

Board of Selectmen & Sewer Commissioners'
Budget Meeting Minutes
Room 204 Town Hall
January 9, 2010

Present: Chairman Knibbe, Selectmen Rosenzweig, Berry, Gowing and Friedrichs; Finance Committee Members Chairman Herman Kabakoff, Pat Clifford, Mary Ann Ashton, Bill Mullen, Pat Easterly, Steve Noone, Doug Tindal, and Brandy Brandon

Convene Meeting: 8:10 Chairman Knibbe opened the Budget Meeting, staff will be presenting the effects of a level funded budget cut to 3% and then an additional cut to 0%. These cuts were made to satisfy the Finance Committee point of view an extremely helpful written statement which was given to the Board.

General Overview: Steve Ledoux asked department heads during this Budget Season to focus on the ramifications of the 3% and 0% budget cuts. Starting in August when the staff prepared to present their Budget for the September Budget Meeting on the hill, the original departmental requests were for \$27.3M of operational and \$8.6 M of capital, including 8 new positions. The Budget Team approached this task dedicating days to reducing budgets and defining level services. Then ALG convened and set parameters using \$1.9 M in reserves, keeping the split with the schools remaining the same and using a 10% cut in local aid as a guideline. Steve Mills has stated that he hears from Roger Hatch the state will be level funding, which is much improved from what we were working towards. The Level Service Budget was then established by the Budget Team at \$28.1M in operations and \$758K in capital requests. It is important to hear what these cuts will mean. The Community Service Coordinator will go to 40 hours as it was felt here services were an absolute necessity given the economic times, the Green advisory monies will stay both in 3% and 0% budget, funding for the second year of the shuttle grant, subsidies to Nursing Services and Council on Aging will stay. There is still a hiring and freeze currently five open positions and three part time nursing positions are on hold. So if the current budget looks like we have monies left it is because of these issues where we have already cut. The philosophy of the cut from 3% to 0% was from the budget working group; that it was important to Public Safety and Human Service needs preserve.

Memorial Library - Marcia Rich – 3% leaves the library intact. The 0% impacts the library significantly. There would be reductions in the personal services category – attendant implications. If one peaks to closing doors, work still needs to be done, as checking books are only a part of the labor. The account for library materials is level funded resulting in a decrease of buying power. The New Network assessment formula factors in circulation, pushing up Acton's share of the costs. Level funding the MIS equipment and software account (520400) will limit the ability to continue and expand use of time saving software. Closing the Library for a day would affect the ability of staff to attend and provide workshops and the ability to increase library visibility on the web.

Chairman Knibbe - The library has recently provided self check out has that helped with the work flow. It frees up a person who might spend 11% of her time on check –out, it helps but it is not a huge difference. If you close the library does it make the work load lighter or just increase work on the days the library remains open? Marcia, people will come on a different day and the overall work load remains the same. Herman Kabakoff – Is the statutory level 15% of the total budget to qualify for state certification, at -% do we qualify? Steve Ledoux added, at 0% we are right at the 15%.

Pat Clifford - Circulation creates a burden-- how do we help that? Marcia suggested limitation on books, but is against penalizing some of the less able in terms of income and students to have books.

Kent Sharp – Marcia was asked about meeting rooms. Should we consolidate one person to reserve conference rooms? When booking for Town hall Boards and Committees Municipal Properties (Andrea) manages the reservations. The School Department has set aside two rooms for town use that Municipal Properties uses for reservations, but anyone else (non-profit groups) like relay for life and literacy groups are charged. The Libraries rooms were booked 618 times for the meeting room use. We have no surplus of meeting rooms. Steve Ledoux – Overall we are doing a study on consolidating back room functions, like room reservations.

Selectman Friedrichs - 15.6 FTEs is greater than any other department for front end work. How much time is spent on planning such as new workshops? You can keep the desk open and stop planning new

programs. Marcia-- if I don't plan it doesn't happen. Child and adult programs have been requested in the surveys we have done. I would be a very expensive front desk person; 5-10% of time is spent in planning. Marcia further stated the 3% budget removes from Municipal Properties funds for changes to the HVAC system at the library which would have reduced costs for the library making funds available for other items.

West Acton Citizen's Library - Jennifer Friedman – The Library has one employee, herself, and a \$1000.00 budget. The Library added 3 hours on each Sunday of Farmer's Market to its current hours. Staffing is handled by volunteers with no additional cost to the town. It is open for the public to have access to a bathroom but it does bring in additional business.

