

**Advisory Committee  
Meeting #3  
September 16, 2009**

Peter Cory, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Those present included Judi Donnelly, Virginia Ferko, Jack Haley, Kathy Macdonald, Barbara McMahon, Maura Murphy, Rich Page, Caren Parker, Steve Simons, Steve Sykes, Marc Taylor and Jason Whittet. Absent: Rick Hill, Derek Redgate

**Citizens Speak.** No one was present.

**Minutes.** Upon a motion made by Ms. McMahon and seconded by Ms. Parker, the minutes of September 9, 2009 were unanimously approved as written.

**Advisory Meeting Schedule.** Mr. Cory reviewed the revised meeting schedule which includes both tentative and confirmed capital budget presentations by boards and committees.

**Liaison Reports.**

Planning Board. Mr. Sykes reported the Planning Board is considering three items for Special Town Meeting including amendments to the Town's bylaws concerning retaining walls and improvements/additions to nonconforming structures or lots, and possibly also presenting the results from the department's bylaw re-codification work. Mr. Sykes is not sure if all these items will be on the final agenda for a Special Town Meeting, if one is held in the fall.

School Committee. Ms. McMahon reported the School Committee plans to address the Middle School Capacity issue with Advisory on September 30th. They hope to have an article presented at Special Town Meeting if it is held in the fall. However, they do not yet have the consultant's report, a presentation for which is scheduled for the School Committee next week. Ms. McMahon also indicated that the Committee discussed its turnback of \$1,786,000 from the FY09 budget. Questions were raised concerning the sources of these funds.

PBC. Mr. Taylor reported that the PBC reviewed proposed plans for the new Senior Center.

Playing Fields Task Force. Mr. Taylor reported that the Playing Fields Task Force discussed the application of field user fees which are typically disbursed to the DPW and the Recreation Department for maintenance and management of the fields. The Task Force is considering applying a portion of these funds towards the cost of the Sprague Field project.

Recreation. Ms. Murphy reported that the Recreation Commission discussed last year's turnback to the Town, which was approximately \$39,000 versus \$97,000 the previous year. Staff will be reviewing issues that contributed to the decrease including the number of summer camp counselors and counselors-in-training hired. They are also looking at ways to reduce costs, e.g., a reduction of catalogue mailings by encouraging website use.

MLP. Mr. Haley reported that MLP is on budget for its annual and five year budget plans. Staff hopes to complete the MLP garage in the next few years, which will

include administrative offices. The Light Board is considering increasing energy efficiencies by eliminating a third of the street lights and presenting this concept to the Selectmen.

**Advisory FY11 Budget Guidelines.** Mr. Cory initiated a discussion among Advisory members of FY11 operating and cash capital budget guidelines, with several alternative possible scenarios of revenues and expenditures presented, including that distributed by the Executive Director at the September 9<sup>th</sup> Advisory meeting. Among the issues that must be considered: the possibility of a sizable increase in health care costs, decreased State aid, and the validity of the key assumptions used in the Executive Director's model. Discussion ensued on the development of the guidelines and the various percentage scenarios considered by members.

One topic of extensive discussion was the State's Circuit Breaker reimbursement and the potential for a large gap in SPED funding for the School Department. There was also discussion concerning the Town's pension plan noting that teachers are not in the Town's retirement system (WCRS), however there are approximately 300 school employees who are part of the Town's retirement system. Relatively new Town employees contribute 11 percent of their salary, in essence self-funding their participation in the plan, which is similar to the teachers' participation in the Mass TRS plan. There was discussion concerning the \$2 million Town-wide pension contribution used in the key assumptions. Mr. Cory reported on his discussion with the Retirement Board Chair, who confirmed that the Retirement Board's recommendation for a \$1 million payment in FY10 and \$2 million payment in FY11 is not a legal requirement, but prudent financial management in light of the sharp decline in financial markets through the early months of 2009. The amount recommended for tax abatements was also briefly discussed.

The group discussed the tone of the guidelines letter, demanding rigor in keeping costs down and developing efficiencies, but also include the Committee's appreciation of Town employees and their hard work.

**Adjournment.** Upon a motion made by Ms. Donnelly and seconded by Ms. Macdonald, the Committee unanimously voted to adjourn at 10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Adeline G. Doherty  
Administrative Assistant