

TOWN OF PEMBROKE
APPROVED
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES
10 FEBRUARY 2020

Linda Peterson, Chairperson opened the meeting of the Advisory Committee in Pembroke Town Hall at 7:00PM on 10 February 2020. Also present were Stephen Walsh, Sandra Beaton, Kelly Seifert, Tim Landy and Matthew Rushing.

Patrick Chilcott arrived at 7:00PM

Absent: Maria Karas and Matthew Norton

Linda Peterson opened the meeting with a Request for Transfer from the Reserve Fund from Ed Thorne, Town Manager for vacation buyback of 80 hours in the amount of \$3,036.64 for the Assistant Town Manager. The town does not currently budget for vacation buybacks. Advisory has discussed this topic with Michael Buckley, Town Accountant who said they don't want to add to department budgets because department heads are likely to spend it. Stephen Walsh said the Board of Selectmen could write a policy or have this be part of the employee handbook. No real negotiation at contract bargaining table, Linda said they have a representative from Kopelman and Paige. Not sure if there is an employee handbook. Tim said there should be a fund in the FY21 budget or at least a policy, suggested Kelly. Linda would like the incoming Town Manager review the contracts once hired.

Upon motion moved by Stephen Walsh and 2nd by Matthew Rushing to approve the Request for Transfer from the Reserve Fund in the amount of \$3,036.64 for the vacation buyback of 80 hours for the Assistant Town Manager.

VOTED¹: To approve the Request for Transfer from the Reserve Fund in the amount of \$3,036.64 for the vacation buyback of 80 hours for the Assistant Town Manager. Stephen Walsh, Matthew Rushing, Tim Landy, Sandra Beaton and Kelly Seifert supported the motion.

Upon motion moved by Kelly Seifert and 2nd by Sandra Beaton to approve the meeting minutes of February 3, 2020.

VOTED²: To accept the meeting minutes of February 3, 2020. Kelly Seifert, Sandra Beaton, Tim Landy, Matthew Rushing, Stephen Walsh supported the motion.

- Linda discussed the absence of Maria Karas at our meetings, she has missed seven out of the last eight meetings. We have reached out to Maria with no response. Advisory will send Maria another email asking her to attend the next scheduled meeting Monday, February 24, 2020. If she is unable to attend, she will be asked to submit her resignation.
- Sandra Beaton explained how the electronic Advisory Tracker would work. She currently has three versions in the spreadsheet which can be changed to one spreadsheet to meet the needs of Advisory. Matthew Rushing asked "what is our action" for FY21 budget and Town Warrant Articles. Patrick Chilcott suggested we could share with the Board of Selectmen. Tim Landy said we should see how well it works for Advisory first also explaining it becomes a public record. Linda asked what comments should be on the tracker. Sandra said she could set up the template for review at the next meeting. Kelly suggested the spreadsheet be updated during the Advisory meetings.
- Patrick Chilcott forwarded the FY21 school budget presentation to Advisory members. The school committee, school Superintendent, Erin Obey had a joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen on Monday, February 3, 2020 to discuss their budget. The school has a FY20 shortfall of approximately \$900,000. This is due to SPED tuition (student move ins/placement changes/tuition increases) and SPED transportation changes in placement. For their FY21 budget they expect to be short 2.1M (probably 1.7M short). Linda suggested the school reach out to Josh Cutler, State Representative. The school discussed selling the property on Washington Street to cover the shortfall. However, you cannot use the sale of land to cover operating shortfall/expenses; this is a challenge. You cannot layoff enough employees to cover this and you can't close a building.

¹ The Chairperson did not vote on this motion

- Stephen Walsh suggested maybe privatizing custodial services. Patrick Chilcott said with the number of custodians that may not be an ideal model; it doesn't save. Stephen Walsh said you factor in the health insurance cost that paid by the town for all employees. What about sports programs, such as golf, baseball, etc. Linda said she doesn't see an answer, if the school needs more money, the town gets short sided and an Override wouldn't work this year. Patrick said the whole process for filing the state for an emergency could take a month. Patrick said the school discussed using the Circuit Breaker funds. The money they get this year it spent next year, they would have to build in for "move ins". Kelly asked about contacting the town where these students moved in from; did they budget for these students. Linda asked about looking at positions such as Assistant Principals and Department Chairs. Patrick said the Dept. Chairs spend half their time teaching and half their time supervising and administrative responsibilities. The Assistant Principals are the point of contact for Special Education; it would have an immediate impact. Stephen Walsh asked about a hiring freeze. He also suggested if they sell the property, they could use that money for the track field.
- Patrick will update Erin Obey.

Matthew Rushing is unclear of Advisory's role and suggested we ask the Board of Selectmen. The committee agreed to send a letter to the Board of Selectmen and ask them to define the role of Advisory and future expectations. Linda suggested we ask for a response by our next meeting, Monday, February 24, 2020.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 24, 2020 at 7:00pm. Advisory adjourned at 9:00PM.

Respectfully submitted

Stephen Walsh, Clerk

¹ The Chairperson did not vote on this motion