Pat Clifford – Can the library provide any extra meeting space the town is looking for? Jennifer replied they have a meeting room for 4-6 people which is very small and not ADA accessible. Inside doorways are the problem, it is useable but difficult.

Selectman Rosenzweig, Is the Tot Time Program on a sign up basis? Jennifer replied it is Toddlers with parents and limited by sign up. We are turning people away, but, due to space, it is the only way to handle it. Selectman Gowing - why two library organizations in this town? Jennifer replied because it always has been that way. John Murray replied that it is part of the charter.

Doug Tindal – The Windsor Building what could you do with it? We would do Story telling, additional educational programs such as the story teller doing a workshop, workshops for the 5-7th graders and move the Tot Time program to that building. Doug-- have you done a cost analysis for assuming responsibility of the building. Jennifer, no, I would just be a small percent of that buildings use.

Selectman Friedrichs – The library operates on funds from private donations. Jennifer yes about \$2000.00 from private donations, about \$2000 from Citizen's Library Auxiliary and about \$2000 from Friends of Acton Library for a total of \$5000 annually.

Highway – Russell Robinson, spoke to the Department of Public Works and Highway Department on the impact of a zero based budget. A 0% budget would seriously impact the sidewalk construction program. They were planning on spending \$500K and \$100K would be cut. Paving of roads additionally would be cut. Traditionally the town paves every 15- 20 years on average (nation wide standard). If you add an additional 5 years to that schedule you will see a change but in 10 years you would see very serious deterioration. The department has saved the town money by using in house construction crews. They have saved monies with this approach on the Hayward and Main intersection. Proposals came in at \$161K and the town crew completed the job for 85K. Russell noted we have had no growth in the department for years.

Bill Mullin praised the department on the fantastic outcome of the Hayward/Main job for the innovative approach and the consideration to the neighborhood. He gave praise to the Selectmen for allowing the process.

Steve Noone asked what % of paving is done outside. Bruce Stamski replied all the street paving.

Pat Clifford asked how the new treatment of ice on the roads was working. Bruce said it was working well that they monitor salt and use a lot less than the other towns in our cooperative per mile.

Chairman Knibbe asked if you are saving on sidewalks with in house crews will you continue to build in that way. Bruce would like to continue to do it in house as you can save monies and save problems with neighbors in dealing with the neighborhood yourself. You are able to react to change and keep a better relationship with the town folks.

Selectman Friedrichs asked when will you stop adding roads. They are really only adding small roads now that are private and the town does not plow those roads. The only ones we will possibly need to deal with in the future are roads in the Robbins Mill development.

Brandy Brandon – what affects the roads most. Bruce replied weather and heavy use.

Bill Mullin – The Dump truck Vehicle should have a useful cycle of 20 years, this one is 23 years old and has cracks and rust and break down. Can you use it 5 more years? Russell --it depends on how much money you want to put into it. Bruce said it depends on when and how it breaks, we are home in bed and the plows are out in the cold night. Selectman Gowing asked, what happens while that vehicle is out of service-- what is the cost to the town? We would have to contract out to get a replacement vehicle.

Doug Tindal – Can you make a plan for us to review replacing 20 year old roads.

Engineering - Cory- Engineering supports 137.5 miles of Roads in Acton and care for 50.8 miles of sidewalks. Highway additionally plows 109 miles of road and 31 miles of sidewalk. They support the

Sidewalk Committee and the South Acton Train Station Advisory Committee. The zero budget has an impact on Engineering-- as Steve Ledoux has noted we are down one open position; that is a Bachelor of Science in Civil Eng. We would like someone by spring as that is when our need is the greatest. MaryAnn Ashton asked about the commuter lot having a loss of revenue due to the broken meters. If we are funding a new system what is the payback. Bruce replied coins need to be collected every 2 weeks and meters are 15 years old and get stuck so it is the total cost of running the lot; it is very labor intensive. We could charge more but at some point you cannot ask a commuter to carry \$4.00 worth of quarters each day and we could not collect that many quarters. Meter money comes from the commuter lot parking fund. Bill Mullin stated that there are limitations on use of meter fund for the maintenance of the lot. Mr. Mullin asked where in the budget are the Engineering department vehicles? Bruce replied, in the Highway budget.

