

Selectmen's Meeting
Monday, April 1, 2019
Town Office Building

Attending: T. Fydenkevez, D. Pierce, S. Bergeron, S. Patch

Others: E. Crowe, B. Bennett, D. Fulton, M. Shaw, B. Barshefsky, K. McFarland, A. Falbel, D. Modestow arrived late

Meeting of the Sunderland Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee was called to order at 6:30 PM.

ENERGY COMMITTEE – AGGREGATION SURVEY

Mr. Falbel gave an overview of the aggregation survey they would like to make available to the community and will be distributed through a variety of sources. We must review the plan and review the proposed survey. The Energy Committee believes the survey will assist the board on aggregation priorities and ongoing discussions regarding the group arrangements the town would like to pursue. Mr. Bergeron said he would like to see price stability over a 3-year purchase period. Residents would like to know what the options are. The more towns that participate regionally, the prices are better. Would the town be able to know the price differential between the 3 options? It was noted that only the supplier services change, Eversource is still the distributor. The Board took the matter under advisement and would like to hold on the survey distribution until the April 8, 2019 meeting.

FY20 BUDGET DISCUSSION with FINANCE COMMITTEE

School administrator and community members were in attendance. The School Committee discussed one revised budget scenario which includes \$90,000 reductions. Principal Barshefsky reviewed the reduced services which would be realized with this reduction. Mr. Fulton noted a provisional budget was formulated in the event of a failed override. Their first budget which includes an increase of \$354,114 includes the override and a \$50,000 buffer in school choice for transitioning students. Mr. Barshefsky expressed concern that the \$254,000+ may not be enough to resolve all issues going into next year and may put the school in the same position for FY21. The override proposed budget would move all salaries from school choice funds. The school cannot always count on Circuit Breaker funds every year because we are not always eligible to receive them. Mr. Fydenkevez asked if the audience had additional questions. The audience asked if the lower budget combines using school choice funds and reducing services? What are the reduced services, and can you count on this money or what is the variability? Mr. Barshefsky responded that very little in the budget that allows for unforeseen services. He also noted that there has been a significant increase in student population which has contributed to the situation with additional teachers, etc. needed. Next school year, there is an expected 21% increase in SPED students which is above average enrollment for the state. The school budget amount needed is \$354,114.

For FY20, the total general government budget is up 1.9%. The school budget is up 10%. The school budget is not up significantly, the reality is school funding sources shifted to the town vs. previous sources used. Basic town budget has stayed the same for several years now. Mr. Fydenkevez noted some town employee wages aren't in line with where they should be and they wanted to review the study this year. Personnel Committee is almost done with the salary reviews. It would take about \$43,000 to bump up the salaries of positions needed which can't be done this year. Town departments have been reduced from the original budget submissions. The audience noted that while there is support for the school, there is concern that everyone

be aware of town department cuts from what they felt was needed to operate. There are also employees in town that are 20-35% underpaid the minimum salary of comparable positions in the region. The budget proposed is affecting a lot of other areas of the town.

Finance Committee recommends \$200,000 override, Vote 4-0.

Motion Mr. Bergeron to notify the Town Clerk of \$250,000 override. After discussion, Mr. Bergeron amended the amount to \$200,000, Second Mr. Pierce on amended amount, Vote 3-0. Amended Motion to notify Town Clerk to include on Annual Town Election \$200,000 Override Ballot Question, Vote 3-0.

At Town Meeting, the Budget vote as being presented to include the \$354,114 increase will be contingent on a passed override vote at the Annual Election. If the override does not pass, the school will meet at the Board's May 6th meet to discuss next steps. \$260,454 is the non-override budget presented by the school.

REMINDER – LAST DAY TO REGISTER TO VOTE

Mr. Fydenkevez reminded residents that the last day to register to vote for the Annual Town Meeting and Annual Town Election is Saturday, April 6th, 9am-3pm located at 7 South Main Street. There are other options on-line to register as well. Call the Town Clerk's Office for further questions at 665-1442.

SELECTMEN UPDATES

- Mr. Bergeron reported the Capital Planning Committee recommended 3 items. The next meeting is April 9th.
- Mr. Pierce announced a Personnel Committee is scheduled for next Tuesday. Finance Committee asked additional questions regarding the salary survey that was conducted. They suggest additional funds for increase town employee salaries should be included in the override request.
- The Ditch committee needs to be rescheduled due to a lack of a quorum. Number of folks have not been sworn in who have been appointed to serve on the Ditch Committee.

Motion Mr. Bergeron to approve Minutes of 03/25/2019, Second Mr. Pierce, Vote 3-0.

No timeline for when Taylor Davis will begin final work on the Riverfront Park.

LED Streetlights have been installed. Check light by elementary school message board for possibly equipping with new LED. Ask Police Chief to review streets for adequate lighting with new fixtures. Request Police Chief and MassDOT to review lighting on Rt 116 areas for sufficient wattages, etc.

Review ATM warrant at next meeting.

Motion Mr. Bergeron to adjourn at 8:25PM, Second Mr. Pierce, Vote 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Sherry Patch
Town Administrator