APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes

For the Meeting Held On January 20, 2015
Meeting Time : 6:30 pm

Location : Council on Aging – Media Room
Address : 328 North Main Street, East Longmeadow, MA

Meeting Posted On: **Day:** Thursday **Date:** 1 / 15 / 2015
(48 hrs required)

Is Meeting Being Recorded by Digital Recorder: Yes X No
The Minutes of this Meeting are being taken by: Marge Larocca

Committee Members: (check if attended)

Eric Madison	✓	Russell Denver	✓	James Broderick	✓	James Walsh	✓
Dawn Starks	✓	Rocco Carabetta	✓	Sam Pizzanelli	✓	Sara Menard	✓

Attendees: George Kingston, Ralph Page, Alessandro Meccia, Diane Bishop, Christine Saulnier, William Johnston, Marge Larocca.

Did the Chair release any prior Executive Session Minutes?	Yes		No	x

Dates of Executive Session Released :

TOPIC / MATTER #1
Budget Review – Planning Board

Summary of Matter Discussed :

- The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed the members of the Planning Board to the meeting.
- Mr. Page distributed a document that showed the costs related to the functions of the Planning Board. Mr. Page was asked to define what a special permit is, and why there was a larger increase in special permits in 2013 from 2012. Mr. Page described special permits, and said that the increase was related to a change in zoning bylaw for home base trades. Mr. Page stated that there is a continual increase in the functions of the Planning Board and the revenue obtained goes directly into the General Fund. He stated that the budget of the Planning Board is minimal, and 1% of their budget covers the cost of stamps. Mr. Kingston gave an explanation of the supplemental budget request for the Planning Board.
- Discussion followed about Planning Board contractual salaries, appointed salaries and the increases shown in the supplement budget request.
- Mr. Kingston expressed a wish to have a personnel manager to rationalize the grades for employees.
- The Town Accountant gave an explanation of the Planning Board's supplemental budget. Discussion followed about the basis of regrading and the amounts shown in the supplemental budget. The Town Accountant communicated that there was an adjustment in the salary number for the supplemental budget.
- The Chairman asked why there wasn't just one budget for the office of Planning, Zoning and Conservation. Mr. Page explained that Conservation and Zoning fall under the purview of the Board of Selectmen, and Planning falls under the Planning Commission. He said that to include all three departments under one budget would simplify the budget.
- The Chairman stated that to include all three under one budget would not impact how

the Appropriations Committee does budget planning, and asked if there were any objections in doing so and asked for a motion.

- A motion was made for purposes of budgeting to combine the Planning Board, Conservation Commission and Zoning Board into one budget. The motion was seconded and all were in favor.
- Discussion began next about the salary of board members and discontinuing of health insurance for elected officials.
- The Chairman asked if there were any things before the Community Preservation Committee for funding and Mr. Kingston stated that there aren't any articles currently for the Community Preservation Committee to consider. He stated that there was only the standard housekeeping article on allocating the new income to different areas and the date to receive any articles to vote on is at their next meeting on the first Wednesday in February (*February 4th).* Discussion followed about the uses of CPC funding.

Documents or Exhibits for this Matter:

- Planning Board functions

Votes Taken Under this Matter :

- A motion was made for purposes of budgeting to combine the Planning Board, Conservation Commission and Zoning Board into one budget. The motion was seconded and all were in favor.

TOPIC / MATTER #2

Budget Review – Board of Assessors

Summary of Matter Discussed :

- The Chairman welcomed the Director of Assessing and members of the Board of Assessors to the meeting.
- The Chairman stated that the budget request submitted by the Assessors was overall a 1% budget, and asked if there were any unsettled contracts that will be open in FY16. The Director stated that there are only two employees and there may be an increase in full time salaries. The Chairman stated that there may some increase based on contract negotiations.
- Mr. Broderick asked if there were any additional in regards to revaluation, and the Director explained that there is a request for a $10,000 warrant article due to a directive received from the Department of Revenue for recertification of all real and personal property. The Director distributed a Notification of certification from the DOR detailing the implementation of the next triennial certification. The Director explained that the project will be undertaken over the next two years prior to being recertified in 2018, and that it recurs about every 10 years.
- The Director spoke about the Senior Abatement work-off program and explained the requirements of the program. She noted that they would like to open more spots for the program over the current seven. She wanted to inform the committee as it impacts the overlay account. The Chairman stated that he is familiar with the program and would support an initiative to increase the numbers and that it's a win-win for the people that participate and for the town.
- Ms. Saulnier gave a description of the uses of the overlay account, and that she felt that increased program spots would not overly impact the account. Discussion followed about particulars of the program. The Town Accountant noted that they are trying to increase more spots with word-of-mouth, and gave a description of some of the duties that might occur within the program.

Documents or Exhibits for this Matter:

- Notification of certification

Votes Taken Under this Matter :

- None

TOPIC / MATTER #3
General Discussion

Summary of Matter Discussed :

- The Chairman stated that as the budgets are gone through, he would like them to be placed in categories: need more work to be done on, or satisfied to help minimize work that needs to be done. It was determined that once contracts are settled, then all the budgets will have to be revisited.
- Discussion began about grading and regarding procedures. The Town Accountant spoke about people expressing concerns about inequities in the grading of positions, and gave a description of the procedure of regrading according to the Town Union Contract. She added that the department heads have been seriously discussing the lack of H.R. problem, and as a result, letters have been and will be submitted to individual boards requesting that action be taken.
- Mr. Denver gave a description of a system for classification of jobs and salary ranges. The Chairman stated that the Town's government is fragmented, and if one board sets a policy, the other boards don't have to follow it.

Documents or Exhibits for this Matter:

- None

Votes Taken Under this Matter :

- None

TOPIC / MATTER #4
Update & Review FY16 Sources & Uses

Summary of Matter Discussed :

- The Town Accountant distributed the document FY16 Sources & Uses and gave a description of the updated data. Discussion followed about what information the committee would like to see added to the document.
- A discussion began about the current amount of local aid, and the appropriation for the Celebrations line item and about the July 4th parade being a separate warrant article. The Town Accountant continued to detail the information that was updated in the FY16 Sources & Uses and described what still needs to be updated.
- The Town Accountant spoke about the requirement of having an actuarial review of the OPEB liability account done this year, and she would have more information at the next meeting as to where it has been budgeted. Discussion followed about methods to fund the cost of the review.
- The Town Accountant spoke about estimated savings for plan changes in health insurance. Discussion followed about the different plans that are available.
- The Chairman asked the Committee to think about the current Sources & Uses if the budget goes through, and to discuss what the budget discussion might have to be in taxing to the max levy. It was determined to meet with the Board of Selectmen on February 17th to bring forth the concerns regarding the max tax levy.

Documents or Exhibits for this Matter:

- FY16 Sources & Uses

Votes Taken Under this Matter :

- None

8:25 PM: Motion to Adjourn

Next Meeting: January 29, 2014 – 6:30PM – Council on Aging – Conference Room

MEETING FOLLOW UP:
Last three years of valuation
PRIOR MEETING NOTES:
Average cash balances – where are they at?
Note: Set date for Auditor's budget forum
Committee Goals :
Health Insurance Plan Designs
Health Insurance for part-time Elected Officials
Meal Tax generation
Professional Development Class
Increase OPEB Appropriation
Establish a Capital Planning Budget