Council on Aging - Jean Fleming The 3% budget is doable, the 0% budget would adversely affect us. Minuteman Services is a regional agency that provides services to 16 towns of which Acton is one. The state funds these services but they look to towns for contributions. The Council on Aging supports Minuteman in the following areas; Protective Services, Meals on Wheels, Long Term Care Ombudsman, SHINE Health Benefits Counseling (providing space each week for the SHINE counselor to meet with seniors needing help with health insurance, pharmacy questions and setting up schedules), Money Management and the Senior Citizen's Law Project. In addition The Council provides Information and Referrals, Case Management and Home Care Services, Caregiver Support, Transportation, Nursing Home Screening, Friendly Visitation and Meals, Courses and Activities at the Center. Additionally the Center has started an innovative seniors driving program. The 0% Budget would take away the newsletter, an important means of communication with seniors, by reducing the number of mailings from 9 to 5 newsletters. (The number of 9 is down due to budgetary cuts from 12 a few years ago.) The new printer has decreased the cost of the newsletter and the Center does encourage email and about 300 are sent that way, but it is not realistic that all seniors will do this. Kitchen appliances will be affected. They have been used everyday since opening in 1994 and will start to need a schedule for repairs/replacement. The van budget has a marked increase of 30%. Not only increased rider ship but the time to get around town has increased. Utilities have increased but the seniors are cognoscente of utilities saving. Space is their biggest problem; they have moved their computer room to the dining room. Increasing the hours for the outreach coordinator has really helped tremendously.

Steve Ledoux – the Community Service Coordinator has been a tremendous help to the Council on Aging. They have traditionally have had to stop and handle many needs of non-seniors; fuel crisis, food crisis, financial crisis, children in crisis, etc that have needs not being met. Now the Outreach Coordinator is beginning to provide seriously needed help. Carol Steiner the senior outreach worker can spend time on seniors.

Selectmen Friedrichs – Are the expenses of the COA van all covered by the enterprise budget? Jean – No it is covered by the amount from MBTA and van fares.

Bill Mullin – Are many seniors aware of the senior tax relief available, could you make people more aware.

Steve Barrett - Volunteer donations are down. The seniors continue to use the work program for tax deferral.

Building – Frank Ramsbottom – The Building Department supports Commission on Disabilities, Historic District Commission, The Historical Commission and share in support of the Board of Appeals. Administratively the Building Department secretary takes in and processes Site Plans for the Board of Selectmen and Street Cut Permits for the Engineering Department. A review of building permit history show that while new construction permits are down, overall permits are up as a result of renovations and remodeling. The Building Department executed 2,054 permits for gas, electric and plumbing and 665 permits for buildings. His department supports all signage and banners in the town initiating both from the by-laws, the Selectmen policies and signs in the right of way. Frank noted his vehicles and documentation system needs. Frank also reviewed cost reductions in his department, currently the local inspector works reduced hours. They have instituted fee increases in building fees, electrical fees, plumbing fees and periodic inspections in the last 24 months. The state has implemented program to teach the new stretch building code but they have implemented a stronger more stringent energy code. This will call for more inspections and more time spent at each inspection.

Chairman Knibbe asked about staff reductions in the Zero budget. Frank stated he would need to close the office during office hours while conducting field business. His department is sharing functions currently. Steve Ledoux – The overall strategy is to increase fees to meet costs.

Lauren Rosenzweig asked if vehicle costs for his department would be included in fees. Frank replied they are coming up with a formula for vehicle maintenance/replacement.

Pat Clifford asked if we are at the point that we can get our GIS completed and up-- she would ask for this to be done.

Doug Tindal-- would one FTE person get your microfiche electronically updated?

Selectman Gowing-- hybrid vehicles are 32K but is there a plan in place for replacing our vehicles in this fashion. Frank said yes over time we are headed in that direction.

Planning - Roland Bartl stated the Planning Board supports the Selectmen, the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Planning Board, the Economic Development Committee, the Community Preservation Committee, the Historic District Commission, Assabet River Rail Trail, Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, and The Comprehensive Community Plan on \$250K of which 90% is salary and wages for 3.5 FTEs. Planning also has a quarter FTE devoted to Community Preservation. He noted that at this time expected revenue from Community Preservation is down. Planning has requested staff support; they would like to have a Preservation Planner to assist the Historic District and the Community Preservation Committee. They would handle the administrative process, keep up with the legal issues, and in general develop a consistency in that area. This request is not in either the 3% or 0% budget.

Pat Clifford asked what that would cost. Roland replied about \$28K.

The 0% budget will greatly affect the service and operation of our department. They have put printing and postage down to zero but this is not sustainable. Many citizens are using the web so that budget item can be down a little. Notices will not be sent and web site will be used but services cannot be sustained in that way.

Selectman Friedrichs questioned if fees currently cover the cost of applications. Roland replied it might not --it definitely needs to be reviewed.

