

TOWN OF PEMBROKE  
APPROVED  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES  
05 FEBRUARY 2018

Linda Peterson, Chairperson opened the meeting of the Advisory Committee in Pembroke Town Hall at 7:00PM on 05 February 2018. Also present were, Stephen Curley, James McCollum, John G. Brown, Jr. Stephen Walsh and Elizabeth Monks

Absent: Maria Karas

Linda began the meeting with review of the following correspondence received:

- Kathleen McCarthy, Treasurer/Collector submitted the Unemployment Compensation figures requested by Advisory. Stephen Curley noted they look like they may be school employees. Not too much information.
- Advisory received an email from Erin Obey, School Superintendent requesting a meeting with both the Board of Selectmen and Advisory to review and discuss their FY19 budget. Advisory will work around the availability of the Board of Selectmen.
- FY19 budget detail was received from Ed Thorne, Town Administrator and Michael Buckley, Town Accountant as requested. Advisory agreed to review the detail and discuss in further detail in the next few weeks. If necessary a future meeting will be scheduled with Ed and Mike at an earlier meeting time to accommodate their schedule.

Upon motion moved by James McCollum and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Stephen Walsh the meeting minutes of January 29, 2018 was

**VOTED<sup>1</sup>:** To accept the meeting minutes of January 29, 2018, Stephen Curley, John G. Brown Jr. and Elizabeth Monks supported the motion.

- Stephen Curley updated the committee on the meeting held on Wednesday, January 31, 2018 at 6:00PM in Veteran's Hall regarding the UMASS Community Compact Funded Grant Project Presentation. The compact was signed and will be returned to Pembroke on April 15, 2018. The consultant, author of the Finance Committee Handbook created an excel spreadsheet that can be built for a five year financial plan. For example: if the Police Department's budget was to increase by 2%, you could input this data and see how it impacts the plan. You can also include debt and 2½ override and run year by year to see when the debt would come off. It was also suggested not to use Free Cash for payroll. The City of Lawrence got into this habit and the state took them over; they went into receivership. The town should get into the habit when you have \$100,000 debt coming off, fund another project. Need to set a target for debt. It was a nice presentation. Advisory has been asking for a 5-10 year plan for several years.
- Stephen Curley reviewed the 2015 Per Capita by population by surrounding towns and noted Pembroke is right around average spending for Police and Fire. With a 2½ override and hiring for police and fire in three years we would have layoffs. Increase of \$900,000 in FY18 local receipts and if we have \$400,000 in snow & ice, snow from the fall meeting in 2-3 years we'll hit a wall and have nothing left. FY19 Silver Lake pension escrow is \$98,000 after FY18 will only have \$50-60,000 left. If there's an override they have to take Free Cash out of the budget.
- The Pembroke Community Compact Signing with Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito on February 1, 2018 went well.

<sup>1</sup>The Chairperson did not vote on these motion.

Upon motion moved by Stephen Curley and 2<sup>nd</sup> by James McCollum Advisory agreed to ask the Board of Selectmen if there is a 2½ override to remove Free Cash out of the budget.

**VOTED<sup>2</sup>:** To ask the Board of Selectmen if there is a 2½ override to remove Free Cash out of the budget. Stephen Walsh, John G. Brown Jr. and Elizabeth Monks supported the motion.

Advisory agreed to have PACTV record two of their meetings in March; 3/5 & 3/19. An email will be sent to Vicky Gillard.

Advisory adjourned at 7:18PM to the Board of Selectmen meeting. The next Advisory meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 12, 2018 at 7:00PM.

Advisory arrived at the Board of Selectmen meeting at the end of Police Chief Rick Wall's FY19 Budget presentation and listened to Fire Chief Michael Hill's complete FY19 Budget presentation.

- Police Chief Rick Wall would still need the same number of staff if all they do is answer calls. The opioid issue has officers involved in outreach program (this wasn't a police function years ago). He is requesting to purchase two more police cruisers in the spring versus the fall as they're not available then. Lewis Stone, Clerk noted that public safety is extremely important and they need to look at how we support the police department.
- Fire Chief Michael Hill is requesting to add personnel. He currently has two staff scenarios: 6 staff per shift and 7 staff per shift. The first call will dictate the staff for the next call. He currently has 27 Fire Fighters/Paramedics (dual role) and one basic EMT. In 2016 they went from 2,658 to 3,073 calls; 2017 under 3,000 calls. It takes 120 minutes per ambulance call. He played audio from a recent fire explaining the call was understaffed due to staff out on other calls. Dan Trabucco asked if the town was liable for underfunding the fire department. The IFPA recommends 10 Firefighters per shift. The town is rated on ISO. Stephen Curley said both the Fire and Police Department's spend is right around average to surrounding towns per capita for the population. Pembroke's health insurance costs are higher. Steve compared Pembroke to Abington; Chief Hill said Abington does not have their own dispatch. Dan Trabucco asked Chief Hill how the Fire Department has cut back. Chief Hill said he hired two people at no cost to the town; funding from the Ambulance Fund. His electricity line item of \$17,500 was taken. Vehicle maintenance in the red and he can't help the contract.
- Stephen Curley said the obvious solution would be a prop 2½ override. Both he and Linda Peterson spoke with Ed Thorne about using Free Cash to balance the budget; \$600,000 used to balance budget. He said that the City of Lawrence ran out of Free Cash and went into receivership. Pembroke should be going the other way. If we hire 2 police and 3 firefighters in three years we'll have layoffs. This needs to be addressed and we must figure it out. Chairperson, Bill Boulter asked what you would suggest to budget police and fire. We're handcuffed with proposition 2½; same staffing as 20-30 years ago. We need to take care of \$600,000 deficit. If the town does a 2½ override, they're committed to spend it that year and the funds would stay with the fire and police departments. Dan Trabucco asked how the town has "trimmed the fat". Stephen Curley said year after year, cost of living increases; expense budgets has not had an increase in 20 years in the 19 years since he's been here. Most departments are very conscientious and doing a good job.
- Lewis Stone, Clerk asked if Advisory would be available to attend the FY19 Budget presentation from the DPW on February 12, 2018. Stephen Curley agreed. The DPW is asking for money to repair roads. Stephen Curley said they have a very good solid plan.
- Bill Boulter, Chairperson thanked Advisory for coming and trying to do the right thing for the town.

<sup>1</sup>The Chairperson did not vote on these motion.

- Linda Peterson said Advisory reminded the Board of Selectmen they had a public meeting on the topic of the town's finances prior to the 2017 Annual Town Meeting and would like to plan one for this year. Last year 30-40 residents attended.

Advisory adjourned from the Board of Selectmen meeting at 9:20PM

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Curley, Clerk

<sup>1</sup>The Chairperson did not vote on these motion.