

TOWN OF PEMBROKE
APPROVED
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES
30 APRIL 2018

Linda Peterson, Chairperson opened the meeting of the Advisory Committee in Pembroke Town Hall at 7:00PM on 30 April 2018. Also present were Stephen Curley, James McCollum, John G. Brown Jr., Stephen Walsh and Maria Karas

Absent: Elizabeth Monks

Linda adjourned the meeting to join the Board of Selectmen meeting.

Advisory joined the Board of Selectmen to discuss and review the Annual & Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles scheduled for May 8, 2018.

Stephen Dodge, Town Moderator thanked the BOS and Advisory, he noted this meeting is being broadcast live and recorded for future viewing on channel 15. He started by saying this is an excellent opportunity and benefit not aimed to obtain an outcome but a process and procedure.

There are 25 Articles, 10 of which are CPC and 5 for STM. The Consent Agenda for routine Articles 1, 6, 9, 23 and 26. Advisory will make the motion on Town Meeting Floor.

Article 2 – Michael Buckley, Town Accountant noted one change - re: Council on Aging Driver.

Article 3 – Budget by department with 51 line items with no 2 ½ Override. Note: a contingency motion subject to Override with five items/1 question on ballot. Advisory moves the lower figure. Stephen Dodge said any article is amendable within reason but there are consequences to amending i.e. Police, Fire and DPW budgets.

Article 4 – Water Enterprise Fund – moved by Advisory

Article 5 – Solid Waste Enterprise – moved by Advisory

Article 6 – Part of Consent Agenda

Article 7 – Establish revolving funds and set limits – moved by Advisory

Article 8 – Funding Article 7 – moved by Advisory

Article 9 - Part of Consent Agenda

Article 10 – BOS approve (PILOT) agreement – moved by Advisory

Article 11 – Property Tax MGL – moved by Advisory

Article 12 – Advisory By-law revision – moved by Advisory

Article 13 – South Shore community Action Council - \$5,000 – moved by Advisory

Article 14 – Recreation Commission to hire part time clerk – moved by Recreation Director

Article 15 – Library – amend Schedule C for Reference Librarian – moved by Library Director

Article 16 - Fire Dept. adding two additional staff – moved by Fire Chief

Article 17 – Police Dept. adding two additional staff – moved by Police Chief

Article 18 – Fund Police Cruiser – moved by Police Chief

Article 19 – DPW fund pavement management – moved by DPW

Article 20 – Fund Luddham Ford Dam projects – moved by DPW

Article 21 – Town Manager – moved by Town Government Study Committee

Article 22 – Stabilization Fund for Capital Projects – moved by Advisory

Article 23 – Part of Consent Agenda

Article 24 – 10 CPC Articles – Town Meeting Floor

Article 25 – add to by-law “right to farm” – moved by Robert DeMarzo

STM Articles

Article 1 – Transfers to supplement FY18 appropriations – moved by Advisory

Article 2 – Pay unpaid bills – moved by Advisory

Article 3 - Repair of school buildings – moved by Advisory

Article 4 – DPW - purchase dump truck – moved by Advisory

Article 5 – DPW - Installation of new water main – moved by Advisory

¹⁻² The Chairperson did not vote on these motion.

Stephen Dodge encouraged the residents present and listening to this broadcast to attend the Annual Town Meeting scheduled for Tuesday, May 8, 2018 at 7:00PM at the Pembroke High School. Get there early and get there.

Linda Peterson welcomed everyone to the 2nd Annual Financial Presentation to specifically discuss the financial state of the Town of Pembroke and some of the why and how we got here. She said Advisory selected this time and location so all officials are available to answer questions on any issues related to the town warrant articles. She turned the presentation over to Stephen Curley, Vice-Chair of Advisory.