Selectman Rosenzweig commented that Comprehensive Community Plan has and will continue to take a lot of staff time.

Doug Tindal wanted to comment on the excellent staff support Roland has in the Planning Department. Each and every person in the department is knowledgeable and helpful. In particular he is impressed with the professionalism shown by Kristen Alexander.

Fire – Chief Craig spoke to the Fire Department operating budget, salaries and OT in the book is the 0% based budget. The population shifts has resulted in calls increasing and especially in the number of simultaneous call, specifically as population shifts to older citizens. This change dramatically affects our budget, as we have been level funded for several years. Our Capital request are for protective equipment, MDT/GPS to vehicles, (similar to laptops in police cruisers.), for the shift commanders vehicle. Last year we did receive revenue for a second ambulance but no staff was added with that; so we are shifting personnel a lot. In an effort to reduce expenses we are in the process of applying for a grant to study the possibility of Regional Dispatch. Emerson hospital is out of the paramedic business so now studying with ten towns how to form and what the cost savings would be in regionalizing this service.

Chairman Knibbe we have dual ambulance how often are both in use. Chief Craig replied they have only both been in use 2 months but 70/80 times a year they could be called out at the same time. She asked about the additional request for a FTE Deputy Chief. The current one spends time on inspections and now we need a deputy to spend time on fire prevention issues as that is complex.

Herman Kabakoff asked about the revolving account, the reply was it moved to the enterprise fund at town meeting.

Selectmen Rosenzweig asked--do you get out to the schools and senior center regarding fire safety and prevention? The Chief spoke to his Safe program at schools which is funded primarily from a state grant program, additionally the Lions Club other possible donations as the program is limited by the amount of outside funding sources, rather than the budget.

Mary Ann Ashton the OT in 0% percent budget is reduced further. What is happening to the need for that coverage? Chief Craig stated it might result in the temporary closing of a station from time to time.

Police – Frank Widmayer – The Police Department receives support services and helps fund the Domestic Violence Services Network, The Committee for Restorative Justice, The Motorcycle Program, Crosswalk Enforcement, and Cops in Schools all of which have previously been funded through state grants. Additionally grants have paid about half of the cost for officers' cell phones. Add to the items listed above the fact that the state has failed to provide traffic lights at promised locations such as Brookside Plaza and made cutbacks in traffic details that resulted in a direct loss to Police Department. I spend much time burdened with contracts, bargaining and labor relations hearings. The severe cuts from the state's failure to fund the Quinn Bill have made negotiations costlier and more difficult than ever before. The Deputy Chief is functionally needed for the most basic operations of our department. The position was funded three years ago at Town Meeting but never filled. I have asked for less than a 1% increase in budget. That is what I feel is necessary to operate services safely. I did not get a 3% budget and the 0% budget is devastating. The town has gone through many changes and difficult situations with an increase in population and shifting demographics, there are a lot of apartments, and various people moving in and out of town resulting in more 911 calls. There is a need for my officers to have cell phones; only 14 out of 35 people currently have the necessary phones. They need them for investigations, scenes of accidents and to be called in for emergency shifts. Dispatch is a major problem; the department is in need of trained Emergency Medical Dispatchers. If the zero % budget is approved the Police Department will need to cut Emergency Medical training and dispatch hours to make up the difference. This will leave only one dispatcher at the desk and without training it would be an uncertified dispatcher. We are sacrificing safety and someone will die if this situation occurs.

Chief, the staff should be 2 dispatchers 24 hours a day. So cuts would result in having one dispatcher alone.

Selectmen Friedrichs, how many man the Fire Station at night? Chief Craig, they have 10 all night long. Our portable radios need to be replaced as the technology has changed considerably from analog to digital. Kent Sharp – Do you need the \$15,000 money for the radios out of both the capital budget and the regular budget?

Chief Widmayer, No, it doesn't matter where it comes from we need one or the other, but not both so only one \$15,000 amount.

Chairman Knibbe - The request for cell phones is cut out of 0 percent budget? Yes, a \$3,000 cut was made. Selectman Friedrichs, so you will loose $\frac{3}{4}$ of your cell phones and how does that affect you?

Chief, I will not be able to contact people that I need during off hours.

Brandy Brendon, does the unified radio system help police at all? Chief, not yet we are going to a new phone system and Mark Hald can explain that.

Herman Kabakoff, for the cost of 21K we need to find that money especially money for dispatchers and 3K for the phones.

The Police Chief explained the part time dispatchers cover two shifts a week and do not help towards the full time need. So the situation is really much dire than it appears.

