highlighting:

- Ladder Truck will be a separate article (14)
- Tennis court maintenance- to be self-funded by court rental fees (~\$5,000/year). This is to maintain the courts and preserve the warranty from the installer
- Interactive White Boards- completes the implementation and installation in all classrooms
- Replenishment of the maintenance fund of the Caryl Community Center (depleted from the work to remove the failed underground fuel storage tanks and installation of new, above-ground storage tank)

Mr. Melville presented the following articles:

Article 6 to fund the unemployment compensation fund

Article 7 for payment of accumulated sick leave to retired police officers

Article 8 for state-funded highway construction projects

Article 9 Revolving funds for the Building Department, Board of Health, Dover School Committee, Building Maintenance and Library

Article 10 to adopt updated flood maps and amend local ordinances

Mr. Greg Hills presented Article 11 to study the feasibility of a Rail Trail. If the Rail Trail is eventually approved there would be a 99 year lease for \$1. Maintenance costs would be covered by the Town.

Mr. Jerry Clark asked how the trestle safety issue would be addressed. Mr. Hills replied that an engineering study would be conducted to see if safe and from that how to construct safety rails.

Mrs. Mary Kerrigan of the Personnel Board presented article 12, requesting \$45,000 for a non-union personnel pay and classification study. The last classification study was 8 years ago.

Mr. Melville stated that Article 13 will be withdrawn.

Article 14, purchase of replacement ladder truck was presented by Mr. Jay Hughes, Fire Chief. Mr. Hughes discussed the need to replace the current ladder truck with a new 104' ladder truck. It is the second piece of equipment to leave the Station. It is used to extricate, get fighters to the roof to vent for safety and transport equipment and personnel to the fire.

The floor was opened to questions.

Mr. Scott Sargent asked how long it would take for mutual aid to arrive at a fire. Mr. Hughes stated that it takes between 15-25 minutes. Mr. Hughes further commented that it is not practical to share a ladder truck with other communities.

Mr. Jerry Clark asked if the poor condition of the truck had a detrimental effect on personnel. Mr. Hughes replied yes.

Mr. John O'Keefe asked if the ladder truck is used to protect property or rescue people. Mr. Hughes stated that the ladder truck has not had an actual aerial rescue. It is used for reach. Many of the newer homes in Town require along ladder for reach from sloped properties to be able to reach the roof.

Mr. Melville clarified that the cost of the truck would be paid for using free cash. Mr. Sargent asked if it is fair to fund the ladder truck from free cash versus issuing a bond. Mr. Melville remarked that voters can make motions at Town meeting to offer alternative funding mechanisms but that it was the opinion of Warrant Committee that the proposed ladder truck be funded from free cash which will have no effect on the current tax levy.

Mr. Melville presented Article 15 which is a technical correction to some wording for the funding approved last year for the sewer treatment plant at the Regional School.

Article 16 requesting \$10,000 for the demolition of Whiting Road outbuilding was presented by Mr. Joe Melican, Selectmen. The photo of the building said it all.

Article 17 withdrawn.

Article 18 to fund the Reserve Fund for \$250,000

Article 19 for unpaid bills of prior year

Article 20 presented by Mr. Ford Spalding for \$6,323 for Dover's share of a repair to Minuteman Vocational and add \$40,000 to reserves as a supplement to appropriations to Article 4.

Articles 21-23 boiler plate presented by Mr. Melville.

Being no further questions from the floor, Mr. Melville adjourned the meeting at 9:26 PM.

Next meeting is scheduled for March 21 at 7 PM

Respectfully submitted,
W. Richard Forte, Jr.