

MINUTES
OPERATIONS PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
January 17, 2013

First Selectman Jayme Stevenson called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m. in Room 206 at Town Hall.

Present were First Selectman, Jayme Stevenson; Board of Finance Chairman, Liz Mao; Board of Education Chairman, Betsy Hagerty-Ross; RTM Moderator, Sarah Seelye; Planning & Zoning Chairman, Fred Conze and Town Administrator, Karl Kilduff.

Board of Education

Ms. Hagerty-Ross reported that the Board of Education continues to work through the budget process. Some of the major factors impacting the proposed BOE budget increase of 4.07% are: considerations brought about by Hurricane Sandy, unfunded State mandates and the security and safety of Darien schools. The main storm related consideration for the budget is the purchase and installation of generators. Mr. Conze commented that the cost of generators hold value in the Town's emergency preparedness and Ms. Stevenson also felt the Town would be well served by maintaining as much self-sufficiency as possible.

The budget costs rising from possible improvements in security and safety measures that may need to be addressed are being accessed by Mike Lynch, the Facilities Director, Duane Lovello, Chief of Police and Dr. Steve Falcone, the Superintendent of Schools.

A funding request for the oil tanks, that have previously been discussed, will be sent to the Board of Finance for consideration. Extra revenue of \$275,000 from roof work that received lower than projected bids may be used towards offsetting the cost of the oil tank expenditures.

Ms. Hagerty-Ross stated that the Board is involved in studying its facilities to accommodate fluctuations in student enrollment. Mr. Conze suggested that members of the Planning & Zoning department should be consulted while long term plans are being studied and Ms. Hagerty-Ross stated that the BOE has long valued the knowledge and ideas brought forth from working with Planning & Zoning, in particular, Jeremy Ginsberg. Ms. Stevenson took this opportunity to remind the group that she wants to make sure the Town facilitates endeavors which encourage seniors to remain a part of the fabric of this community.

Planning and Zoning

Mr. Conze is pleased with the curb appeal and progress at The Heights, a development of affordable housing. The first occupants expect to move in approximately two months from now and residents will continue to move in as units are completed over the next year and a half.

Applications to rebuild after Hurricane Sandy damage in the Bay area are coming into Planning & Zoning. The Planning & Zoning Commission will hold a public hearing on modifications to zoning regulations in the Bay to allow flexibility in design in response to new FEMA regulations.

Board of Finance

Ms. Mao noted that the Board of Finance has approved using residual funds from the Weed Beach building project to purchase furniture for the beach. The Board of Finance also approved hiring a consultant to review equipment needs at the fire departments and a Board of Selectmen's request to cover the costs of implementing a new parking management system.

Ms. Mao also noted that Board does not presently feel the need to create a reserve to cover costs related to the new heart and hypertension unfunded mandate for public safety employees.

RTM Moderator

The RTM meets on Monday, January 28, 2013. Ms. Seelye has asked RTM members of standing committees to attend appropriate meetings and keep the full RTM informed of pertinent issues during the year. At the January 28th meeting Dot Kelly will report on the Transfer Station Advisory Committee and Dennis Maroney will speak about topics before the Education Committee.

First Selectman

Ms. Stevenson has sat in with Karl Kilduff as he reviewed budgets with each department head in preparation of the budget he will submit to the Board of Selectmen as the Town Administrator's Recommended Budget. She commented that he has done a commendable job of scrutinizing needs and making adjustments accordingly. Of concern to Mrs. Stevenson in preparing the BOS budget will be supporting costs to cover facility maintenance and departmental efficiency.

Ms. Stevenson is also concerned about the safety of municipal buildings and has been working with Chief Lovello to determine if any measures should be taken to further ensure the safety of employees and the public in municipal buildings.

Finally, Ms. Stevenson expressed appreciation for the effort being put forth by State Representative, Terrie Wood, to forge working relationships with a bi-partisan group of approximately 10-15 legislators. The group will introduce five bills intended to modify 8-30g legislation. SWRPA is also working with eight communities to alleviate some unintended consequences of 8-30g, while promoting the development of affordable housing within municipalities.

Fred Conze left at 9:40 a.m.

Ms. Stevenson requested a motion to accept the proposed schedule of meetings for 2013 and the minutes from the OPC meeting of December 21, 2012. Ms. Seelye so motioned, seconded by Ms. Hagerty-Ross. Ms. Mao abstained. The motion passed with three votes.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 21, 2013 at 8:30 a.m. in Room 206.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda O'Leary
Recording Secretary