Doug Tindal, how are union contracts progressing? Steve replied the town is in mediation not near settlement.

Steve Ledoux added that the Community Services Coordinator has really helped the part of the community that is so down and out and need a place to go. This resource is invaluable, whether it is financial help, physical help or mental health. Chief Widmayer fully supported bringing this position to full time.

Selectman Rosenzweig stated that the coordination between the Police Department and the Community Services coordinator is very good as the Police Chief is able to direct the Laura to where the help is needed. It is a huge help to his department.

Information Technology – Mark reviewed the progress of the GIS implementation plan. Due to spending freezes in FY09 and FY10, we are in the second year of layer development instead of the third. Current layer development includes the storm water drainage network and the sewer system. This is the second year that we have deferred adding a GIS/database coordinator position. The GIS system became available to the public in May 2009, and there is a link to it on the Town's web site. The voice over IP project is progressing, and the municipal telephone budget was transferred to I.T.

I.T. is assisting finance and the schools to expand the financial system package to include employee and citizen self service. Citizen self service, which includes online payments, is being tested in-house right now. The 468 Main Street facility, recreation point of sale, the town telephone system, the nursing service and the memorial library computers have been, or are being added, to the department's workload.

I.T. reduces expenses by using thin clients instead of desktop computers, virtual servers instead of physical machines, and consolidation of telephone and cellular costs. The self service systems will hopefully cause a reduction in printing costs, as well as expanded use of DocuShare to more committees.

Selectman Gowing asked if there is funding for training is included in our software updates. Mr. Hald replied that the GIS does include training. Town Hall has run out of space for people and paper-- this program will be a step to help to address this problem.

Municipal Properties - Dean Charter spoke to the fact that the air conditioning improvements were cut from Memorial Library and long term they will need to cut 10% utility costs from all Municipal buildings. The budget will also cut the custom tree work and the newly accepted Tree Program which is a safety issue to prevent street tree hazard. Sprinkler system in the Public works building is being requested again as a mandatory need. A fire would be a \$7.5M dollar loss. The town acquires buildings and can think of nothing to do with them, but it is Municipal Properties job to keep them safe and in working order. Our department would like to encourage the town to take in property but not buildings as they are magnets for vandals.

Doug Tindal inquired about the house on Woodbury Lane, how much would it cost to make it useable? Dean it would cost about 200K to make it useable. Only a small portion of that house is historic and if that is what we preserve it is too small for any real use. Selectman Rosenzweig would like the Comprehensive Community Planning effort to explore why people specifically wanted to save each of the historic homes like the one on Woodbury Lane. What was the original intent and the most important aspects to be saved? They then could make a more global decision on what to do with them.

Steve Noone, what happened on 8 Piper Lane? The thinking was we would sell the house Dean replied. Steve Ledoux suggested that Piper Lane road frontage could be added to keep the land for preservation, we could sell the house. Steve Noone stated decisions have been made on Morrison Farm as the study has been completed. Are we moving forward there? There had not been an update on that study from the committee.

Pat Clifford is concerned about security.

Selectman Friedrichs stated that the Alarm system on the municipal building could be used on the other buildings. We need list of buildings the town owns with depreciation and maintenance schedules. She wanted to hear about the DPW truck mileage. Dean explained it is only 40,000 but it is the rust and the heavy use that has it in such poor condition.

Natural Resources – Tom Tidman/Cathy Fotchman representing Conservation and Recreation spoke to the budgets. Their department supports Middlesex Chamber of Commerce, the Lions Club, Danny's Place, American Cancer Society, Sri Lanka Association, Acton Chinese Language School and the Outdoor Lighting and Education Committee. Their department maintains 160+ acres of Cemetery land and 60+ acres of Recreational fields. Town Boards and Committees that they support are Cemetery Commission, Recreation Commission, Conservation Commission, Open Space Committee, Land Stewardship Committee, Morrison Farm Re-Use/Feasibility Committee, and the Friends of the Acton Arboretum Committee. Looking at a 0% budget would result in cutting two summer people from their seasonal camp program and cutting all merit pay at the end of year. For trail maintenance they would continue to look at grant opportunities. Field maintenance and equipment, which they are always in need of and share with other departments, maybe do some in-house repair work. Their capital request is for the back hoe purchased in 1989 and seriously needs to be replaced. Herman Kabakoff - why are you asking for what appears to be a \$20K increase in spending? Tom replied that in the spring a lot of spending is done for example that is when the land stewards start to work, field maintenance is required and expenditures start at NARA. Have you had success in getting grants for maintenance through the MMA or the like? The land stewards do our grant applications when something applies. They also use Eagle Scouts very successfully to accomplish projects. One of our problems with cemetery equipment is that it is kept outside. We have been trying to get a building built for that equipment; it would take about \$200K. You will note an increase in our budget for beaver control, it cost about \$200. an animal. We are usually dealing with four or more of these animals at a time. Pat Clifford asked if the requested back hoe can be shared with highway. At cemetery there is a need to fit in small places and do light work; we can help highway in some instances but their trucks are too big and heavy for our use. Selectman Gowing, do we look at both used and new trucks? The Town Manager answered yes we ask the engineering department for advice.

