

# Budget/Management Committee Meeting minutes of May 7, 2013

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## **TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES BUDGET/MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE Town Hall Council Chambers May 7, 2013, Tuesday**

Present: Kenneth DiFazio, Chairman  
Arthur Mathews, Councilor  
Michael Smart, Councilor

Not Present: Patrick O'Connor, Vice Chairman  
Michael Molisse, Councilor

Also Present: William McKinney, Chief Financial Officer  
Richard Swanson, Town Auditor  
Jeff Bina, Director, DPW  
David Tower, Water Supt.

Recording Secretary: Mary Barker

Chairman DiFazio called the meeting to order at 6:49 PM. He noted Vice Chairman O'Connor and Councilor Molisse were not present.

*Review/discussion of Department of Public Works and Water/Sewer budgets with Chief Financial Officer and DPW Director*

Auditor Richard Swanson provided each department with a list of questions to incorporate into their budget review.

Deliberate the following measures:

### **13 068 O-Department of Public Works**

Questions provided by Auditor Swanson:

- A. Kindly provide an updated Organizational Chart for DPW, by operation.
- B. The total Fy14 budget for Expenditures is \$196,895 or 2.1% higher than the Fy13 revised budget. Are all salary step increases and other

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- types of salary changes included in the budget? What manpower level does the budget support?
- C. What type of training and for what position will the \$5,000 pay for in Management & Administration?
- D. What was the basis incorporated for calculating overtime of \$42,500 under Street, Sidewalk and Storm drain?
- E. What is driving the \$25,000 { 25% } increase in Operating Supplies?
- F. Please provide a list of all contracts { vendor, amount & service dates } that support the \$5,212,500 in Refuse Collection & Removal? What components of the Refuse Collection & Removal are under a multi-town contract?
- G. Kindly review with the Budget/Management Committee the Bid/Quote process currently employed by DPW? Discuss the use of “Consortium Bids and Contracts” and the resulting cost savings?
- H. How are the Fy13 actual expenditures tracking against the Building Maintenance budget of \$199,800? The Fy14 budget is the same.
- I. Building Maintenance is budgeted at \$199,800 which is the same as FY13. Was the impact of possible inflation and higher prices from vendors factored in for next year?
- J. Are there contracts for Gas & Diesel Fuel and with whom? What is the per gallon price for gas in the FY14 budget?
- Kindly explain the internal controls in place to monitor usage by authorized employees.
- K. Salaries under Parks & Playgrounds increase by \$69,762. Why is this and what additional services will this money yield?
- L. What is driving the \$20,000 { 67% } increase in Overtime for Parks & Playgrounds?

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- M. Explain what the line item Prk/Con/Ma for \$90,000 is used for? Why the \$50,000 { 125% } increase?
- N. What organization is under contract for the \$460,000 for Street Lighting? Is the price fixed and for how many years? How many companies bid to provide this service? Is the lowest bidder selected?
- O. In Snow & Ice Control there is \$73,143 for overtime. Is this for employees or contractors?
- P. In the line items Electricity, Gas Heat and Building Maintenance FY14 is budgeted at the same level as Fy13. Is it reasonable to assume a zero price increase when there is inflation and a higher cost of doing business?
- Q. In the salary detail explain what is paid for with the \$10,580 Tree Stipend, OOG, CDL under Parks and Playgrounds Maintenance?
- R. In the salary detail explain what is paid for with the \$12,580 Meals, OOG, CDL under Street Sidewalks & Stormdrains?
- S. In the salary detail explain what is paid for with the \$17,250 Mech Stipend, Meals, Standby, OOG under Vehicle Maintenance?

David Tower provided a narrative overview of the budget which is level funded and includes the salary for the new positions of Parks superintendent and electrician for half year. There was a brief discussion of the status of the interview process for Parks Superintendent. The department anticipates small amounts of unexpended funds. The budget includes salary increases only through FY13 and step increases. There may be additional costs when contracts are settled. He also provided written responses to Mr. Swanson's questions.

