

Town of Brookline
Advisory Committee Minutes

Sean Lynn-Jones, Chair

Date: April 5, 2016

Present: Carla Benka, Clifford M. Brown, Carol Caro, Lea Cohen, John Doggett, Dennis Doughty, Janet Gelbart, David-Marc Goldstein, Neil Gordon, Kelly Hardebeck, Alisa Jonas, Janice S. Kahn, Steve Kanes, Bobbie Knable, Fred Levitan, Robert Liao, Pamela Lodish, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, Mariah Nobrega, Michael Sandman, Lee Selwyn, Charles Swartz,.

Absent: * Stanley Spiegel, Shaari S. Mittel, Sytske Humphrey, Amy F. Hummel, Christine Westphal, Jennifer Goldsmith, Harry K. Friedman, Angela Hyatt.

Also attending Allison Steinfeld, Planning and Community Development, Fire Chief Paul Ford; Sandra Debow-Huang, Director of Human Resources and Melissa Goff.

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM.

1. REVIEW OF REVIEW OF FY 2017 OPERATING BUDGET – BENEFITS/GROUP HEALTH

Janet Gelbart gave an overview of the subcommittee report.

Q: Revised group health insurance – the school budget says 55 new hires

Q: Prospects for renegotiating the Town's contribution rate?

A: Need a 70% agreement with the other side. Health consultant who came to the last meeting, gave us some information to begin talking with them.

Q: What does the Town do to incentivize employees to opt out of Town health insurance plan?

A: Opt out is a one-time payment of \$1,500 for individuals, \$2,500 for families. People are aware of it and do take advantage.

Q: How many employees do opt out? It may be generous, but how do we know it is the right amount to persuade people to opt out? Need to do the math to determine how much is ultimately cheaper than to pay for coverage?

A: More concern about people spreading money to people who were never on health insurance plan. Requirement to be on for a year and then go off to get opt out payment.

Melissa will provide a split sheet of the Town/School benefits.

Q: What is the latest word from the Bond Agency regarding OPEB?

A: Whether or not we were following our fiscal policies. Moody's was just looking to see that we were increasing our appropriation. They don't talk about other communities during the call.

Q: Do we have anything in writing reaffirming our AAA rating?

A: Yes, it is on the Town website.

Lisa will distribute the link to the AC.

Q: Delores Mitchell, head of GIC, is retiring or has retired – is that likely to lead to any changes?

A: Town Administrator Mel Kleckner is one of the GIC commissioners and is involved in the hiring process of her replacement. He isn't hearing anything right now. Once there is a new hire, we will learn more about the plans and goals of the GIC.

Q: Remind us what the Add back is for again

A: For Planning and Community Economic Development long term planner position and one crafts person in the Building Department.

Q: When we will get mediation with Fire Department – what is the timeline?

A: Arbitration will go into the fall and will affect this year's budget. Third night of Town Meeting is our first JLMC. We will potentially bring it to November Town Meeting.

Q: where are we with all the other contracts? Do you expect contracts to be available by the time Town Meeting convenes?

A: Filed for mediation with AFSCME – will file with mediation for police tomorrow and Teamsters soon.

A MOTION was made and seconded to recommend approval FY17 Fringe Benefit budget of \$56,848,195.

Vote: With a vote of 19 in favor, 0 opposed with 0 abstentions, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the FY17 Fringe Benefit budget of \$56,848,195.

2. REVIEW REVIEW OF FY 2017 CIP PROPOSALS – PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Carla Benka gave an overview of the report of the Capital Subcommittee.

The Gateway East Project is not something that is being voted on, but the write up regarding costs to date and how CDBG funds have been allocated is useful to review.

Alison gave some additional information regarding the Gateway East Project. Still one area that remains unfunded, expect State to pay for full construction costs.

Q: Is there any impact on the Gateway East Project for Children's Hospital?

A: No because CHB has already contributed there part. Coordinating and juggling many parts.

Second request for \$100,000 of Major Parcel Study which is the second part of a two part study – this would be to hire a consultant to look at large properties in Brookline (mostly privately owned) and identify current use, permissible use and possibly desired use.

A MOTION was made and seconded to move favorable action on funding \$100,000 for a Major Parcel Study.

Vote: With a vote of 19 in favor, 0 opposed with 1 abstention, the Advisory Committee recommends favorable action on funding \$100,000 for a Major Parcel Study.

3. REVIEW OF FY 2017 CIP PROPOSALS – FIRE DEPARTMENT

Carla noted that there are three CIP requests to consider.

16. Tower #1 Replacement – replacement of ladder truck that was purchased in 2006. It required repeated repairs and was problematic. Traded in so only need \$800,000 to replace it instead of full \$1M. Current plan is to purchase a “twin” of well-performing Ladder 2.

Q: Where will it be housed?

A: Babcock Street.

Q: How does our equipment fit in with our firehouses?

A: Some with a shoe horn. Apparatus getting longer and larger; with older stations it can be problematic. Station 6 (Hammond Street) has trouble, floor needs to be supported. Babcock is the most modern station, has the width and floor strength. There may be a possibility to develop a future plan for station consolidation.

Q: Is the biggest equipment the best choice for Brookline given size of our streets?

A: We do have to be careful. Either need to have a bigger station or less requirements on the apparatus. In Europe their standard is smaller but they also drive smaller vehicles. You can't necessarily go to a manufacturer in the US and request one of the European size trucks.

17. Fire Station Renovations –

18. New Fleet Maintenance and Training Building – current building is inadequate and inefficient. \$4.5M requested for final design and construction of the current facility at Station #6.

Q: As a Precinct 15 representative, delighted that this is happening.

Q: Is it possible or even feasible to combine repair and maintenance with DPW?

A: No, there are different qualifications and timing of getting work done could be in conflict with needs of DPW and needs of Fire Department. A genuine public safety issue and safety issue for the fire men.

Q: What are NFPA – compliant standards?

A: Organization that outlines a number of safety rules and standards for training.

A MOTION was made and seconded to recommend the following for FY17 Fire Department CIP requests: \$800,000 for 16 Tower #1 Replacement, \$670,000 for 17 Fire Station Renovations and \$4.5M for 18 New Fleet Maintenance and Training Building.

Vote: With a vote of 20 in favor, 0 opposed and 1 abstention the Advisory Committee recommends funding the following FY17 Fire Department CIP requests: \$800,000 for 16 Tower #1 Replacement, \$670,000 for 17 Fire Station Renovations and \$4.5M for 18 New Fleet Maintenance and Training Building.

Next Meeting: The next meeting of the Advisory Committee will be on April 7.

Upon a MOTION made and seconded and voted unanimously, the meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Documents Presented at Advisory Committee Meeting:

CAPITAL SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT ON PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND FIRE DEPARTMENT FY17 CIP REQUESTS

GATEWAY EAST PROJECT REPORT

PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT ON FY17 OPERATING BUDGET – BENEFITS/GROUP HEALTH