Cathy noted that she has been working at reducing seasonal staff, furloughs to seasonal staff and the redesign the supervisory roles at NARA, town owned parks and playing fields, resulting in a 6.6% reduction. They have had a continual flow of donations to events such as concerts and activities at NARA. Chairman Knibbe mentioned the possibility of consolidation of the catalog with the Community Ed catalog mailing and enrollment process. Cathy responded that somewhat their needs are different as one is a summer based program as opposed to the schools with a year round program. We have decreased the money to produce the catalog, saving \$2K by going out of the local area for printing. Chairman Knibbe stated that service is difficult as it is hard to have to apply in person. Cathy stated now we are looking in to software to implement on line credit card and application payment. Schools use a different package that is much more costly. Selectman Friedrichs understood that we are up and on line with our payments. Cathy said one can call in with a credit card but cannot go on line and complete the transaction yourself and the software charges for each transaction. Selectman Friedrichs asked how much of this budget goes strictly to recreation. They will detail the \$600K for Doug Tindal. Selectman Gowing asked how we are doing with playgrounds. Cathy is working on the plan; recreation commission must look at safety, ADA accessibility, and placement of new playgrounds. Safety items will take priority.

Year: 2009--Acton Recreation Dept.
 TJ O'Grady 3rd Anniversary Event
 Fishing for Fun at NARA Park (up to age 14)
 Dog Day Jubilee
 Family Movie Night
 Lions Club Fair at NARA Park
 Danny Juice Music Fest!
 Classical Concert
 Annual Family Campout
 US Air Force Band:
 Afterburner! Classic Rock Concert
 July 4th Concert featuring the Blushing
 Blushing Brides Concert: July 4 with warm-up band
 Face Paint
 July 4th Fireworks
 Reign of Motown: Scooby Snax Band
 Flower Power: Classic Trax
 Summer of Love: In the House
 The British Invasion: Beatles for Sale

Beach Party Blast: 60s Invasion
 Sri Lankan Festival!
 Elvis Alive and Well with Oldies Show
 Tanglewood Marionettes Show
 Acton Day
 Winter Carnival
 Middlesex West Chamber of Commerce 5K Run
 OLEC Star Party Community Outreach
 Monster Bash
 Relay for Life Community Outreach
 Numerous Bus Trips Offered
 Numerous Show Tickets Offered
 Old Gold Rugby Tournament--large event with direct assistance
 Wedding & Corporate Outing Assistance--Large events with direct Assistance
 Drum Circle Community Outreach
 Model Rocket Launch Community Outreach

Human Resources - Mary Ann Fleckner completing her first year as Human Resource Director is to present Veteran Services, Celebrations and the Human Resource Department.

Veteran's Services will remain in place with the 0% or 3% Budget. The majority of funding in this department handled by Dore' Hunter is for housing, medical and miscellaneous expenses. The town receives reimbursements of 75% from the Commonwealth for those expenses.

Celebrations funding has dropped significantly from 2009. In FY 11 the town has been forced to drop Flags, Wreaths and Flowers for Patriot's Day and Memorial Day. I would request that line be added back into funding.

Human Resources, while the budget has not changed considerably the operations and responsibilities have changed significantly. These include newly mandated duties for Police. With the completion of the Commonwealth's Civil Service Reform, the time spent in processing one candidate will jump to about 20 hours. Additionally, the town is now self-insured and we are hoping to see cost savings. Human Resources is now doing the administrative work that the insurance carrier had previously done. This includes injury determination, interacting with the Doctor, hospital and ambulance provider, as well as negotiating prices and bill payment. Additional unfunded mandates State Ethics Laws, on-line filing of EEO and self-serve on-line filing for tracking Veteran's Services all take considerable time with no additional staff.