Councilor Smart asked if the budget includes parks department field maintenance. He asked how the meals tax money will be included- as a line item in the future. There was a brief discussion of funds budgeted for town parks. It does not include funds for school fields. It has been the same over the last few years in level funded budgets. Chairman DiFazio noted that it is

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a lean year and every department has cut backs and he questions that the DPW has \$50,000 to fund a parks superintendent. Mr. Bina responded that the Mayor has made parks a priority. Councilor Smart asked how the DPW expenditure on fields and maintenance compares to the school side expenditure. He believes there is a need to look at a consolidation of duplicated services across town; not just with parks- noting that this was also brought up to IT at a prior meeting.

Councilor Mathews asked the status of the current trash contract. Mr. Bina responded that the current contract expires June 30<sup>th</sup> and an RFP is out. He reports that the Mayor has not yet released her trash plan and will be making her announcement shortly. They are currently in negotiations and soliciting proposals. Councilor Mathews asked if the RFP is out. Mr. Bina responded that the RFP, and the price proposals have been received and the Mayor is reviewing them and she will soon make an announcement. Councilor Mathews does not want to see the town go to a pay-as-you-throw program as it is not the way to go; for too many years he's seen dumping. If you go to a pay-as-you-throw program he could envision people dumping every which way. From neighborhood cleanups that he's done to Whitmans Pond Association cleanups, he does not want to imagine the number of people that will be dumping things-they will be driving in the middle of the night to a parking lot to dispose of their trash. Councilor Mathews certainly would like to see an increase in recycling. He's talked to the Mayor in the past and will say to those present that although the recycling market has crashed and we're not getting any more money for recycling, as obviously we pay by the ton, he'd like to see an increase in recycling. People having to wait two weeks for recycle pickup and having the bins fill up will result in throwing recyclables in with the weekly trash. He stated every Monday morning the dumpsters at the DPW are overfilled with recyclables and that this is an indication that the town wants to recycle; they just need to be given a better avenue. Mr. Bina responded that Councilor Mathews is right and the Mayor's plan allows for increased recycling. She will soon make an announcement. Councilor Mathews responded that they both know the town pays by the ton. Mr. Bina interjected that the Councilor is right--the market has dropped dramatically for recyclables, and results in less sent to a landfill. Councilor Mathews noted that he has full recycle bins and a barrel, and still has to go to the DPW to drop off additional recyclables, due to the fact that he has to wait 2 weeks. Director Bina responded that they see the

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dumpsters are full and that is why they took steps to prevent the illegal dumping at the DPW, and that's helped a lot. Councilor Mathews agreed.

Councilor Smart asked if \$2.768 million is the total cost for FY13? Councilor Mathews responded, so far. Councilor DiFazio noted it was budgeted at \$3.8 million. Councilor Mathews noted the actuals are the amount spent per date. Councilor Smart responded that if the contract ends in June, there's only 7 or 8 weeks remaining. Councilor Mathews responded that it would go by quarter, and this was probably printed in April. Councilor Smart noted that it states the actual, and it was printed in April, on page 2 of the Public Works section; the 2013 actual for Rubbish Removal is at \$2.7 million. David Tower responded that the amount represents 7 months- the March bill would not be in there yet. At the printing, the March bill would not have been paid at this point in time. It's about half a million dollars a month. Councilor Smart stated that the 2012 was right up there at \$4.04 million David Tower responded that we'll be right up there at \$5.2 million.

Chairman DiFazio noted the present contract was with three cities and Quincy just opted out and are going elsewhere. Is the town still going with Braintree; he asked if they have any idea of what's going on? Mr. Bina responded that initially that was the plan. Currently they're under negotiations and it hasn't finally come out. Councilor DiFazio asked if the town could be alone? Mr. Bina responded "everything's a possibility." Councilor DiFazio asked if we even looked into what Quincy was doing? Did they simply go out and unilaterally jump into the next pond without notifying us? Mr. Bina responded, yes, you could say that. He noted they all knew going in that each town had certain needs and if one town wanted to split off, if they saw an economic benefit, then so be it. They did solicit bids from companies and apparently- Sunshine Scavenger is the name of the company- they did come in at a good price. Councilor Smart noted it was a small company with a small number of trucks and in his opinion, was a bit of a risk because obviously it would come back at you if you have a smaller number of vehicles; it's comparable to getting an external auditor that has never audited a town before. They have a very small number of vehicles that are available for trash pick up when he looked into them. So he was really surprised when they (Quincy) broke off and went with them- an unknown and inexperienced group. Hopefully it works out for them. Councilor DiFazio thanked Mr. Tower and Mr. Bina for their expertise.

