

Municipal Budget Committee
September 15, 2015 Meeting
Minutes

Present:

David Carbone (DC)
Steve Giovinelli (SG)
Peter Menard (PM)
Brendan O'Donnell (BO)
Troi Hopkins (TH)
Karen Cote (KC)

Absent:

Kevin Verville
James Spillane
Fred McGarry
Carol Levesque
Andy Robertson

Minutes:

PM suggested that DC, as eldest member, lead the meeting. DC called for citizens' comments. There were none.

SG suggested that the MBC review the most recent appropriations report.

Jan Foisy informed the committee that Deerfield may be receiving FEMA money from the state that could help the highway department, which is behind. Jan Foisy further informed the committee that, other than that, appropriations are on schedule for the 2015 budget target. The FEMA money would be approximately \$21,000 in FEMA money.

SG pointed out that this would still leave a deficit. SG asked how Deerfield has historically dealt with deficits such as this.

Jan Foisy informed him that the other town departments must cover the deficit. The bottom line of the budget is what controls. Deerfield will stop spending if it reaches that bottom.

Jan Foisy updated the committee on the highway shed. It is in the process of being built. Builders are hoping to raise the rafters in the next few days. Work on the GBW building will be happening the following week on the Parks & Recreation side. The town received some unexpected revenue. The town was deeded some property, and the owners have redeemed it.

SG asked for the appropriations reports to be sent along with the AP Manifests. It would be nice to see the information ahead of time, monthly reports preferably.

DC asked if there was more discussion on the highway department. He asked Jan Foisy what the expected completion date would be on the highway building. Jan Foisy estimated that it would be done in the next two weeks.

DC asked about the questionnaire that he received in the mail about the safety complex. Jan Foisy said that the town would wait until it received all of the responses before determining what the town people want. Then, the people who want to be on the committee will be notified. A subcommittee would be created thereafter. This would be a warrant article in the future, but not ready for 2016. The town would need a building plan and bonding. 2017 would be the earliest date. DC asked how soon before the results of the survey. Jan said she had thus far received three phone calls and four returned surveys. She had not yet checked the computer to see if e-mail responses had been received.

School Budget Update:

PM—In the process of finishing up the previous fiscal year. DCS has a new business manager, Amanda Wheeler. This week the school board should have the books closed. At the next School Board meeting on October 7 the School board will figure out how much to return to the town and how much to put into reserves. PM suggested that he could send this information to the MBC chair when it is available. School enrollment is at 500 this year, which is up somewhat. The incoming kindergarten class is also larger. At the next school board meeting, they will begin preparing the next school budget.

DC asked how much enrollment is up. PM estimated that enrollment was up about 10-11 students as of September 2. He also reminded the committee that this is a moving target because families continue to move in and out of town. PM does not yet know the breakdown between DCS and high school students.

SG asked if the increase was within the school's resource limit. PM said that the school was managing it. PM said the goal is to study a possible addition to the school that might be more efficient than the existing modulars. SG asked if we own the modulars. PM: No, we pay about \$50,000 per year for those.

PM said that the maintenance director wants the parking lot paved. Dirt from the dirt parking lot comes into the school and causes increased expense. The parking lot probably won't be paved this year (2015). This is phase three of the parking lot renovation. Only the first two phases have currently been funded.

Citizens Comments:

Ms. Cady said that she is bothered by what she just heard. We built the school for 500 students. We added four classrooms and a cafeteria. We added four more for kindergarten rooms. Each classroom was built for 25 students. So DCS should have room for 700 students. Thus, the school is paying for modulars that are unnecessary.

Ms. Cady further complained that DCS has not finished studying the parking lot. She brought Lamprey River (people?) To see the parking lot two years ago. She next asked how much the school board has retained from its budget from the previous year.

PM reminded the citizens that he had already answered that question—the School Board does not yet know that amount. The issue would be addressed at the next school board meeting. There will be a surplus of an unknown amount.

Ms. Cady stated that she would put in right to know requests directly to the school board. She said that she would make them answer with right to know. SG pointed out that this would be a management question, not a budget question. DC asked if the school had the capacity for 700 students. PM reiterated that this question has come up numerous times in the past. The answer remains unchanged. State requirements have changed. All spaced in DCS is being used. Closets are being used for staff. The school is at max capacity if it is to meet the needs of all the students.

SG asked what the standards that dictate class capacity. PM said that some requirements come from the state, others from the school board based on the needs of the students. SG asked if the school board policies are more or less lenient than the state policies. PM said that DCS is within the range of the state policies. PM is not sure if there are any federal requirements on student class size. TH pointed out that these are recommendations by the state, not laws or regulations. Furthermore, the larger the size of a class, the less able a teacher is to meet the needs of the students.

Ms. Cady commented that based upon some calculation, it costs Deerfield \$19,000 per student, while the state average is apparently \$14,000. SG suggested that the answer lies in economies of scale. Larger school districts benefit from their size and are able to lower overall costs.

Ms. Cady suggested that ‘widows,’ without specifying who these people are, are spending five to six months of their social security checks on town taxes, just to receive road, rescue, and fire. She posited that people who vote for their kids vote other people out of their homes. She hypothesized about the reason for the lot being deeded back to Deerfield. TH noted that Ms. Cady was only speculating and had no facts.

Then Ms. Cady mentioned an unnamed developer who is taking advantage of people in Deerfield.

Ms. Cady compared Deerfield to Waterville Valley, which she says spends approximately \$20,000 on each student. DC asked what would cause this number to be so high. Ms. Cady said that the school board’s management is responsible.

KC: asked about the cost of kilowatt hours, which varies throughout the appropriations report. She doesn’t know why the cost per hours varies. Jan Foisy said that she would look into the matter.
