

Name of Committee: Override Study Committee Municipal Subcommittee

Meeting Date: March 3, 2014 Time: 5:30 p.m.

Meeting Location: Town Hall – Room 310

Members Present: Janet Gelbart, Michael Glover, Jim Stergios, Ann Connolly Tolkoff

Others Present: Nancy O'Connor

Topic: Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held January 14, 2014 and January 30, 2014 were approved.

Topic: Discussion of Recreation Department reporting

Janet Gelbart reported on the Advisory Sub-Committee meeting regarding the Recreation Department budget. Much of the discussion centered on the fees charged for the Soule early education program and the level of cost recovery for the department as a whole. The Recreation Department has one revolving fund for all of its programs except for the golf course and sets its fees according to market surveys and demand. There are surpluses and losses among the funds in the program. The goal is to cover all of the direct costs and as much of the town subsidy for administrative expenses as possible. The golf course is at 100% cost recovery (direct and indirect); the recreation revolving fund is at 100% of direct and 66% of total (including indirect). Some of the costs, such as use of the pool by the school department, are not recoverable. The Populations /SPED task force is looking at the fees for the Soule program because they are substantially less comparable programs, and roughly 50% of the BEEP program fees. Because there is high demand for the Soule program, there is a potential to raise these fees substantially and pick up more of the town subsidy. The subcommittee agreed to refer these items to the Revenue subcommittee.

Ann Connolly Tolkoff indicated that the governor's budget included additional funds for early education targeted for low income communities. She said that while Brookline did not qualify when looking at the town as a whole, there are segments of the population who would qualify. The School Department and our state representatives should be encouraged to investigate creative approaches to secure some funding for Brookline residents.

Topic: Discussion of Fire Department information provided by Chief Ford

Michael Glover reported on his meeting with Chief Ford regarding fire department manning. Brookline, Boston, and Cambridge are the only communities that have 4-person manning instead of 3. The NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) standard requires 4 people per company defined as personnel under the supervision of one officer operating one piece of equipment, arriving at the same time. Under its

current configuration of stations and equipment, Brookline does not have sufficient coordination and management for 3-person manning. National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) data indicate the 4-person manning achieves savings in response time.

Janet asked what the remaining Massachusetts municipalities do if they are all out of compliance with the standard. Jim Stergios agreed we should do some benchmarking to other towns. Massachusetts has the highest per capita total cost for firefighters/fire inspectors/ fire supervisors/EMTs than any other state. Brookline's costs are higher than comparable towns. Ann indicated that it would be good to speak with Newton since they do 4-person manning all winter, but only 3 the rest of the year. How do their responses differ?

Nancy O'Connor addressed the committee as the mother and wife of fire fighters. She is fearful for the safety of her sons if the manning were reduced. She related several anecdotes of a life being saved because of the availability of a fourth man on the scene. She indicated that Chief Ford came from outside of Brookline and is an adamant defender of 4-person manning.

Ann raised the issue of emergency calls and the times an engine goes to the scene unnecessarily. Jim responded that the costs are the same if the men are in the fire house or out on a call. It might make sense to recommend that the Town pay for a triage analysis to see if there are efficiencies to be gained.

Topic: Discussion of full OSC presentations

Michael asked the committee to start thinking about what tasks remain and how we pull our report together. Janet said she had asked Sean for the cost per hour of library service but he had referred her back to Chuck Flaherty. Chuck said savings depended on when and where the hours were reduced. Michael will survey the group for additional meeting times to discuss these issues.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.