

BOARD OF SELECTMEN – WORK SESSION – SEPTEMBER 8, 2009

I. Call to Order/Roll Call

Vice Chairman Mary Lyman called the **Board of Selectmen's Work Session** to order at 8:00 P.M. at Memorial Hall in the Memorial Hall Library. Present were: Selectman Teichert – Y, Selectman Lyman – Y and Selectman Stabile – Y. Chairman Vispoli and Selectman Major arrived after the Call to Order. Also present was Town Manager Reginald Stapczynski. The meeting was duly posted.

II. Opening Ceremonies

Vice Chairman Lyman asked for a Moment of Silence in memory of Charlie Wesson, former Selectman and Finance Committee Chairman and member, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Selectman Stabile spoke about what a great individual Charlie Wesson was. He said Charlie gave a lot of himself to the Town and made significant contributions. He was a member of the Finance Committee for six years also serving as Chairman and served as a Selectman for twelve years also serving as Chairman during that time. He said Charlie will be missed by many and he set the bar for those who volunteer and give back to the community.

III. Town Manager's Evaluation

Vice Chairman Lyman highlighted the remaining **segments of the Town Manager's** evaluation to be finalized. The Board edited areas of the evaluation on Leadership and Planning, Recruitment and Selection, Negotiations and Collective Bargaining, Board of Legislation Relations and modified the wording of the overall assessment. The Board agreed to hold one more meeting to complete the evaluation.

IV. FY-10 Budget

Chairman Vispoli said the purpose of the Work Session is to review the **Town Manager's** draft of the FY-10 Budget. He also shared highlights of the meeting held that afternoon with the School Committee and facilitator, Lyle Kirtman of Future Management Systems. Mr. Kirtman guided them through areas to impact savings without reducing services, areas that could be combined to realize savings, as well as ideas on creating better relations between leadership teams. Chairman Vispoli said it was a healthy discussion and although it may not impact the FY-2011 budget, it will be helpful in planning for 2011.

The Town Manager addressed the budget deficit stating new growth has been re-calculated and revenues increased in the area of personal property tax in the amount of \$950,000 of the \$1M originally anticipated.

The School Department deficit is \$920,471 as of today with a possible savings in transportation of \$600,000. Technology funds in the CIP may be used to cut the deficit if not used for the lease/purchase of laptops. Other areas of possible revenue income would come from the hotel/motel local options tax, additional school reductions, and circuit breaker funds to offset the School Department reductions which could bring the remaining school deficit down to approximately \$320,000.

The Town Manager has asked all Department Heads to share in the \$500,000 reduction **to meet the Town's deficit.**

The Police Department will not be filling 1.5 vacancies and plans to reduce overtime by re-shuffling personnel and holding trainings in-house. Fire Rescue has three firefighter vacancies with the possibility of two more retirements in January. Overtime is also being scrutinized. With over 1/3 of the staff in supervisory positions, the Board talked about restructuring possibilities before more promotions are made in Fire Rescue.

General Government will reduce overtime, legal services, Medicare expenses and a variety of office expenses. Community Development & Planning will reduce their personnel by one with a retirement in February or March. The Public Works Department plans to eliminate leaf collection, shut off street lights and is discussing ideas for concessions for personnel.

Selectman Lyman asked that DPW Director Jack Petkus look at alternatives to keep leaf collections. Possible considerations could be issuing stickers for leaf pickup, shorter pickup schedules, use of outside vendors or any other area where \$42,000 could be saved. She also requested Departments include information on alternative sources for services being cut that residents could explore. Selectman Teichert asked about the elimination of trash pick up at the public housing areas in 2011 and if the Town could bill them for trash pickup. He also asked about the change of past practices.

The Plant and Facilities Department is expecting \$16,000 from the sale of stickers for the Bald Hill Compost Area. Selectman Lyman said more volunteers are needed at the site on weekends. She also asked about the part-time Project Manager for Bancroft School and would like to have Joe Piantedosi address this situation.

The Library has one full time vacancy and is not replacing the Assistant Director for FY-2010. Staff will be reshuffled to meet the hours of service. Selectman Major said we need fewer managers and more workers and to consider spreading duties out. If needed, additional librarians could be brought in, in place of hiring an Assistant Director in FY-2010.

Youth /Elderly/Community Services Divisions are all facing reductions in expenses. Selectman Lyman requested a report on class sign-ups for all three divisions with a grid showing the cost of the instructor and the number of participants in each class.

Water Department revenues were down last year and there is a warrant article being submitted for the October Special Town Meeting for a modest rate increase. The Board believes there is still an issue around take home vehicles and the number of vehicles the Water Department has.

The Board discussed the cost of health benefits for part-time employees and legal ramifications if hours were reduced. The Town Manager explained Chapter 150E and the process required by law for negotiating wages/hours/conditions of part-time employees. The Board requested that the Town Manager ask the Human Resources Director to attend the next Board meeting and present information on health insurance costs for part-time employees and the number of part-time personnel employed by both Town and School. Selectman Lyman asked the Town Manager to approach our Legislative representatives and request that they revisit the definition of part-time. The Board also requested that the Town Manager and Superintendent of Schools invite legal

counsel to attend the next Tri-board meeting to discuss what can be done contractually to reduce hours of part-time employees and to eliminate the health care benefit.

Bob Willard, 76 Tewksbury Street, asked if both the Fire and Police Unions have agreed to the reduction in overtime. The response was no, they have not agreed yet.

Selectman Stabile motioned to adjourn the Board of Selectmen's Work Session. The motion was seconded by Selectman Major and was voted 4-0 to adjourn. Selectman Major left the meeting before it was adjourned.

The meeting ended at 9:48 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo
Recorder