

DOVER WARRANT COMMITTEE
Minutes of the March 11, 2020 Meeting

Members in attendance: Rob Andrews, Kate Cannie, Melissa Herman, Cam Hudson, Gordon Kinder, Janet McCormick, Steve Migausky, Peter Smith

Members absent: Andy Ursitti

Others in attendance: Bob Springett, Selectman; Carissa Haydon, Al Sepehr, & Rick Garron, Article 28 & 29 sponsors; Gerry Clarke & Steve Kruskall, Board of Health; Barry Goldman, Capital Budget Committee

Location: Fireside Room, Dover Town House

Ms. Cannie called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

The minutes of March 4 were approved.

Ms. Haydon and Messrs. Sepehr and Garron presented their case for Article 28, which would appropriate moneys to fund extra school buses, allowing the Chickering School to continue its current start time while the Regional Schools move to a later start. Their goal is for Chickering to start no earlier than 8:20 am and for no bus pick-ups before 7:30 am. They cited studies indicating that young children as well as teenagers are adversely affected by early school start times. The Committee reminded the group that even if Town Meeting approves the funds for more buses, the school is not obligated to provide the service or revert to the later start. Article 29 requests funding for a traffic and safety study. They believe that earlier start times at Chickering would cause more parents to drive their children off rather than take the bus. They are concerned that the already busy drop-off / pick-up area and traffic around the school would become unmanageable.

Messrs. Clarke and Kruskall explained Article 20, which would accept Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40U. Chapter 40U provides a mechanism for the Town to issue fines to property owners for violation of State regulations and local bylaws. Mr. Clarke stated that the Town has little recourse for addressing violations, especially regarding wells and septic systems. Mr. Clarke also brought up the matter of funding more hours for the Board's agent. He was reminded that Reserve Fund transfers may not be used for wages, except for emergency services personnel. However, there is still time to amend the department budget request to include the expanded hours.

Mr. Goldman discussed the not-yet-finalized Capital Budget. It includes a new dump truck for the Highway Department, two police cruisers, and flooring and network gear at Chickering. The largest item is replacement of all windows at Town House. The 1920's-vintage windows and storms are not worth repair and re-glazing. New windows are expected to significantly reduce energy consumption and pay for themselves in 10-12 years. Capital projects at the Regional Schools will be self-funded.

There was a brief discussion of the Open Hearing on the Warrant next Monday. Ms. Cannie will contact all presenters. Mr. Kinder will outline the Operating Budget. The Moderator is investigating the implications of postponing Town Meeting should that be necessary due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

The next meeting will be the Open Hearing on the Warrant at 7:30pm on March 16.

There being no further business a motion was made to adjourn, seconded by unanimous proclamation. The meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Peter Smith, Secretary