

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order by Mr. Weiss at 6:35 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Gerry Weiss, Diana Stein, Alisa Brewer, Aaron Hayden, Stephanie O'Keeffe

Absent: (none)

Present: Town Manger Larry Shaffer, Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director John Musante

OPENING REMARKS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Weiss said that this meeting was called expressly to discuss the FY10 budget process. It was agreed that the meeting would wrap up at 8:30 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

SELECT BOARD'S ACTION

Discussion of Budget Process and Priorities

Ms. O'Keeffe distributed documents she had prepared to help guide and inform the discussion. Mr. Shaffer gave an update of the status of his FY10 budget development. Meetings with Department Heads have begun and will continue over the next several weeks. Consideration is being given to how each department might: improve services at no additional cost; reduce the cost of current services; increase revenues; eliminate or reduce services; or assign services outside of Town departments. The Finance Committee's 2% guideline is being used, which is projected to leave a gap of \$550,000 to \$600,000 for level services in the municipal portion of the Town's budget. Wages represent a significant portion of the budget increase with FY10 being the year of the 3.5% increase, part of the negotiated 2.5% average increase over 4 years, with 1% and 2% increases the previous two years. Health insurance costs are projected to increase by 6%. Where possible, moving costs out of funding from the General Fund is being explored, including the remaining 20% of the Community Development Director's salary and the funding for human service agencies. Additionally, opportunities for consolidation and regionalization are being explored. Ms. Brewer raised the issue of how to discuss the possibility of redistributing the 2% guideline to consider whether the schools might get a larger amount. Mr. Musante reviewed four slides from the Facilitation of Community Choices Committee presentation, showing the projected budget gap over the next five years between projected revenues and what would be needed to maintain level services, and the larger gap that would result if State Aid were to be cut by 15% for FY10. The Select Board discussed how to identify and express its collective ideas and priorities, in general and in the face of the significant budget gap. Mr. Shaffer said that broad policy statements regarding core priorities, and expressing support or opposition to concepts such as regionalization, hiring freezes, fee increases, assigning services outside of Town departments, and eliminating services versus maintaining them in a "survival mode" to try to reach the next economic upturn would be helpful. Mr. Weiss suggested that the Select Board should determine policy positions on CPA spending for capital

investments and for override types and amounts. Ms. Brewer suggested consideration of any Town assets that might be sold, and requested a list of those assets.

Action: Without a vote, it was agreed that Select Board members would each prepare lists of thoughts and ideas focused on broad-stroke concepts, but including some smaller details. These will be e-mailed to Kate Seaman in the Select Board office by Thursday, November 20th, to be included in the November 21st packet, in preparation for a substantive discussion of the matter at November 24th meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

VOTED unanimously to adjourn the open meeting at 8:35 p.m.

-- Respectfully submitted by Stephanie O'Keeffe