

Madison Advisory Budget Committee Minutes November 24, 2014

Members Present: John Arruda – Selectmen Rep., Mike Brooks, Ron Force, Ted Kramer, Cheryl Littlefield, Bill Lord, Ray O'Brien – School Board Rep, Josh Shackford, Hersh Sosnoff –Chairman

Others Present: Sue Stacey – Deputy Town Administrator, Melissa Arias – Town Administrator, Jeff Eldridge – Fire Chief, and Chris Young – recording secretary

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Sosnoff called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** A typo was noticed in Chairman Sosnoff's name in item 1. **CALL TO ORDER** of an extra "s" in the middle of his name. Mr. O'Brien moved, seconded by Mr. Force, to accept the minutes as amended. The motion passed.
3. **REVIEW OF TAX RATE HISTORY:** The budget committee reviewed a document that Mr. Force brought to the meeting outlining the history of the Town of Madison Taxes over the past 24 years. The document showed that the Town taxes have for the past few years been on the low end of the spectrum.
4. **REVIEW PROPOSED SCHOOL STAFFING:** The committee reviewed another document which was again supplied by Mr. Force detailing the proposed school staffing for 2015-2016 and previous staffing for the past 10+ years. The document showed that the school is working to keep staffing in proportion to the students that are enrolled.
5. **REPORT OF FIRE TRUCK COMMITTEE:** Mr. Lord filled the budget committee in on the process of the fire truck committee and the recommendations it had for the town.

The fire truck committee began by evaluating the current truck's condition. They had it assessed for mechanical and frame integrity. The report came back that it was sound and would last another few years. The truck's fire fighting apparatus was then evaluated. Upgrades could be made to the fire fighting apparatus to a total of \$50,000-65,000, but were not essential.

The next step was to send out specs to 26 companies and receive bids on a new truck. Four bids were returned ranging from \$523,000-574,000. None of these bids met all the required specs. Additionally if funds were available

demonstration models that are essentially new, could be purchased for bargain prices. These are available for limited periods of time and not predictable. The fire truck committee had the following recommendations for the Town:

1. Authorize the purchase of a replacement truck in 2016 for an amount not to exceed \$425,000. The Fire Chief will identify the specific truck for Selectman approval and purchase.
2. Approve warrants in each of the years 2015 and 2016 for \$50,000 in each year to be added to the current fund of \$214,000. The balance of the purchase amount above the then-existing (\$314,000) balance in the fire truck capital improvement fund would be provided through financing.
3. Request Selectmen to task the Fire Chief to actively develop and execute fund - raising programs which would provide additional funding e.g., private, corporate, & grants to facilitate the purchase of a fire truck. Additionally, task the Fire Chief to begin a recruiting campaign to add volunteers to the department.
4. Authorize the Selectmen to release the existing truck fund for use in purchasing a replacement truck prior to 2016 if the Fire Chief finds an economic, competitive, and attractive opportunity prior to 2016. The balance of the purchase amount above the then-existing balance in the fire truck capital improvement fund would be provided through financing.

The Committee's rationale was as follows:

1. This recognizes the eventual need to modernize the Madison fire-fighting equipment and improve fire-fighter safety.
2. This recognizes the lack of immediate urgency to replace the existing fire truck, given the written evaluations of professionals/experts, after their evaluation of the current truck.
3. This provides the Selectmen with Town pre-approval, so that if the Fire Chief identifies a truck that is immediately available in 2016 e.g., demonstration or stock truck, they may act quickly.
4. This recognizes that the bids received for a new truck did not meet all the firefighting needs identified in the specification, yet were all in excess of \$520,000.

5. This will allow for the purchase of an available replacement truck with potentially greater capability but at less cost to the taxpayers e.g., a demonstration model meeting/exceeding the current specification.
6. This allows time for the Town to accumulate funds slowly in order to save for the purchase amount vs. immediate financing with tax dollars.

Mr. Brooks raised the issue that the Selectman would require a town meeting to authorize spending for the fire truck, especially since some of the funding would have to be raised in the future. This is a technicality that would have to be sorted out.

6. **REVIEW OF MADISON FIRE/RESCUE BUDGET:** Mr. Arruda started with a comment that the town was redoing the standard operating procedure of the fire department which would the reimbursement policy among other things. Contracted Services costs were reviewed and it was in the process of being altered as the internet service for the fire house would be combined with the town's service. Dry hydrants were also an increased budget item. The town has two that are still waiting to be installed and on in need of repair. The fire department buys one every year to be installed in new locations to increase the ability to fight fires. New equipment was also up. The fire department must replace various pieces of equipment as they age. Several air packs, gas meters, and uniforms must be replaced this coming year.
7. **REVIEW OF TOWN SPENDING 2014 YTD:** The Town is 92% of the way through the year and has only spent 79% of the budget. There are many items that are typically not paid until the end of the year, such as reimbursement to fire fighters. Some of the budget is for snowplowing which has not started yet. A failed experiment to crush glass using the front end loader bought some time with the need to remove the recycled glass from the solid waste transfer station. The library is working on its remodeling and will be using its warrant article funds by the end of the year.
8. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** No public was present to comment.
9. **OTHER BUSINESS:** Mr. Sosnoff read a statement about the function of the advisory budget committee to be placed on the committee's webpage and asked for approval from the members. Mr. Kramer moved, seconded by Mr. O'Brien, to put the statement on the webpage. The motion passed.

10. ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Kramer moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Force. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 7:15 PM.

The next meeting will be on December 9 at 5:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Young

Minutes Approved: not yet approved