

Town of Newbury, MA

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Board of Selectmen's Meeting Minutes 4-16-13

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING
APRIL 16, 2013

Chairman Story opened the meeting at 7:05 p.m. with the pledge of allegiance to our flag. In attendance were Selectmen Story, Bear, Bulgaris, Mountain, Walker, FinCom Chair Frank Remley and TA Blais. The purpose of the meeting is to review the budget and warrants.

Blais presented a slide presentation of her draft FY14 budget ("Rebuilding on a Strong Foundation"). She listed "goals and priorities" which included reinstating public safety programs, developing a road improvement program, funding our OPEB liability, establishing a stabilization fund program, maintaining adequate reserves, addressing capital facility issues and enhancing communication with residents. She reviewed the operating budget totaling \$16.7 million which included increases to DPW, Public Safety and Human Services. Also shown were small increases in municipal spending and wages and a decrease in education spending, some of which depends on finalization of the state budget. Mountain asked about the anticipated date for word on the state budget and Blais advised the last year it was June which is after our town meeting. She discussed the fiscal challenges of revenue vs. expenditures noting that Newbury has only three sources of revenue (property taxes including 2 ½% annual increase plus new growth, local receipts and state aid). Our available funds ("free cash") increase was due to the intensive collection of back taxes and miscellaneous settlements. Our debt service target is under 10% and our stabilization target is 5+% as recommended by DOR.

Municipal department budget changes were reviewed. Blais noted that Whittier's assessment was due to an increase in student enrollment from Newbury (14 students this year). Kevin Hunt our Veterans agent is looking at regionalization of this department, she advised and he will keep us in the loop. Revenue generating and cost saving strategies were briefly discussed. The PILOT Task Force while appointed does not seem to be a working committee as yet. Blais will check on meeting schedules and the Chair of the committee. The budget and accomplishments were summed up noting priorities of adding back staff and programs lost over the past seven years, most facility issues addressed except for the Police Station, incorporating a CPC funding program and identifying the challenges ahead. Mountain suggested our next priority should be a COA facility.

The Special Town Meeting Warrant and the Annual Town Meeting Warrant were reviewed article by article so that questions, if any, could be addressed. Drop dead dates were discussed. The Town Meeting is scheduled for May 21st. The STM warrant must be posted by May 6th.

Remley asked about a joint meeting of the Finance Committee and Selectmen for final recommendations. A joint meeting will be held Tuesday, April 30th at 7 p.m. The Finance Committee will meet on that evening at 6 p.m. to review and discuss the final warrants.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m. on a motion by Selectman Bear, seconded by Selectman Walker and voted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen Sirois, Admin. Asst.