

Hanover Advisory Committee
550 Hanover Street
Hanover, MA 02339
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 15, 2017 – 7:00 pm

Opening:

The meeting was opened at 7:00 p.m. by Edward Hickey, Chairman.

Committee Attendees:

Edward Hickey
Angela Blanchard
Emmanuel Dockter
Joan Port-Farwell
Wayne Moores
Sandra Hayes
Jerry O’Hearn
Gavin Little-Gill

Absent

Brandon Freeman

Other Attendees:

Anthony Marino, Assistant Town Manager

General Discussion

A general discussion was held with regard to the Town Manager’s budget presentation held on Monday, February 13, 2017. Concern was expressed by committee members relative to the pattern of underestimating of revenues and over-estimating expense line items which appears to be generating a large amount of free cash. Ted Hickey noted that the Town’s recently certified free cash is within the range recommended by State but expressed concern regarding the amount of free cash derived from over-estimates of projected expenses set forth in the operating budget. The committee also discussed the fact that free cash is currently utilized as a source for many capital appropriations and if the Town reduces free cash it may force the Town to borrow for capital improvements in the future. The committee discussed possible ways to reduce free cash derived from over-estimates of projected expenses while ensuring that funds are available for unexpected circumstances.

After much discussion, it was decided that the Committee members would meet with the department heads during our regularly scheduled meetings to go over each line item in an effort to identify areas where the budget could be reduced.

Emmanuel Dockter asked Tony Marino if he could assist in facilitating the delivery to the committee of an electronic copy of the detailed expenses and expenditure estimates contained in the Town Manager’s budget in an Excel or other electronic format. Mr. Marino noted that he had been copied on an email exchange between the Town Manager and Ted Hickey earlier in the day in which the same request was refused by the Town Manager. Mr. Marino asked several questions about the reasons for the committee wanting this electronic data. Mr. Dockter explained that we hoped to use a spreadsheet containing this data for our internal analysis and debate. Further, we intend to rely on the spreadsheet and to come up with the “additional column” of recommended budget line items contemplated by the Town by-laws. Mr. Marino indicated that the Town Manager was firm in his position on this matter, at

which point Mr. Dockter volunteered to input the data manually to create a spreadsheet if necessary. After some debate, Mr. Marino indicated that he would consult with the Town Manager on the matter.

The committee then went through the various sub-sections of the operating budget and attempted to identify how much time would be required for each department head meeting. A general outline of the schedule was discussed and an ambitious goal for having the review completed by April 12th was established.

Next Meetings

The Committee's next meeting will be held on Thursday, March 2, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. Fire Chief Jeff Blanchard and Police Chief Walter Sweeney will attend to discuss their budgets with the Committee. Additionally, on March 1, 2017, the Advisory Committee members have been invited by Evite to meet with the new owners of the Hanover Mall.

Adjournment

Angela Blanchard made a motion to adjourn. This was seconded by Emmanuel Dockter. All were in favor, and the meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.