Town of Rowe – FY2010
Board of Selectmen
Minutes – Wednesday, February 10, 2010 – 4:00pm

Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 4:00pm by Chair Bill Loomis.

Present: Selectmen Bill Loomis and Paul McLatchy III; Town Coordinator Ellen Miller

Also Present: Anne Besgen and David Dvore, Finance Committee

FY2011 Medical/Dental/Life Insurance Estimates: Ms. Miller presented details of cost estimates for FY2011. Blue Cross/Blue Shield HMO rates will increase 5.9% and PPO rates 3.0%. The total estimate for FY2011 is $394,217, which includes 1 extra PPO family at $16,232.

GIC Interim Year Increase: A copy of an article in the Jan 15th edition of the *Berkshire Eagle* concerning a mid-year hike in deductibles and co-pays for employees in the state's GIC (Group Insurance Commission) was given to the Selectboard and Finance Committee members by Ms. Miller. GIC officials claimed the fee hikes were necessary to erase a $35 million shortfall in its current $1.4 billion budget. Pittsfield City Councilor Jonathan Lothrop has filed a petition with the GIC opposing the increases. GIC Executive Director Dolores Mitchell said the hikes were necessary to maintain health care coverage for GIC members. Most employees in the GIC program are union employees, so increasing premiums mid-year is not allowable. Rather, the employees themselves had to bear the brunt of covering the $35 million shortfall.

Wage Increase for FY2011: David Dvore presented a document he prepared with estimates of current DPW wages in the area. He feels that a raise for town employees for next year is out of realm of possibility, and that Supt. Taylor is way overpaid...being the second highest paid in the area. Greenfield DPW Supt. is highest paid, and in Mr. Dvore's opinion, Mr. Taylor is not qualified for the Greenfield superintendent's job. Chair Loomis said that the crew was very professional and the town is able to afford the wages they pay. Mr. Dvore said that Anne Besgen and Selectmen McLatchy agree with him. Mr. Dvore said that Jim Taylor could be cut 20% to $60,965, which is still a very good salary. He was not proposing that Mr. Taylor's salary be cut. Chair Loomis asked that Ms. Miller give the sheet that Mr. Dvore prepared to Supt. Taylor and invite him to the next meeting.

Chair Loomis felt that the best thing to do would be to present the budget with a 3.0% wage increase to town meeting and let them decide. He agreed that there shouldn't be a COLA, but thought this could be a performance raise.

Budget Reductions: The budget worksheet was again reviewed for possible budget reductions. An updated budget worksheet and memos for departmental budget reductions will be prepared for the next meeting.

Vacation/Personal Time Policy: The Selectboard voted unanimously to approve updated vacation and personal day policies as follows:

VACATION

- All new permanent employees with six (6) months of service will accrue ½ day or four (4) hours of paid vacation for each full month of service.
- All permanent employees with a minimum of one (1) year of service are entitled to two (2) weeks or eighty (80) hours of paid vacation through the fourth (4th) year of service.
- Three (3) weeks or one hundred twenty (120) hours of hours paid vacation during the fifth (5th) through the ninth (9th) year of service
- Four (4) weeks or one hundred sixty (160) hours of paid vacation during the tenth (10th) through the fourteenth (14th) year of service.
- One (1) additional vacation day will be added each year during the fifteenth (15th) year of service until nineteenth (19th) year of service, or a maximum of five (5) weeks or two hundred (200) hours vacation with pay.

Each fiscal year, vacation must be taken before the first of the next fiscal year (July 1), or the time will be lost. *At the end of the fiscal year, unused vacation time, (not to exceed five (5) days or forty (40) hours), may be compensated for at the regular rate of pay, at the discretion of, and with the prior approval of the Selectmen.* Vacation time cannot be accumulated from year to year. Vacation time will be taken in units of not less than one (1) hour. The timing of all regular vacation is subject to the approval of the Department Head.

PERSONAL TIME

Each employee is allowed three (3) days or twenty-four (24) hours of personal time per year, which may be taken in units of not less than one (1) hour. Personal time off requires prior approval of the Department Head. Any unused personal hours will convert to sick time at each fiscal year end.

Mass Energy Insight: Ms. Miller is scheduled to go to a training session on Wednesday, February 17th in Belchertown for the new Mass Energy Insight system that monitors and tracks energy usage for towns. Authorization letters from the Selectboard were unanimously approved for Ms. Miller to take to the training. This will give her access to all town energy information. Similar letters were obtained from the School Superintendent for access to Rowe School energy information.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be Wednesday, February 17 at 4:00pm. The meeting is an hour earlier than normal so work can be done on the FY2011 budget. Ms. Miller will have the budget worksheets updated for the meeting.