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Councilor Mathews discussed the proposed snow removal budget. The town has \$700,000 shortfall for this fiscal year. He asked when the salt shed will be built. Mr. Bina responded that it should be completed by November. It is being finalized with a Mass Highway design to avoid having to go out for design services, in an effort to save costs. A wooden structure is desirable.

Councilor Mathews asked if the fuel is for all departments. Mr. Tower responded that it is with subsidies from Water and Sewer Enterprises. School vehicles are included. DPW allocates a formula for reimbursement from the schools. He asked Mr. McKinney if the cost is factored into the net school spending formula. He asked if the maintenance on school vehicles is performed by the DPW and Schools have their own maintenance personnel. He asked if the diesel is purchased through the Norfolk County bid. Mr. Tower responded that it is being purchased through the state bid pricing.

Mr. Swanson reviewed his questions. Mr. Tower provided an organizational chart as requested. He reviewed the positions, which match the actual budgets. The park superintendent has been included in the chart, and the two six month positions are funded. 39 employees are funded through the DPW with all but one full time. There is currently no funding for part time summer help, but there may be unexpended funding that can be utilized. No positions are grant funded. There was a training seminar discussion. Mr. Tower highlighted several that were funded over the last few years and the employees are making more use of the seminars. There was a brief discussion of materials. Councilor Mathews asked if the DPW is following a state mandate for catch basin cleaning. Mr. Bina responded that there is not a specific number of cleanings which are mandated; but the EPA requires that it be logged and the amount of debris logged. Councilor Smart noted that in Boston there are catch basin medallions which indicate that dumping is prohibited. Councilor Mathews noted that the Whitmans Pond Association stencils them in town under town supervision.

Mr. Tower provided an overview of the trash budget which includes pickup, yard waste dumping, paint disposal, hazardous waste, and tire drop-off. Councilor Smart asked if the joint venture with Hingham will alleviate yard waste remaining on the site at Hollis Street. Mr. Bina responded that they let it sit for a short time and then haul it out. Councilor Mathews noted that if

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yard waste pickup could be increased to weekly, it would help. Mr. Tower provided an overview of the town bidding procedures for materials and contracts; all in accordance with the state guidelines. Some are consortiums (trash, salt) and they attempt to piggy back on those they can. The town has the flexibility with these contracts to opt in and out. It was noted that increases in utilities means that they have less to spend on maintenance, but DPW works with what it has in the budget. There was a brief discussion of fuel pricing and how the town monitors its use. Mr. Tower noted the pumps have a key system, video monitoring and a monthly report is generated and scrutinized. Councilor Smart asked how many vehicles are driven home. Mr. Tower responded that approximately half a dozen-- not including emergency personnel vehicles. There was a brief discussion of the overtime budget and the measure requesting additional funds. Mr. Tower provided an overview of the street lighting- which is currently under review. It is less costly to leave them on than to remove them from service. Councilor Smart asked if there is any incentive to installing LED's and having National Grid pay for the installation. Mr. Bina responded that they are looking into this option through a different vendor. There was a brief discussion of snow overtime. Mr. Swanson asked if this included contractors. Mr. Tower responded that it is comprised of employees of the DPW only; contractors are not paid overtime. There was a brief discussion of the licenses, out of grade, stand-by and meals stipends per contract.

### **13 072 Free Cash-FY13 Snow Removal Appropriation**

Mr. Tower reported on this request for \$700,000 to pay the costs associated with the FY13 snow removal. Auditor Swanson reviewed the account details. Mr. Bina noted the total expended this season was \$972,194.73.

Councilor Mathews requested a monthly tally next year so the Council is aware what is being spent as the winter progresses.

