

TOWN OF PEMBROKE
APPROVED
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES
26 FEBRUARY 2018

Linda Peterson, Chairperson opened the meeting of the Advisory Committee in Pembroke Town Hall at 6:30PM on 26 February 2018. Also present were Stephen Curley, James McCollum, John G. Brown, Jr. Stephen Walsh, Elizabeth Monks and Maria Karas.

Guest: Michael Buckley, Town Accountant

Linda opened the meeting welcoming Michael Buckley to discuss FY19 Budget. Mike began discussing available revenue.

- Full day kindergarten will be a wash; those students will count as part of the enrollment.
- Local receipts are up 2%; just under \$100,000.
- Free Cash zero to \$500,000 in 3-4 years. Stephen Curley asked who's pushing it; Mike said he put it in.
- Ambulance Fund subsidiary: Fire Department operating budget includes two of the four new personnel.
- Reducing Silver Lake Withdrawal Escrow fund; one more year and then it's gone.
- School Athletic Funds; to pay debt service.
- Current Revenue \$63,695,210.00
- Stephen Curley noted that Chapter 70 is up \$60,000; Mike said due to an additional \$20.00 per pupil. Stephen Walsh said Pembroke will be losing an entire class (approximately 240 students; not sure how many kindergarteners will enroll (estimating 120). Stephen Curley said when you lose 20% of your budget over the years you should be cutting.
- Excise tax revenue is flat at 3M; will stay for a while.
- Meal tax – the question was asked are prepared foods sold at stores like Cumberland Farms, Stop & Shop; 7-11, being taxed. Mike said it could be that the state is not treating them like a restaurant. Stephen Walsh said it starts with Pembroke's Board of Health; they do the inspections. Mike said the enforcement may be through the DOR. Maria asked what the meal tax percent was for Pembroke. The state tax is 6.75%; the town gets .75%.
- Health Insurance – Stephen Walsh asked if the town is still looking at other providers. Mike said they received a quote from MMA and spoke with the unions informally. The unions don't want to go with MMA but the town wants to keep the dialogue open. Mayflower proposed 5½% increase; the Steering Committee disagreed, Mayflower came back with 4½%. They will be voting on March 5th. The total healthcare cost in the budget is 8.8M. Linda said it needs to come down to health insurance or raises.
- Linda asked about the longevity and performance increases and if they should be combined or if there is a maximum. Mike also mentioned (spare pay). He suggested writing a letter to the Board of Selectmen suggesting items that should be negotiated out of the contracts. This could be one. Stephen Curley said Advisory has been pushing the Board of Selectmen on increasing employee contribution for healthcare and they are beginning to listen. Another suggestion would be to encourage employees to opt out of the town's health plan and take insurance with their spouse's plan if an option. The town could then offer an incentive if they do. Again this idea would need to be negotiated with the union. Linda said Advisory could add this idea to their "to do" list. Mike said the town has until December 31st to opt out of Mayflower. The Board of Selectmen can begin to bargain with the unions now. Advisory could also send a letter to the School Committee as their union contract is up first.
- Linda asked about the Eye Wear line item. Mike said it was never really budgeted before.

¹The Chairperson did not vote on these motion.

