

***Town Council Budget/Management Committee
December 2, 2013 at 6:30 PM
Town Council Chambers***

Present: Chairman Kenneth DiFazio
Councilor Arthur Mathews
Councilor Michael Molisse
Councilor Patrick O'Connor
Councilor Michael Smart

Also present: Richard Swanson, Town Auditor
William McKinney, Chief Financial Officer
Pamela Pantermoller, Principal Assessor
Paul Haley, Board of Assessors

Recording Secretary: Diane T. Hachey

Chairman DiFazio called the Budget/Management Committee Meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

13 128-Appointment to the Board of Library Trustees-Vicki Kaufman

Ms. Kaufman was present and noted that she is a three year resident of the town and the first thing she did when moving here was register for a library card. She has extensive experience in the library field: Commission on Libraries Member from 2006-2011, Trustee of the Melrose Public Library, and Member of the Friends of Libraries. She noted that our library system is phenomenal. Councilor O'Connor had the opportunity to meet Ms. Kaufman and stated that she brings a wealth of experience and enthusiasm.

Councilor O'Connor motioned for favorable action on measure number 13 128-to the full Town Council, motion seconded by Councilor Mathews and voted unanimously.

13 129-Appointment to the Youth Coalition-Mary Jordan Roy

Ms. Roy was present and stated that she is a 40 year resident of the town, graduated from the school system, owns a home in the town and works for the town's State Representative. She attends youth coalition meetings and wants to lend a hand to the coalition.

Councilor O'Connor cited Ms. Roy's excellent work ethic at the State House and supports her appointment.

Councilor O'Connor motioned for favorable action on measure number 13 129, motion seconded by Councilor Molisse and voted unanimously.

13 130-Fiscal Year 2014 Tax Classification

Pam Pantermoller and Paul Haley presented, noting that the Board of Assessors is recommending a 1.48 shift for classification purposes (as they have done in past years), with no residential exemption for fiscal year 2014. They further noted that condominiums will decrease by 64 basis points and industrial will increase by 76 basis points. DOR approved the values and the process for next year, which is a full evaluation year. The maximum allowable shift is 50%, resulting in residential increasing by 38 cents/thousand and commercial increasing by 57 cents/thousand which overall is a modest increase.

Councilor Smart asked about the abatement situation. Mr. Haley responded that there were 30-40 hearings with only a few proceeding to appellate court. Ms. Pantermoller will supply the Council with a case breakdown, inclusive of details and add them to the distribution list, going forward.

Councilor Molisse asked about the valuations and noted that next year the town will view the interiors of resident homes. Miss Pantermoller noted that they hired a consultant for three years at a cost of \$600k. The home valuations will result in 65% of homes captured, beginning in January, the same procedure as done for the last 10 years.

Councilor Mathews asked for the commercial breakdown and Ms. Pantermoller agreed to supply.

Councilor O'Connor asked where we fall in relation to other communities, in terms of tax rate. It was noted that Cohasset and Hingham have homes averaging \$750k, therefore they collect more revenue in taxes. Hingham's average tax bill is \$7900, but they do not have trash pick-up.

Councilor O'Connor hopes that we aren't falling behind surrounding communities, since growth isn't where we want it to be. Mr. Haley noted that the tax rate is subject to the market fluctuations and new growth.

There was a discussion regarding potential increases in market valuations, and Ms. Pantermoller cited that there has been a 25% increase in transfers from January to September, with an increase in open houses, which she hopes continues. Foreclosures are down in the town as well.

Councilor O'Connor motioned for favorable action to the full Town Council, on measure number 13 130; motion seconded by Councilor Molisse and voted unanimously.

With no further business to attend to, Councilor Mathews motioned to adjourn at 6:57 PM-motion seconded by Councilor Smart and voted unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted by: Diane T. Hachey

Approved by: Chairman Kenneth DiFazio