

As is customary the Chair or in this case Vice Chair typically provide an overview of the proceeding meetings following up to this meeting.

The Town Budget has increased from the budgeted 2016 amount of \$3,699,895 to a projected 2017 budget of \$3,858,139 this is an increase of 4.3%. The Town budget has been adjusted to reflect the lower fuel costs.

Included in the Town Budget is the cost for two new Police Cruisers with a price of approximately \$31,000 each spread out between two budget fiscal years. not including the change out fee.

There was also a budget line reduction in the animal control officer line to bring it more in line with the actual spend of that line.

There was also considerable discussion regarding the highway maintenance line item and if it was keeping pace with the roads. There was a discussion about adding an expendable trust similar to the Winter Maintenance Trust that was created. At the end of the discussion no action was taken regarding adding or reducing this line and the Highway Department budget amount was kept at the same amount as the previous budget.

There was an increase in the police department budget primarily due to salary increases requested and the previously mentioned police cruisers. A considerable increase was noticed in the Workers Compensation Insurance line however due to the circumstances of this item, there can be no real adjustment made to the line. The full time librarian position was also adjusted in the new Town Budget.

Parks and Recreation had a number of items adjusted which included the hiring of part time staff, the new Hartford Brook field and moving old Home Days over to the revolving fund.

And now on to the School Budget.

First and foremost, and I want to be very clear about this, none of the members on the MBC are anti school, or anti education. Many have spouses or children currently in the education system, or their children have successfully gone through the Deerfield education system.

Since there is already much negative information being spread out to the public, and at least one negative petition warrant article being circulated about the MBC, as we begin discussion of the school budget, it's important to put the recent actions of the MBC in perspective.

The School budget portion of the Deerfield tax bill has increased from 66.8% in 2010 to 68.9% in 2016. Since the school budget comprises nearly 69% of our overall tax burden in Deerfield, it is not out of line to closely scrutinize this budget. In fact, we owe it to the Deerfield taxpayers to do just that.

When the new budget was proposed by the school board in excess of \$13 Million Dollars (a dollar increase of nearly \$480,000 from the previous year) it was readily apparent that there was a substantial increase in the budget from the previous year with little or no back up for the reasons behind the increase. After some prodding by the MBC the school board did provide some back up information regarding their requested increases.

Much discussion continued back and forth over the course of several meetings regarding the various line increases, including the \$142,000 addition to SAU staff which Deerfield has the lions share to financially support. This is a new position that we only became aware of during our discussions.

In the end it was determined that the School surplus for 2016/2017 was going to be \$568,580 of which \$190,000 was going to be retained by the School Board leaving a net surplus balance of \$378,580. This surplus amount essentially translates to every single household in the Town of Deerfield giving an interest free loan to the School board in the amount \$232.57.

Given the fact that the School Board has demonstrated that they can return a surplus of over a half a million dollars on a budget of \$12,538,426 the question became, why do you need more this year when you didn't spend all the money you had in the budget last year? A question that remains unanswered. It was felt that the School Board

could have proposed a flat budget, or even a budget with a slight increase, and still have enough surplus funds to take care of ALL the financial obligations of the upcoming new fiscal year.

In a recent 2015 decision in Brentwood regarding the Brentwood School Board vs. the Brentwood Municipal Budget Committee, the Courts held that since the School Budget is managed to the bottom line, the Municipal Budget Committee can reduce the bottom line of the School Board proposed budget.

Based on this information, the Deerfield MBC by majority vote decided to reduce the proposed School budget bottom line number by \$395,365 from \$12,933,791 to the previous years budget number, voted upon last year and approved by the Deerfield voters of \$12,538,426.

In taking this approach, this will allow the School Board the ability and flexibility to use their best judgment in which budget lines to reduce.