

DOVER WARRANT COMMITTEE
Minutes of the January 13, 2021 Meeting

Members in attendance: Rob Andrews, Melissa Herman, Cam Hudson, Gordon Kinder, Sara Kinney, Janet McCormick, Steve Migausky, Peter Smith, Andy Ursitti

Others in attendance: Bob Springett, Selectman; Chris Dwelley, Town Administrator; Kate O'Brien, Assistant Town Administrator; Dave Sullivan, Municipal Project Manager; Peter McGowan, Chief of Police; Paul Luttazi, Acting Fire Chief; Ford Spalding, Jim Dawley, & Kate Cannie, Board of Fire Engineers; Janet Claypoole, Director Council on Aging; Gerry Clarke, Steve Kruskall & Kay Petersen, Board of Health; Karl Warnick, Building Maintenance

Location: on-line, via Zoom

Mr. Kinder called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

Mr. Kinder opened the meeting with a review of COVID-related remote meeting procedures

Mr. Kinder asked for any citizens' comments; none were made.

The minutes of January 6 were approved unanimously.

Budget Reviews:

Mr. Dwelley presented an overview of expected revenue and operating expenditures for FY'22 (slides attached). He is expecting level Chapter 70 State aid for schools, and a small decrease in unrestricted State aid. Given estimates for new growth and local receipts, if we raised the tax levy to the 2.5% limit, we would have approximately \$1.4 million in new revenue. Increases in expenditures will come from the schools, wages, pensions, and insurance are expected to total around \$940,000. Combined with requests for new hires, the total expenditure increase would be on the order of \$1.1 million. This implies that we will have excess levy capacity.

Mr. Dwelley continued with a budget review of the departments reporting up to the Selectmen.

- The Conservation Commission has put in a lot of work defining their role and how best to deliver services. Proposals coming before the Commission are becoming increasingly complex. Accordingly, they would like to add hours for their full-time staffer, and hours for consultants. Fees charged to applicants have not been changed in over a decade, and an increase to help cover costs is in order.
- Most departments have submitted level-service budgets. By reviewing and reflecting actual expenditures some line items have been reduced.
- Mr. Sullivan explained that the IT budget includes increases in software license costs as we transition to new application suites and add users to existing ones.
- Transfer station costs are up a little due to increased volume.
- Chief McGowan explained that the Police Department wages are up due to seniority and negotiated base pay and shift differentials. The budget for 16 hours of temp/part-time help over the weekends has been overspent for four consecutive years, so that budget item is being increased. They are upgrading their anti-virus / anti-malware computer protection at a cost of about \$5000. Utilities at the Protective Agencies building are up a little. The Animal Control budget has been adjusted to reflect actual spending.

Acting Chief Luttazi explained that the Fire and Ambulance budgets are level-funded except for a wage increase as per Personnel Board recommendation.

Ms. Claypoole discussed how COVID caused major changes in the Council on Aging's operations, which will likely continue to some extent into FY'22. Postage and office supplies have gone up. Travel has gone way down. Food costs have gone up, offset to some degree by donations, grants, and CARES Act funds.

Dr. Clarke, Mr. Kruskall and Dr. Petersen presented the Board of Health's budget request (slides attached). They are asking to add a half-time professional assistant and to add hours for consultants. Land development has become much more complex, as have regulatory and reporting requirements. Even with Board members volunteering in the office as much as 15 hours a week, it is impossible to keep up with requests, let alone address the massive backlog of filing and indexing. Several members of the Warrant Committee asked if a dedicated staffer is necessary, instead of using a floating resource? Dr. Clarke responded that they have no objection, provided such a resource could be sufficiently trained to be able to locate requested information and to answer technical questions. Moreover, while the idea of shared administrative help has been brought up, there is no sign that it will be available in the immediate future, and the Board's difficulties are immediate.

Mr. Dwelley reported that the Town is about half way through its compensation study. The consultants expect to submit their report this spring.

Other Business:

Mr. Dwelley said that the website team is putting together a new, simpler repository for financial information.

Mr. Springett reported on meetings with the Moderator to prepare for Town Meeting. We want as much information as possible to streamline the flow of the meeting. Specific article proponents are urged to hold public hearings to disseminate details and gather feedback. Proponents should work with Town House and Warrant to fine tune wording for clarity. We want a much more productive meeting than last year, but do not know what COVID restrictions will be in place in May. We may need to move Town Meeting to a Saturday to avoid conflict with activities at the Regional Schools.

Liaison Reports:

- There is no liaison assigned to the Stagecoach Lane article (carried over from last year). Mr. Smith believes that Kate Cannie had it.
- Ms. Kinney asked about contacting the Long Range Planning Committee; it is dormant, so there is no need.
- The Cemetery Commission is considering a bylaw change; Mr. Migausky will inquire.

The next meeting will be at 7:00 pm on January 20.

There being no further business a motion was made to adjourn, seconded by unanimous proclamation. The meeting adjourned at 9:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Peter Smith, Secretary

Attachments:

1. FY22 Budget Outlook
2. BOH Presentation to Warrant Committee