Adjournment: The Selectboard voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellen B. Miller, Town Coordinator

Approved:

William A. Loomis, Chair

Paul McLatchy III

[Vacant]

Mar 3, 2010
Date Approved

Documents

- FY2011 Medical/Dental/Life Insurance estimate
- GIC co-pay and deductible hikes article – *Berkshire Eagle 1/15/10*
- DPW wage estimates (D Dvore)
- Authorization letters for *MassEnergyInsight*

	FY10	FY11				
	Mthly Prem Per Emp	*Mthly Prem Per Emp*	*Annual Premium Per Emp*	*# Emp*	*Annual Cost 100%*	*Annual Town Cost 85%*
Med Benefits						
BC/BS Network Blue NE (HMO) - 5.9% incr for FY2011						
Employee	482.48	510.95	6,131.36	3	18,394.07	15634.96
Employee +1	1,123.58	1,189.87	14,278.45	6	85,670.73	72,820.12
Family	1,393.04	1,475.23	17,702.75	6	106,216.51	90,284.04
					210,281.31	**178,739.11**
BC/BS Blue Care Elect Perferred (PPO) - 3.0% incr for FY2011						
Employee	564.06	580.98	6,971.78	2	13,943.56	11,852.03
Family	1,545.00	1,591.35	19,096.20	7	133,673.40	113,622.39
					147,616.96	**125,474.42**
Dental Benefits						
Guardian Dental PPO Core Plan - 21.0% incr for FY2011*						
Employee	20.31	24.58	294.90	1	294.90	250.67
Employee +1	40.06	48.47	581.67	0	0.00	0.00
Family	74.87	90.59	1,087.11	1	1,087.11	924.05
					1,382.01	**1,174.71**
Guardian Dental PPO High Plan - 21.0% incr for FY2011*						
Employee	36.84	44.58	534.92	3	1,604.75	1,364.04
Employee +1	69.92	84.60	1,015.24	12	12,182.86	10,355.43
Family	108.24	130.97	1,571.64	9	14,144.80	12,023.08
					27,932.41	**23,742.55**
Basic Life Insurance						
Boston Mutual - no increase for FY2011						
Life	7.90	7.90	94.80	32	3,033.60	2,578.56
AD&D	0.15	0.15	1.80	32	57.60	48.96
					3,091.20	**2,627.52**
Medex 3 - no increase						
Retiree	363.00	363.00	4,356.00	14	60,984.00	51,836.40
					60,984.00	**51,836.40**
* Looking for another provider				**Total estimate for FY2011**	**451,287.90**	**383,594.72**
				Cushion: 1 family PPO	19,096.20	16,231.77
					470,384.10	**399,826.49**
				Less individuals moving to Medex:		(5,609.80)
				FY2011 ESTIMATE:		**394,216.69**

BOS
FinCom

Insurance co-pays, deductibles hiked mid-year

By Dick Lindsay, Berkshire Eagle Staff
Updated: 01/15/2010 06:50:21 AM EST

PITTSFIELD - City officials and employees are livid with anger following the Group Insurance Commission's (GIC) unprecedented mid-fiscal year increases in fees, which come less than a year after Pittsfield joined the state-sponsored health insurance program to save taxpayers and workers millions of dollars.

Effective Feb. 1, the GIC will charge between $5 to $25 more for co-pays, depending on the type of medical care or physician office visit.

The state insurance group is also adding a $250 deductible for individual health plans and $750 deductible for family plans that affect ancillary tests and procedures performed during an office visit without preapproval.

GIC officials claim the fee hikes are necessary to erase a $35 million shortfall in its current $1.4 billion budget. The increases affect 135,000 state employees and municipal workers from 26 cities, towns, regional school districts and other government entities -- including Pittsfield -- that are covered by the 11 health coverage plans offered through the GIC.

Nearly 2,000 of the more than 2,400 active and retired city workers eligible for the GIC enrolled in the state health insurance program last spring.

"We voted for the GIC hoping to save families money and it hasn't," said Scott Eldridge, president of the 600- member United Educators of Pittsfield, which represents Pittsfield's teachers, and is the city's largest union.

"If [the increase] isn't illegal, it's certainly immoral," Eldridge added.

The city and its 17 collective bargaining units in October 2008 agreed to sign a three-year contract with the GIC, which took effect for fiscal 2010 starting last July 1. City officials convinced the unions the move would save workers and taxpayers more than $5 million combined.

"We vouched for this being a viable, credible program," said Ward 5 Councilor Jonathan N. Lothrop, himself a state employee. "I've never seen premiums and co-pays go up in the middle of the year."