### **13 078-Sewer Enterprise Annual Appropriation**

Questions provided in advance by Auditor Swanson:

SEWER DEPARTMENT



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- A. Kindly provide an updated Organizational Chart for Sewer Operations and review said chart with committee.
- B. What drives the increase in Rate Revenue of \$331,551 or 2.6%
- C. What is the basis for calculating Connection Fees of \$125,000? Does this include fees paid by Southfield?
- D. Kindly discuss the \$200,000 in Sewer Mitigation and how that revenue is generated.
- E. Kindly review the Lien Process and how the \$950,000 was derived for Liens Added. Approximately how many customers and percentage of the total pool does this line item involve? Discuss the methods employed for the collection of Past Due Billings?
- F. Explain what I/P Rates and I/P Liens represents for \$98,000.
- G. The total expense budget is 3.0% or \$424,551 higher than FY13 revised budget. Are all salary step increases and changes resulting from CBA included within the budget? What manpower level does the budget support?
- H. What does the \$5,000 cover under Gas/Exo?
- I. What items would be paid out of the \$31,500 in Sundry/Supplies?
- J. What is the Ret Reserve/Meals expense of \$5,500 under Management & Administration salary detail? Also, same question for the \$21,205 under Sewer Collection?
- K. In the Sewer Collection budget salaries decrease by 4% and Overtime increases by 11.1%. Is staffing being reduced and will additional Overtime thus be needed?
- L. In the line items Electricity, Gas Heat and Vehicle Maintenance FY14 is budget at the same level as FY13. Is it reasonable to assume a zero price increase when there is some inflation and a higher cost of doing business?
- M. Equipment and Vehicle Maintenance total \$95,000 for FY14. Kindly speak to this level of funding as it relates to the total Vehicle & Equipment pool of assets.
- N. Telephone Expense is budgeted at zero. How will this cost be paid for in FY14?
- O. How was the \$30,000 in Gas expense derived? What employees are authorized to access the gas pumps?
- P. What is the basis for the \$75,000 in ST-Meters and what is this amount used for?
- Q. What is the \$20,000 line item "Coll Rep"?
- R. What items are in Unc/Exp for \$10,000



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- S. Please walk the Committee through the Allocation worksheet explaining how the factors were determined for each cost center.
- T. Please walk the committee through the Benefits and Indirect Charges of \$2,581,637.

Mr. Tower provided an organizational chart and briefly reviewed it. He noted the drive behind the increase in water rates is the rate increase imposed by the MWRA, the debt service on the water treatment plant, and the I/I Montcalm Interceptor project. The town has been absorbing MWRA rates over the last several years. The increase from FY13 to FY14 and trending each year has been 3%. The state used to provide rate relief but doesn't any longer. Councilor Mathews asked about the bonding for Montcalm and cost per year. Mr. Tower reviewed the rate connection fees; it noted that it does not include any funds from Southfield. The funds that have been received from Southfield are in the Enterprise Fund and will be requested for capital improvement projects in town. Southfield is still behind in payments and are in the process of paying for FY12. Mitigation funds have been paid in advance; both are in accordance with their agreements with the town. There was a brief discussion of connection fees. Mr. Tower notes the town monitors closely the connection fees from Southfield. The town does not include this in the rate setting structure. The philosophy is to use these funds to improve the overall system so that it does not place a burden on the system. There was a brief discussion of the status of the Montcalm project. Fields should be usable by next spring. The ACO has been lifted but all practices that were developed as a result are still in play. The MWRA requires 4:1 but the town continues to keep its goal of at least 6:1 in mitigation. There was a brief discussion of DEP requirements for future projects or retriggering a consent order. Mr. Bina reported that the department has modeled to determine any infrastructure needs in the future. The lien process was reviewed. Mr. Tower noted that the process is the same each year. Outstanding charges from the prior year plus interest and penalty are transferred to the real estate account. He reviewed the anticipated amount this year, noting that 12% interest is charged on overdue amounts. This process protects the town. Mr. Tower reviewed the positions, the supplies, postage and other expenses in the budget. He further reviewed the contractual obligations included in this budget. The overtime use is similar to the DPW. One vacant position was eliminated in the FY14 budget. There was a brief discussion of utility costs, which have increased. The impact will affect equipment and supply costs. Maintenance costs are reduced slightly

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due to the newer equipment. Telephone costs are absorbed into the maintenance costs. These are not the actual phone costs but are for emergency calls-namely alarms, high water levels, etc. gas costs are based on prior year usage. Keys are assigned per vehicle, not actual employee. The meter replacement costs were discussed. The department does not outsource this function and replaces 100 or so per week. The Dig Safe notification process was outlined. Councilor Smart asked about the water main break on Pond Street and the erosion that resulted. He asked that the contractor be notified to remedy the situation. It was noted that a small sum is held in the budget for unforeseen emergencies, such as sewer backups. There was a brief discussion of split salary allocations and the allocations in other areas of the enterprise (retirement, etc.).