- OPEB – Mike and Kathleen McCarthy, Town Treasurer agreed to add \$100,000 a year until they fully fund retirement assets through 2030; they plan to have 4M to convert to OPEB by 2060. By doing this the town will have a plan to show Standards & Poor.
- Computer maintenance line item in Town Accountant budget for \$50,000 is for the new accounting software for both the town and the school.
- Mike noted as full disclosure that the \$150,000 in the budget for legal expenses will not be enough for the 40B.
- The Town Clerk' salary will stay the same with Mary Ann Smith's retirement; the two part-time employees will be leaving.
- Stephen Walsh asked about the computer maintenance line item in department budgets. Stephen Curley said certain departments have specialized software, i.e. Assessors, Treasurer, Board of Health, Inspectional Services. Town website maintenance is \$6,000.
- FY18 Actual Budget - Linda asked Mike about the debt service – solid waste and why it's negative at \$2,300. Mike said he made an error when he put the budget together. Camp Pembroke listed under Treasurer. Mike said it's always been that way; should be listed under Board of Selectmen.
- Travel and meetings are going up; Ed cut it back.
- Town Hall Custodian overtime, why; Mike said that is a legitimate question.
- Linda asked why the town hall has bottled water and why they can't drink town water. Stephen Curley asked what the cost was last year. Mike said it was paid out of the office supply line item and he did not have that number. Mike said Advisory could push back on this.
- Police Department budget includes 2 additional employees and one cruiser. The \$60,000 for gas was discussed.
- Fire Department budget includes 4 new personnel plus equipment to outfit them. The Fire Chief is applying for a grant for "turn out gear" equipment.
- Municipal Inspectional Services budget now includes building services, health agent, and Conservation agent.
- School department will be meeting with Board of Selectmen and Advisory March 5, 2018.
- DPW - \$20,000 for Stand by Pay – new to the contract; one DPW and one Water Department employee carries the beeper. Pavement management \$500,000; FY18 was \$25,000. Don't know if DPW Commissioners will pursue.
- Town wide utilities - \$20,000 credit from solar.
- Snow & Ice - \$590,000. Mike said the town should budget more than \$100,000; we should be trying to increase. Stephen Curley asked what gets cut to add money to this line item.
- Council on Aging – funding added to Outreach; this was grant funded. The Outreach person is now the Director.
- Veteran Services – the state reimburses the town 75%.
- Library – clothing allowance line item is for the custodian. Reference Librarian requesting to change from part time to full time – Library Director is requesting an additional \$28,000.
- Community Center overtime was in question. Mike said we don't have to give it to them.
- Mike also reviewed the Articles for the Annual Town Meeting. Advisory will request a copy from Sabrina Chilcott, Assistant to the Town Administrator.

Advisory thanked Mike for coming.

The committee reviewed and discussed the following correspondence:

- Social Media Guidelines for town employees and elected/appointed officials. It contains the best practices encouraged by the MMA. John Brown said it's vague but states public officials should be more responsible.
- There is a MMA Legislative breakfast in Fairhaven on Friday, March 2, 2018 if anyone can attend.

¹The Chairperson did not vote on these motion.

- The FY17 & FY18 Actual Budget received from Mike Buckley
- Debt Schedule received from Kathleen McCarthy
- Stephen Curley prepared a financial presentation for the April 30, 2018 meeting for town residents. Expenses since 2009 have increased, schools up 27%; Public Works up 28%; Benefits & Insurance up 72%. A massive increase; population only slightly increased. State aid is killing us 5% increase over the past 10 year period. The good news is that the town has already received \$100,000 in grant money since the signing of the Community Compact. Snow & Ice spending went down; Pembroke was much worse. General Fund FY15 versus FY16; Police 6.2%, Fire 5.5% (avg. 5.6%); School 53.0%; Public Works is low 3.3%. Health insurance is a fixed cost.

Upon motion moved by James McCollum and 2nd by Elizabeth Monks the meeting minutes of February 12, 2018 was

VOTED¹: To accept the meeting minutes of February 12, 2018, John G. Brown Jr. Stephen Walsh supported and Maria Karas the motion. Stephen Curley abstained.

Advisory is scheduled to meet with the Board of Selectmen on Monday, March 5, 2018 for the School Committee FY19 Budget Presentation. Advisory would also like to meet with the Police Chief, Fire Chief, DPW and Library Director to discuss FY19 Budgets.

The committee agreed to request a copy of the Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles from Sabrina Chilcott, Assistant to the Town Administrator.

Advisory will also send an email to the Board of Selectmen asking if they approved an override.

Advisory adjourned at 9:00PM. The next Advisory meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 5, 2018 at 7:00PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Curley, Clerk

¹The Chairperson did not vote on these motion.