

DOVER WARRANT COMMITTEE
Minutes of the January 20, 2021 Meeting

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

Members absent: Melissa Herman

Others in attendance: Bob Springett, Selectman; Carol Jackman and Peg Crowley, Cemetery Commission; Erin Rodat-Savla, Judith Schulz, and Ameer Tejani, Library Trustees; Cheryl Abdullah, Library Director; Chris Boland, Parks & Recreation Commission; Mark Ghiloni, Parks & Recreation Director; Ellie Beasley, Justine Kent-Uritam

Location: on-line, via Zoom

Mr. Kinder called the meeting to order at 7:17 pm.

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

Citizen comments:

Ellie Beasley, former President of the Friends of the Dover Town Library expressed her support for the job the library staff has done adapting to COVID restrictions.

Justine Kent-Uritam said that she was disappointed by the library's very limited availability, especially services and programs for adults and seniors.

Budget Reviews:

Cemetery (Carol Jackman) – Most items are level funded, with small increases for office expenses, rental equipment, and grounds maintenance; the latter due to increased number of graves. Asked about the large unexpended balance for the current fiscal year for grounds maintenance she was unable to explain at this time, but will get back to the liaison. The new telephone system has allowed a significant reduction in that budget item. Ms. Jackman went on to explain the bylaw changes being proposed: who may purchase a lot; who may be buried in a lot; headstone requirements; cremation remains added to an existing burial.

Library (Erin Rodat-Savla) – The budget assumes a normal level of service. Library staff level has not changed in a decade, while utilization over the same period has increased substantially. Comparisons to similar towns indicate that Dover is under-staffed with respect to population and utilization metrics.

Planning Board (Carol Chirico) – The full-time land use planner, which was approved at last year's Town Meeting, has been hired and her full salary appears in the FY22 budget. The budget for part-time professional services has been reduced from \$29,772 to \$5,000. This will allow the former planner, whom we shared with other towns, to help acquaint the new planner with Dover's past and ongoing projects.

Parks & Recreation (Chris Boland and Mark Ghiloni) – Salaries are up per guidelines, all else is level-funded. Asked about the unexpended amounts in past years' temporary part-time salaries, Mr. Ghiloni explained that most of those years those positions were not fully staffed. As of right now, two of the three positions are filled. Asked about the revolving fund, Mr. Ghiloni said that there is a fairly direct relationship between cash flow in and out of the fund and utilization: turf maintenance, field lining, and tennis court resurfacing being examples. He does not believe that the fund balance has been growing, but will get the details from the Town Accountant.

Other Business:

Mr. Andrews reported that we will receive detailed information on the Chickering budget in advance of our review. Out-of-district special education placements are up significantly this year and are assumed to continue in FY22.

Mr. Andrews reminded the Committee that the Board of Health will be presenting its request for the Town to adopt the State 40U provisions for the issuance of fines. If anyone has any lingering questions about the budget (presented last week) forward them to him to pass along to the Board.

Mr. Kinder followed up on the acceptance of Stagecoach Lane as a Town way, which was dropped from last year's truncated Town Meeting. At that time, the residents had a dispute with the developer and wanted to postpone acceptance. He believes that a resolution may be at hand, and will inquire further.

Mr. Springett reiterated his request that proponents of special articles fully vet them before the general public, to minimize question-and-answer time at Town Meeting. He believes that Open Hearing does not reach a wide audience, and we need a better way of getting the attention of citizens and conveying specific details. He also floated the idea of "State of the Town" bullet points that would highlight significant items in the operating and capital budgets. It was agreed that the much-improved Town website is the best place to disseminate details, but other means, whether meetings or recorded presentation, are necessary to alert the citizenry to the issues.

Mr. Kinder will verify and re-send the list of liaison assignments.

The minutes of January 13 were approved unanimously.

The next meeting will be at 7:00 pm on January 27.

There being no further business a motion was made to adjourn, seconded by unanimous proclamation. The meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Peter Smith, Secretary