### **13 079-Sewer Retained Earnings-Capital Equipment**

Mr. Bina reviewed the request for \$115,000 for the costs associated with the purchase of two new vehicles; items #31 and #32 in the Capital Improvement list- a dump truck for the sewer department/snow removal and a replacement pickup truck inspectional services' use. Auditor Swanson confirmed he reviewed the measure and the Capital Improvement List.

### **13 080-Sewer Retained Earnings- Pump Station Improvements**

Mr. Bina reviewed the request for \$200,000 to fund the costs associated with Pump Station Improvements; item #44 in the Capital Improvement plan. There are 41 pump stations in town which are currently in use. The one on the end of Pond Street is next in the maintenance cycle. Auditor Swanson reported he reviewed the measure and the appropriate Capital Improvement item.

### **13 081-Sewer Retained Earnings-Sewer System I/I Rehabilitation**

Mr. Bina reviewed the request for \$1,600,000 to fund the costs associated with Sewer System I/I Rehabilitation. Mr. Bina noted this is for Contract S1-13 with Beta Engineering. This project is a compilation of several items; areas with infiltration and/or structural problems; manholes and services. The bidding is occurring on May 29, 2013 so exact costs are unknown at the moment. The studies were performed over several years to identify the needs. Most items are known deficiencies that need to be cleared up. Councilor Mathews noted it will take away some of the mitigation money from the base but that is one purpose for the mitigation funds. He noted there are many manhole covers with potholes and erosion surrounding them which

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contribute to I/I problems, particularly on main roads, and he hopes the main roads in town are targeted. He requested additional back up information be provided before the measure comes up for a vote, since it will significantly deplete the funding. There was a brief discussion of the I/I calculation formula with MWRA. There will be additional I/I work identified going forward under the sewer model.

### **13 082-Water Enterprise Fund Annual Appropriation**

Questions provided in advance by Auditor Swanson:

#### **WATER DEPARTMENT**

- A. Please provide an updated Organizational Chart for water Operations and review said chart with the Committee.
- B. Discuss the rationale of budgeting Rate Revenue exactly the same as FY13. Does management expect FY13 Rate Revenue coming in on budget? Are there any changes to rates for FY14?
- C. Kindly explain the type of “fees” for the \$137,730 line item and how these fees get generated.
- D. Please talk about the Connection revenue of \$154,000 regarding how these are generated. Does this line item include Connection fees from Southfield?
- E. Kindly review the Lien Process and how the \$500,000 was derived for Liens added. Approximately how many customers and percentage of the total pool does this line item involve? Discuss the methods employed for the Collection of Past Due Billings.
- F. The total expense Budget of \$9,586,083 is within a few dollars of the FY13 budget which indicates level funding. Are all salary step increases and changes resulting from CBA included within the budget? What manpower level does the budget support?
- G. What type of training will the \$6,000 be used for?
- H. What will the \$10,000 in Other Professional buy for service?
- I. What types of items are paid out of the Sundry Expense of \$40,000?
- J. Explain what the WTR/ASSESS budget of \$14500 is used for.
- K. What is driving the 15.6% increase in Water Treatment Salaries?
- L. How is the Water Treatment Overtime of \$125,000 derived? If Salaries are increasing by 15.6% why would overtime also be increasing?
- M. Why is it that Electricity will decrease by \$50,000 or 10%?

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- N. Review/Explain the budgeted increase of \$45,000 or 50% in EQPT/MAIN?
- O. Please discuss the \$170,000 budgeted for WTR/ENG Testing in regards to the type of work done and why it is required.
- P. What is SLDGE/MANA for \$150,000? Discuss the type of work done with these monies.
- Q. What will cause the 50% increase in VEHC/MAINT?
- R. How was the \$50,000 in Gas Expense derived? How many employees and what are their positions, who are authorized to access the gas pumps? What Internal Controls are in place to verify that only authorized vehicles are allowed to gas up?
- S. What will the \$90,000 I ST-METERS and \$50,000 in ST-PIPE-HY buy for water Operations? How are these line items estimated? The FY13 actual expenditures show only \$24,132 spent Y-T-D; therefore, what is Management's forecast for the total year? It appears the FY14 budget is much higher than the actual FY13 expenditures for these two line items.
- T. What types of items are paid for with the \$125,000 in MAINT/MAIN?
- U. The Allocation Cost Center Workshop shows the grant total for Water being twice that of the Sewer Department. Why is this?
- V. The RESERVE is decreasing by \$550,000 in FY14. Please discuss how this will affect Water Operations.

