Select Board
Minutes
Tuesday, February 5, 2019 at 7:00pm
Town Hall Meeting Room, Harvard, MA

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Chair Lucy Wallace in the Town Hall Meeting Room. Select Board members Rich Maiore and Stu Sklar were in attendance as well as Town Administrator Tim Bragan and Executive Assistant Julie Doucet. Alice von Loesecke and Kara Minar were absent.

Budget reviews with Finance Committee

Finance Department
Newly hired Finance Director Lori Bolasevich has been familiarizing herself with the town finances since she started on January 2nd. Everyone received copies of the budget submission along with questions and answers. Bragan provided an updated personnel spreadsheet. Bolasevich noted the accounting software Munis will need to be upgraded along with all of the computers in the department. Bragan and Sobalvarro will work on a proposal to replace all outdated computers in the various town departments.

Agricultural Commission
Chair Kerri Green presented her first budget with guidance from Assistant Town Administrator Sobalvarro. The commission has a small budget of $500 which Green plans to utilize in the coming year to join the Massachusetts Farm Bureau and to attend other conferences that are beneficial to the commission. She recently attended a very informative agricultural forum in Boxborough and the commission continues their work with the Energy Advisory Committee on the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness sub-committee. Green said the recent Agriculture workshop held was well attended.

Town Benefits & Insurances
Sobalvarro has not received final health insurance figures for the coming year but expects to in the next week. She provided a snapshot of retiree enrollment and active members.

She explained the building and liability insurance increased due to building improvements and workers compensation increased due to claims.

Park & Recreation Commission discussion on the Athletic Field subcommittee
Commission Chair Doug Thornton and member Joe Reynolds came to review their draft charge for the subcommittee. Maiore and Wallace suggested they reduce the number of members to make it easier to meet quorum requirements. Reynolds expects this task to require a minimal amount of meetings. They plan to gather and analyze data to determine needs for field usage. This will allow the subcommittee to determine where the critical need is and offer options on how this can be addressed. They discussed how the DPW Director and School Facility Manager can effectively assist the subcommittee. Reynolds expects the subcommittee to complete their work by May/June.

Minutes
On a Maiore/Sklar motion, the board voted unanimously to approve minutes of 1/15 and 1/22, as presented.

Town Administrator report
Bragan reminded everyone the annual town report submissions were due Friday, January 25, 2019.

Bragan reported our Free Cash was approval and the number certified by the State is $1,151,086.

Bragan announced Mary Traphagen will be stepping down from the School Committee. A joint meeting of the School Committee and the Select Board will be necessary to fill the vacancy until the town Election on May 7, 2019.

Bragan announced a volunteer form from has been received from Michelle Lauria and vetted by the Park & Recreation Commission therefore an appointment will occur at the next meeting.

Bragan reported the Nashua River Wild & Scenic Study Committee informed us that the designation did not make it through this 115th Congress but they are hopeful that it will pass in the 116th Congress. They are also going to be moving ahead with a Canoe Access Assessment Project and Networking Gatherings for Conservationists.

Bragan reported a letter from MassDevelopment was received in response to Ms. Wallace's and Mr. Normand's letter.

Bragan reported a company named Dude Solutions evaluated all of the Town Buildings and produced a report and spreadsheets that contain a great deal of information on the buildings and their various systems.

Bragan is working with COA Director Debbie Thompson investigating the potential movement of some $30,000 from our MBTA charges to our MRTA charges. He has made inquiry into this and is now in the process of disputing. We did not authorized the money to be moved for the stated purposes.

Town wide clean up
Organizers of the event notified the Select Board they plan to hold the event again this year the weekend of April 25th – 28th. On a Sklar/Maiore motion, the board approved the roadside trash clean up and garlic mustard pull for April 25th – 28th.

AARP WHO Global Network of Age Friendly Communities
Community & Economic Development Director Chris Ryan prepared an application to the AARP designating Harvard as an age friendly community. This is only a designation and does not require any funding from the town. On a Maiore/Sklar motion, the board voted unanimously to allow the chair to sign letter with the AARP membership application.

Single assessor
Bragan said with the recent legislation passed the town is now allowed to have a single assessor. Bragan confirmed current Assessor Rick Maiore does not wish to continue and with the education requirement it has been difficult to maintain a full board for a number of years now. He stated Assessor David Manzello from RRG can serve in this role for the town. The board members were supportive of this change. They will take action at their next meeting.

Finalize budgets for submission to the Finance Committee
Bragan presented his budget recommendations and adjustments to small warrant article requests. He noted nothing can be finalized until the health insurance figures have been set. He was able to include the Governor's budget in the financial recap and projection worksheet. With a deficit of $ 400,523, Bragan provided a letter outlining his budget reduction suggestions and small warrant articles he would consider forgoing. He offered his reasoning for each item also noting he would not recommend an override this year. Bragan spoken with Superintendent Dwight who also is not in favor of an override.

Wallace and Sklar do not agree with Bragan's suggestion of removing the small warrant article for the new COA van operating costs. Maiore understood the reasoning behind the suggestion. Wallace highlighted the importance of balancing equity between all town departments when deciding on reductions.

The board members decided to send the budgets as is to the Finance Committee as a starting point. They welcome future debate and discussion on the budgets and decision to have an override or not. Bragan confirmed final review and decisions will happen in early March. The Finance Committee will meet every Wednesday in February and Bragan will be in attendance at those meetings. Wallace read aloud an email from fellow board member Alice von Loesecke who could not be present. One of her suggestions was to use $175,000 from free cash to help decrease the deficit. On a Sklar/Maiore motion, the board voted unanimously to send budget with concerns noted to the Finance Committee. Bragan will provide regular communication to the Select Board from the Finance Committee meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30pm

Documents referenced:
FY20 budgets – Finance Dept, Ag Commission, Health Insurance & Benefits
Field Activities sub-committee charge – dated 1.7.2019
Town-wide clean up request – dated 2.1.2019
AARP letter & application – dated 2.8.2019
Budget recommendations letter – dated 2.5.2019