New regulations are updated regularly for example the recent ones regarding FFML and Cobra. These require interpretation and time with employees to distribute. The necessary advertising budget has taken a 51% cut in FY11. Our employee recognition program has taken a 72% cut. This at a time when employees and their family need to know their hard work and dedication is acknowledged and appreciated. These employees graciously donated monies to the Town's SERVE Program, the gratitude was overwhelming. My request is for a Human Resource secretarial position is critical, it was vacated in 2008.

Accomplishments that this department is proud of in these difficult times:

- Instituting a training and education unit for employees. To date 9 sessions.
- Department heads (10) have been met with for reviews and job descriptions updated for the first time in two decades.
- Created an Orientation Program for new hires.
- Created a totally new Orientation Program for New Seasonal Employees at NARA including a piece called "Meet the Town Manager" to encourage young adults to consider a career in Public Service.
- Completely refilled all terminated employee files.
- Went live with Mass Municipal Personnel Association's Compensation Survey System, a statewide compensation survey tool.
- An Employee Recognition Committee was established to make recommendations to the Town Manager.
- Created a strong working relationship with MIIA's compensation unit to significantly reduce time to get employees back to work.
- Worked with the Town Manager to assure each employee has an Annual detailed performance review.
- I am an active member of the Mass Municipal Personnel Association interacting with HR counterparts ensuring that Acton has a voice at the table.

Selectman Gowning was impressed that the Serve program has taken off so successfully. Serve means, Residents through Voluntary Employment.

Selectman Rosenzweig does hear and is impressed that people will fund raise for the 275th

Dore' Hunter – Massachusetts has supported veterans economically since the revolution. Funds provided for by Chapter 115 from town to Vets are so scant that could not live in Acton on these monies. On a positive note, monies start quickly with Chapter 115. The most important part of this job as Veteran's Service Officer is working through the Veteran's Administration which is a lengthy difficult process.

Health - Doug Halley – Has found it difficult to get to a zero budget as the state continues to pass on Mandates with no supporting revenue. Public Health Fees include Tobacco, tanning, body and massage salons, 6 camp related, 33 different Sealer and Weights fees, 28 fees for Hazardous Waste, Underground Storage, 25 for Food Service, and approximately 70 different Sewage/Septage fees. With the continued state staff reductions the burden falls on the towns. Mandated fees carry fines making compliance necessary. His department has requested expanded hours for the Community Service Coordinator as a top priority. They have requested a new vehicle a second Prius as the old one (60,000 miles) did not pass inspection. In getting to the zero % budget the department will cut the Hazardous Waste Program by setting limits on what will be accepted. The Medical waste day will not happen and the current Medical Alerts will be curtailed. To further cut cost they are hoping to get an intern to help out and obtain the HOPE grant to offset some of the H1N1 costs. The Health Department supports the following committees.

Board of Health	Board of Selectmen/Sewer Commissioners
Water Resources Advisory Committee	Health Outreach Planning Essentials Committee
Wastewater Advisory Neighborhood Taskforce	Social Services Steering Committee

Medical Reserve Corps

Emergency Preparedness Region 4A

The Health Department works closely with the following organizations;

SUASCO

Organization for the Assabet River

Central Mass Mosquito Control

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

Selectman Rosenzweig would like to see some monies to develop monitoring systems and data collection/graphing.

Selectman Friedrichs asked when the department will start to collect fines for storm water violations. Doug replied that the process will be part of the by law.

Merrily Evdokimoff spoke to Nursing Services which all run through the enterprise fund. Increased demands for free care and unexpected health crisis have hit her department hard. As patients have

increased administration has increased so overall less monies coming in. Challenges this year has been regionalization with Stow. The town receives payment for the services provided. The Home Care Organization is a 7day a week 24 hours a day operation.

Selectman Rosenzweig asked if we bill at a max rate.

Selectman Gowing asked if because we have had several H1N1 clinics, it spiked this year but will not carry forward. Merrily replied we need to be prepared for emergencies each year something comes up. She would like to carry emergency funds within her budget.

Finance – In Eva Taylor, the Clerk’s budget one item has dropped, travel. Employees will instead use a town vehicle to travel to conferences and work in town instead of using their own vehicle and getting reimbursed. The changes you see in the budget reflect the additional elections so you will notice additional charges.

Brian McMullen - Assessors, There are three staff in this area; one clerical, one property lister and Brian. The Department of Revenue mandates study property valuations (reevaluations) every three years for recertification.

Karen Kucala is the Town Accountant; her budget is entirely payroll. Security of data is very important. Looking forward she will be working with Munis on Citizen self serve keeping in mind the Town has to be PCI compliant.

