Select Board Minutes
Wednesday, March 16, 2022
6:00pm

The Select Board Regular Meeting was held virtually in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L.c.30A. S.20.

Select Board participants:
Stu Sklar, Kara Minar, Erin McBee, Alice von Loesecke, Rich Maiore
Town Department attendees:
Town Administrator Tim Bragan, Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro and Finance Director Jared Mullane

FY23 budget discussion
Alice von Loesecke explained her biggest concern was with the assumptions used on the look ahead. She was able to meet with the school budget committee which was helpful. In addition, she learned more details from Finance Director Jared Mullane and is more comfortable with the approach.

She shared with the Select Board members some of the relevant highlights:

- Budgets are 3.25% higher than in years past
- On the Town side employee wages will increase at 3%
- 2.5% increase for expenses which in years past was 0 or 1%; more realistic
- Health care will increase at 5%

She is confident is this budget as long as there is collaboration moving forward and a commitment to stay at these levels. She indicated projections are based on the level of budget for this year.

She understands the challenges for the school department but noted any additional ESSR funds being used this year are one time funds. If those funds continue in future budgets the expense will be included however revenue will go down. She emphasized ESSR/ARPA funds will not be an option in the future. The school department understands this as well and expects additional housing in Devens at Emerson Green will help increase the Devens fund that could be used to offset losses from ESSR.

Erin McBee asked about new growth figures and expects those figures may be conservative.

Finance Director Jared Mullane reaffirmed what von Loesecke had conveyed.

At this time, von Loesecke is not included to suggest any changes to the budget. Her fellow board members were in agreement.

By a roll call vote, von Loesecke – aye, Minar – aye, McBee – aye, Maiore – aye, Sklar – aye, the board voted unanimously to accept the FY23 budget as recommended by the Finance Committee according to the version proved by finance director as of today.

The meeting adjourned at 6:20pm.