

TOWN OF HARVARD
TRI-BOARD
Minutes

Draft

Meeting Date: Jan 24, 2009

Meeting Place: Town Hall

Members Present: **Finance Committee:** George McKenna (Chair) Steve Colwell, Marie Crowley Sobalvarro, Marie Fagan, Lori Granville, Terry Mead,; Bob Thurston, Associate members Paul von Loesecke, Collyn Bradley; **School Committee:** Stu Sklar; Virginia Justicz; Willie Wickman, Patty Wenger, Keith Cheveralls; **Board of Selectmen:** Leo Blair, Tim Clark, Ron Ricci, Peter Warren

Others Present: Tim Bragan, Town Administrator; Lorraine Leonard, Finance Director; Tom Jefferson, School Superintendent

Meeting Time: 3:15 pm

Adjournment Time: 5:05 pm

Discussions and Actions

- George McKenna opened meeting as a continuation of Jan 21 meeting. Said expect to have to cut \$350,000 as noted last time—even though state said Chapter 70 is exempt, the shortfall is a moving target and we should expect worse numbers over the next few months. So he feels \$350,000 should be the target cut for remainder of FY09.
- Tim Bragan presented powerpoint with update to Jan 21 powerpoint. Local receipts still expected to be \$50,000 lower; and safe to assume local aid will be down \$300,000 as described at last meeting.
- George proposed 70/30 split in cut (School cuts \$245,000; Town cuts \$105,000). Clarified that the goal of today's meeting is to agree to do the \$350,000 cut; and understand its impacts. Tim Bragan and Tom Jefferson have examined the budgets and have figured out how to do the cuts.
- Discussion followed. Overall direction of the discussion was members' attempts to figure out how much money could be cut from various accounts or found/saved in various other accounts; many members expressed the desire for more transparency in the numbers and the tradeoffs involved (because cuts involve layoffs, Tim and Tom were not handing out detailed budgets). Willie Wickman asked that Fin Comm meet and examine the details and recommend on the \$350,000 cut. Tim Clark asked what we have left in unencumbered expenses? Peter Warren said other towns are not jumping on this and cutting budgets right away, they are waiting for final numbers from the state. Several members of Fin Comm asked for the opportunity to have closer look, at the actual proposed cuts.
- George McKenna asked for public commentary.
- More discussion among Tri-Board, again focused on digging into details, trade-offs. Lori Granville asked if School Committee could give a broad categorization (not at the level of individual jobs) of the cuts they came up with. Stu Sklar said not cuts to classroom teachers per se; no cuts to special ed. Said he was originally opposed to \$350,000 cut but now thinks it must be done. But Harvard Schools are a brand and we want to monetize it.
- Timing issue also discussed: Bob Thurston pointed out even if state number are not as draconian as -\$300,000, if we wait it could end up being just as many layoffs because it has to get done over fewer remaining weeks. George McKenna said another delicate balance is the immediate hit of accumulated paid time off. Tim Clark suggested setting a deadline for the first round of personnel cuts, and for a second round if necessary.

- Fin Comm, School Committee, and BoS split up to caucus.
- Fin Comm unanimously agreed to support \$350,000 cut, to be enacted ASAP.
- School committee unanimously agreed, with caveat that they will freeze expenses but if the cuts are less than \$350,000 they want expenditures back.
- BoS agreed to immediately institute the \$105,000 cut in town budget; Library hours will be cut back; and personal reductions will take place over Feb 1- April 1. Tim and Tom were charged to implement the changes they had in their proposed budgets.
- Move to adjourn at 5:05 pm.