Mr. Tower reported there is no plan to change the rate structure at this time, but a shift may be needed. Next year the first payment on the water treatment plant is due. FY14 will be a tight year. Rate revenue is a separate line that is kept out of the usage charge calculations; they are for fire lines, and fees for removal of lines or pipe replacement, and items before the meter in homes. Councilor Smart asked about the condition of the pipes replaced into homes. Most are cement-lined circa 1940's and are in poor shape. The town replaces these pipes in down time, and provide at a reasonable replacement cost. Mr. Tower reported on the staffing level in the department. He reviewed the training that will be paid for CDL, hoisting, continuing education and training seminars. Dues are paid to various miscellaneous outside training professionals. Postage fees include an annual saturation mailing to every resident. Bills were previously printed in-house but are now electronically provided to a Worcester company who generates billing (including electronic transmission) realizing a significant cost

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savings. There is a move to change to a different collection vendor. There was a discussion of the specific positions assigned to the new treatment plant. It's a very technical plant and a facilities manager position has been added. The increase in overtime is based on historical use; the plant runs 24 hours a day. The cost of the treatment plant is significantly higher. The contractor warranties are now up and contracts are required. The water quality sampling program was reviewed. The budget includes well and stream monitoring. The sludge management program was discussed. Cleaning is on an annual basis. The amount requested in the budget should be sufficient to clean the two lagoons planned this year. Gas and tracking is monitored the same as DPW and Mr. Tower noted the stock purchase of meters and hydrants is split-funded between both enterprise funds. The Maintenance line item covers all maintenance of the distribution system. There was a brief discussion of the bond payment on the water treatment plant and the short-term interest. The reserve fund puts the town in position to begin making bond payments on the plant without an increase in rates.

Councilor Mathews asked where the town stands on the Consent Order for water. The town has not been under a Consent Order for over ten years and it is still 2:1. He noted that while interest payments are historically low, it may be an opportunity to begin long term plans for increasing storage capacity. A working group is researching dredging the south cove of Whitmans Pond. There was a brief discussion of the sediment levels, what affects it, and how it affects the storage capacity in a dry or drought season.

### 13 083-Water Reserve Fund-AJB Fence Replacement

Mr. Bina reviewed the request for \$75,000 to fund the costs associated with the fence replacement at the Bilodeau Water Treatment Plant. The existing fence is rusting and the gates are not working as they should. The fencing that surrounds the plant and runs along Winter Street will be replaced; possibly with black vinyl clad style fencing.

### 13 084-Water Retained Earnings-Capital Equipment

Mr. Bina reviewed the request for \$216,999 to fund the costs associated with the purchase of #34 of the CIP to replace a medium size dump truck and #36 for a 2- pickups to replace two in use by the meter readers. Auditor Swanson reviewed the measure and the CIP. Councilor Smart asked if there is an opportunity for use of electric vehicles, or incentive for use. The town

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currently has none, but has charging stations. It could be used for light duty use.

### **13 085-Water Retained Earnings-Water Main Improvements**

Mr. Bina reviewed the request for \$1,000,000 to fund the costs associated with water main improvements for the town's distribution system; targeting areas with breaks or historical low pressure. A water model was created and a list of streets needing replacement was prepared. Another part is a piggyback on a MassDOT project for duplication of transmission lines to increase the reliability of the system. Chairman DiFazio asked for specific back-up before this measure is voted. Auditor Swanson reported he reviewed the list and confirmed. Councilor Mathews asked to see a long-term management plan and supports continued chipping away at the water issues. The department will provide a list quickly to the committee. Councilor Mathews noted a public hearing must be held before these items can go forward.

At 9:00 PM, there being no further business, a motion was made by Councilor Mathews to adjourn and was seconded by Councilor Smart.  
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Barker as Recording Secretary

Approved by Chairman Kenneth DiFazio  
Budget/Management Committee