Steve Barrett - The 0% budget will give the Finance Department no replacement coverage. We are doing some major transitions now such as testing self serve payroll on munis, bringing in on line tax payments, starting on line recreation sign up and being compliant with data security implementation.

In addition, the Finance Department is a resource to the Finance Committee, Bond Certification, elections, budgets, getting free cash certified, police and fire billing, and are looking at a major reorganization in our department. In reorganizing the window service we are cutting one FTE to reduce our budget. All back office functions will be consolidated. The heavy drivers in this budget are health insurance and pension. A possible new revenue source for the town is death care business, crematorium.....

Middlesex retirement how much is reserve, Steve, really none.

Selectman Rosenzweig thinks it is important to retain personal service even with the new reorganization model. Most people see the town by the interaction at the windows with these employees. They are the people with the most face time with the public.

Selectman Berry, with unemployment the way it is, will this affect more people in your model. Steve stated it very well may.

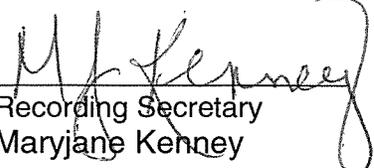
Kent Sharp, The new 111F line is offset by a reduction in property liability.

FY 11 Budget why is it higher? Steve, GIS, 25% increase in benefits, borrowings for modular classes and School Building projects -- all have a part.

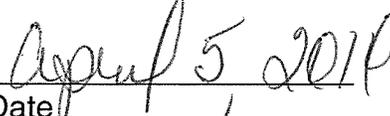
Brandy Brandon if Middlesex Retirement System gets hit do we pay for it? Steve-- we absolutely do.

Steve Ledoux – The Town Manager’s budget funds 4 people; and professional development for all departments and membership for the town in professional groups such as MMA. Compensation reserve has been removed. Steve has reduced his salary. Professional development has been cut. Legal services in the 3% budget increased to \$275k, in the level funded budget, it was reduced by \$40K. A newly created a green committee budget of \$10K was funded. A total of 5 unfilled FTEs in both budgets and three part-time from Nursing.

Steve Noone how and when will we be including collective bargaining? Steve replied that ALG is meeting on this.


Recording Secretary
Maryjane Kenney


Lauren Rosenzweig, Clerk


Date

Agenda					
Event	Who	Time	Special Funds	Manager's Recommended Capital Item	
Convene Meeting	Chairman Knibbe	8:10 AM			
General Overview	Steve Ledoux	8:15 AM			
Memorial Library	Marcia Rich	8:30 AM			
Citizen's Library	Jennifer Friedman	8:45 AM			
Highway/NESWC	Russell Robinson	9:00 AM	NESWC Enterprise	Vehicle, Trailer	
Engineering	Bruce Stamski	9:15 AM			
Council on Aging	Bruce Stamski, Corey York Jean Fleming	9:30 AM	COA Van Enterprise	Parking Meters	
Break		9:45 AM			
Building Planning/Zoning Board of Appeals	Frank Ramsbottom Roland Bartl	10:00 AM 10:15 AM	Building Inspectors Revolving		
Fire	Bob Craig	10:30 AM	Fire Alarm Revolving /Ambulance Enterprise	Protective Equipment, MDT/GPS, Vehicle	
Police	Frank Widmayer	11:00 AM		Portable Radios	
Information Technology	Mark Hald	11:30 AM			
Lunch Break					
Municipal Properties	Dean Charter	12:15 AM		DPW Sprinklers, Vehicle	
Natural Resources	Tom Tidman/ Cathy Fochtman	12:30 AM		Back Hoe	
Human Resources/Celebrations/Verterans Services	Marianne Fleckner	1:00 PM			
Health/Nursing	Doug Halley, Evdokimoff	1:15 PM	Enterprise, Sealer of Weights Revolving, Food Service Revolving, Hazardous Materials Revolving	Vehicle	
Finance (Accounting, Town Clerk/Elections, Assessors, Collector, Finance Director)	Steve Barrett, Karen Kucala, Brian McMullen, Eva Taylor	1:30 PM	Sewer Enterprise		
Town Manager/Emergency Mgt.	Steve Ledoux				

All vehicles that are being replaced will be parked in the lot behind Town Hall if anyone would like to take a look at them on Saturday. Coffee and morning pastry good will be available at 7:45 AM. As in the past lunch will be provided, we will take a brief break for you to fix a plate but we will work through lunch in an attempt to get folks home early. We will resume the meeting while eating.