

SELECT BOARD

MINUTES

January 24, 2024

Board met in HYBRID session at 6:00 p.m. at Abbot Hall and via ZOOM Conferencing
The following members were present constituting a quorum:

Erin M. Noonan, Chair
M. C. Moses Grader
Bret T. Murray
James E. Nye
Alexa Singer

Thatcher W. Kezer III, Town Administrator

The Chair called the meeting of January 24, 2024 to order. This meeting is being recorded.

FY2025 STATE OF THE TOWN. Thatcher Kezer, Town Administrator, presented the 2025 State of the Town, concerning the projected financial status of the town for FY25. The Town is facing increased financial difficulties as FY24 progresses and planning for FY25 begins. While the Town is currently in good financial health, difficult decisions will need to be made for FY25 and beyond to ensure continued fiscal stability. The Town will continue to take proactive steps to ensure future fiscal stability. The Board asked questions and discussed the presentation. The Chair noted that the Board held a retreat in early fall to address questions and residents concerns and to explore options for increasing the town's revenue. The Board recently adopted financial policies enacting best practices and advice from the Department of Revenue as well as implementing cost sharing collaboratives and is pursuing organization and operational reviews and exploring a town charter.

PUBLIC COMMENT. The following public comments were taken:

- Questions on property taxes and looking for explanation on assessments.
- Clear Gov and migration to Office 365 are a big plus and the town should look into adding Teams suite. Suggest website have a link that fully explains the tax assessment process.
- Comment regarding the mission statement and how level of services is measured and how do we attract and maintain new growth through commercial development.
- Upset at earlier response from a board member to a resident and wants to know why a member of the Assessors was not invited to the meeting to answer questions.

- Impressed with the presentation and its transparency. Disappointed with the failed override but appreciated the Board's desire to be creative in finding other revenue sources for the town.
- Question on tax growth/who is accountable to the people of the town?
- No standards or guidance put forth by Assessors. Why isn't the Town Administrator/Select Board holding Assessors accountable?
- Town department heads should not work remotely and should live in Marblehead. Cannot find anyone at Mary Alley to answer his questions because they are not there. The public should be able to make appointments.
- We have a decentralized form of government locally, which has amazing positives, and occasionally some negatives, it is the role of the Board of Assessors to be answering these questions and handling these issues. Comment also on base levy and new growth, revenue projections and free cash.
- What we invest in as a town shows what we all value.
- Are expense projections based on current services? If the town is not asking for override what about the schools?
- The children of Marblehead deserve exemplary education and the current budget does not allow that. Positions were left unfilled at the schools because they could not attract candidates. Town will lose families coming into town if not in good financial health. Town and Schools should work together.

The Chair thanked everyone for the comments and discussion that was had.

Motion made and seconded to adjourn at 8:20 p.m. All in favor.

Kyle A. Wiley
Administrative Aide

List of documents used: FY25 State of Town PowerPoint presentation.