- Steve began with an overview comparison from 2009 to 2018.
- General government expenses 3.39% to 3.22% down to bare bones.
- The smallest part of the budget is Public Safety 11.11% to 12.29%; schools down 59.56% to 53.90%. Benefits and Insurance are going up 7.2% a year. Revenue/state aid dropped from 32.88% to 25.21% of the budget. It's only going up 0.5% a year since the state changed the lottery formula. Revenue/Property taxes 59.49% to 64.18%. State aid by town is down.
- Excise taxes are a major factor of Free Cash. In 2009-2012 we were flat; in 2013-2014 people started buying cars again and we saw an increase.
- Free Cash and Snow & Ice deficit fairly close. The difference in Snow and Ice in 2011 was over \$500,000 to 2015 was over 1M. Local receipts in budget 2017/2018 added solar which increased the budget for local receipts to \$784,920. This was free cash but it's not going to be there in the future as the use of Free Cash to balance the budget is difficult to maintain.
- Stephen reviewed the DOR comparison of local services for 24 towns in area; snow & ice is 10% of budget.
- Police and Fire are right on. Education is at 53.006%; the average is 49.002% and the median is 49.127%. The percent of the budget for education has come down due to the 1.3M Override. Public Works is way below other towns. Fixed costs are higher due to the fact that Pembroke contributed 75% to employee's health insurance premiums. Total expenditures \$3,047.57 vs. median of \$3,056.68; lower half of spending vs. other towns. School enrollment 2008 – 2017 down 603; K-6 down 522; middle/high school down 81 and state aid goes down.
- Pembroke Stabilization is better than others; a lot have more money in their savings; little concern overall. Unemployment is down.

Steve opened the meeting up to questions.

- Patrick Chilcott, member of the school committee said enrollment has dropped but next 4-5 years enrollment will stabilize. Steve said he was not able to obtain birth rates.
- Libby Baked asked about data per pupil. Steve said 14 communities spend less than us; 341 towns are in this report.
- Bob DeMarzo said state aid dropped just over half of revenue. Snow & Ice can over spend at will; it's underfunded. Michael Buckley, Town Accountant made a recommendation to budget an additional \$25,000 per year to Snow & Ice and get more realistic.
- Stephen Curley noted that Pembroke now has a 5 year plan. Steve Cirillo, Professor at UMASS Boston who practices financial forecasting, capital improvement planning, financial policies, training, budget process, PILOT's and OPEB strategies presented a 5 year summary of projected revenues and expenditures for Pembroke last week.
- Maureen Robinson asked why Advisory voted favorable action and how much spending are we talking about. Stephen Curley said the balanced budget is \$62,471,460 with the Override it would be \$63,179,460. The town has \$94,000 left from the Silver Lake withdrawal and another \$73,000 which totals \$160,000 in savings which affects our bond rating. He said we go to Town Meeting with unified figures. She also noted that nothing in the town warrant says there is an override.
- Ben Bastinelli said that the override vote authorizes increased taxes by \$700,000+, so why so complicated. Dan Trabuco explained that the Board of Selectmen supports the override and voted to submit two budgets and consolidate to one question on the ballot. The tax increase for residents is approximately \$125 a year based on a \$375,000 assessed property. Libby Bates and Cathy Salmon explained that this override if voted would be added to the levy and stays there forever.

¹⁻² The Chairperson did not vote on these motion.

- Maureen Robinson suggested that health insurance for new employees pay more. Dan Trabuco said that the Board of Selectmen has heard from both the union and Advisory regarding this topic and both sides are mad at them. Stephen Curley said that benefits and health insurance increased 7.2% and revenue is increasing 3%; it's squeezing everywhere else.
- Stephen Walsh asked with the increase of the 2½ override are we hiring people to lay them off. Steve Curley said maybe in 2-3 years if the revenue is not there.
- Don Bryant said he has spent time recently with senior residents and they're concerned about property taxes and fear an increase. This has been a stunning experience for him. Libby Bates said Pembroke has been proactive in taking care of seniors over 65 years of age and they should talk with the Assessor's office and apply for abatement. Don said the amount to qualify is poverty.
- Stephen Curley thanked everyone.

Advisory adjourned from the BOS meeting at 8:59PM and reconvened at their meeting.

Everyone agreed that Steve did a great job with the presentation and thanked him. Steve will prepare a brief statement for Town Meeting.

Upon motion moved by James McCollum and 2nd by Maria Karas the meeting minutes of April 9, 2018 was

VOTED¹: To accept the meeting minutes of April 9, 2018, Stephen Curley, Stephen Walsh and John Brown, Jr. supported the motion.

Upon motion moved by James McCollum and 2nd by Maria Karas the meeting minutes of April 23, 2018 was

VOTED²: To accept the meeting minutes of April 23, 2018, Stephen Curley, Stephen Walsh and John Brown, Jr. supported the motion.

Linda handed out the assigned list to members reading the motions for the Annual & Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles.

All members received the email from Denise Baker, MMA regarding upcoming training workshops. Maria plans to attend the one scheduled for May 16, 2018.

The Advisory financials for March 2018 was reviewed.

The next Advisory meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 8, 2018 at 6:30PM at the Pembroke High School prior to the start of the Annual Town Meeting at 7:00PM.

Advisory adjourned at 9:25PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Curley, Clerk

¹⁻² The Chairperson did not vote on these motion.