

Acton Leadership Group

Meeting Notes - September 8, 2022

Virtual Meeting - 7:30 am

Members Present: Bart Wendell, Facilitator; John Mangiaratti, Town Manager; Peter Light, Superintendent Regional School District; David Martin, Select Board; Dean Charter, Select Board; Kyra Cook, School Committee; Adam Nolde, Finance Committee; Marie Altieri, ABRSD staff; Steve Barrett, Town of Acton staff.

Regular Business:

Bart Wendell lead a review of the charter and ground rules for operational changes. There was consensus to invite the Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical High School to participate in the ALG meetings with the understanding that representation would not be part of the required quorum.

Minutes of the April 28, 2022, meeting were accepted without changes.

New/Special Business:

FY22 and FY23 Update (Light and Mangiaratti)

Peter Light reported that the RSD was waiting for DOR certification of E & D (Excess and Deficiency) which staff expects to be about \$1.25 million. The District had surplus revenue in Regional Transportation and Medicare accounts. He attributed the higher than expected expenses impacting the E & D final estimate to the expenses related to the elimination of the EDCO Collaborative, increased health insurance costs, and utility cost increases. There were also changes to the personnel and Special Education budgets.

FY23 priorities include complete opening of the Boardwalk Campus including demolition of the old building and the completion of the parking area and solar project. They plan to coordinate a TriBoard meeting (Select Board, Finance Committee and Regional School Committee) for the two towns to be held at the new school building. The district professional staff positions are full; there is a plan to combine the Finance Director and Operations Director positions taking advantage of a current vacancy. There are some issues in filling positions for hourly employees: classroom assistants, extended day and food services.

John Mangiaratti cited the stability and strength of tax revenues with a 99 percent collection rate. Unused Budget allocations resulted in approximately \$600,000 in turnbacks and FY19 local receipts of about \$500K (including \$200K in ARPA funds) were also positive. Free cash estimate is \$1.1 million. He said the departments in Town Hall are fully staffed; there are vacancies in Public Works and Public Safety. FY23 priorities will be to fill vacant positions and continue with the combined dispatch system for Acton and Concord including recruiting the Executive Director using a \$1 million grant from the state. Kelley's Corner construction will begin this fall following a townwide Block Party to celebrate the \$20 million state and federal government funded project.

Multi-Year Financial Model (Barrett and Altieri)

The FY24 model starts with the version printed in the Town Meeting Warrant, showing FY23 balanced and projected FY24 numbers: \$2.4 million deficit using \$1 million in reserves. There is no unused levy capacity; the Minuteman assessment increases 30 percent over the previous year. The Town Budget reflects a 3.5 percent increase and a drop off of old debt. The School District Budget goes up 3.75 percent.

There was discussion of a request from David Martin that the model start with 3 percent increases for both entities but there was no consensus to support the change. Staff suggested they could create a “change sheet” to show the 3 percent numbers for working purposes.

Future Meeting Schedule

Members agreed to hold some meetings virtually and some in person at noontime. The Town Manager will coordinate the scheduling and provide remote support. The next meeting will be in October, date to be determined, probably on Thursday (Bart is not available on October 13.)

Patricia Clifford, Substitute Clerk.