The City Council this week unanimously approved Lothrop's petition to the GIC and the local legislative delegation opposing the increases.

Mayor James M. Ruberto, who aggressively lobbied city unions to switch from Blue Cross Blue Shield to the GIC, said he is "terribly disappointed" by the fee hikes and supports the council's petition.

State Rep. Christopher N. Speranzo, D-Pittsfield, also supports the council's position, saying, "The GIC is going down an unfair path. Municipalities would never look at mid-year increases."

"The problem is not so much the cost going up, but the entire $35 million put on the backs of employees and retirees," said Lothrop. The GIC should have instead raised the premiums to offset the deficit and allow government employees and their employers to share the burden, he said.

In Pittsfield, the city would have absorbed 85 percent of the increase, with workers and retirees picking up the remaining 15 percent, based on the city-employee negotiated split for local health care costs.

GIC Executive Director Dolores Mitchell admits a mid-year price hike is rare, saying it was last done 15 years ago. Mitchell said the hike is necessary to maintain health care coverage for GIC members.

"Adding to co-pays and deductibles is tough enough of a mid-year change," Mitchell said. "It's more of a problem changing premiums."

The GIC could ask the state Legislature for emergency funding to close the $35 million shortfall, but Mitchell said such an appropriation is "not on the radar screen" due to the state's fiscal crisis.

Lothrop's petition claims "the deficit could have been avoided" had the GIC raised premiums by 5.39 percent rather than 3.19 percent for fiscal 2010.

Mitchell said estimating health insurance costs is difficult to do. "We have to make decisions before we know who joins the GIC and what health plan employees choose," she noted.

cc Jim T
pls discuss w/BOS

Highway dept by town											
	miles of Public Road	Super	other positions	other	other	total ft sta	Overtime for Super	Health ins %	Retiree Health ins		
Ashfield	83.2	50,515.00	17.82	21.62	16.95	5	no	75	50		
Bernardston	58.1	49,379.00	16.86	15.81		3	?	75	No		
Buckland	50.5	39,824.00	16.09	15.01	14.72	5	winter stipen	75	50		
Charlemont	57.6	49,595.00	15.40	14.06	13.40	4	yes	85	50	* hrly super.	
Colrain	86.3	48,712.00	20.46	17.50	17.50	5	no	75	50		
Conway	71.0	54,358.00	17.13			5	yes	70	50	* hrly super.	
Deerfield	100.1	71,451.00	21.20	23.01	19.00	7	Yes	65	50	* hrly super.	
Erving	39.5	63,465.00	19.00	17.45		3	yes	86	79	* hrly super.	
Gill	43.7	33,010.00	20.96	15.45		3	yes	75	75	* hrly super.	
Greenfield	131.0	80,808.00	26.23	19.92	13.71	56	no	90	90		
Hawley	48.5	48,335.00	16.45			2	yes	75	No		
Heath	59.5	48,124.00	14.19	15.15	16.56	4	yes	75	0	* overtime listed as 170 hrs	
Leverett	43.1	56,691.00	18.77	16.41	15.71	4	yes	75	50		
Leyden	38.1	55,222.00	15.50			2	yes	50	No	* hrly super.	
Monroe	18.4	35,448.00	15.75			2					
Montague	115.6	69,498.00	20.71	25.30	21.00	16					
New Salem	103.8	53,331.00	18.20	17.40		6	yes	75	50	* hrly super.	
Northfield	83.7	58,468.00	18.70	16.09	17.59	5	yes	75	50	* hrly super.	
Orange	103.5	60,660.00	16.18	18.19	19.00	7	no	75	50	* park maintained by Hwy Dept	
Rowe	45.3 36.2	76,206.00	22.79	21.79		4	no	85	85		
Shelburne	59.2	55,924.00	16.69	17.97		5	no	75	50		
Shutesbury	42.0	55,620.00				3	yes	75	50		
Sunderland	46.3	55,876.00	20.00	16.67		3	yes	55	50		
Warwick	64.5	52,374.00	17.76	15.85	14.75	4	no	75	no		
Wendell	66.5	42,730.00	15.38			3	yes	75	50	* hrly super.	
Whately	48.3	51,128.00	18.34	15.83	16.40	4	no	80	50		

Analysis:

*** Rowe Superintendant has a 52% higher wage than the average of superintendants with < 100 mi of road**

for hourly Supertendants used an average of 170 hours of overtime at time-and-half.

*** Rowe workers make 26% higher wages than the average for Franklin County.**

*** Starting salary for worker with no experience in Rowe was higher than Superintendant salaries in many Towns.**

*** Health benefits are superior to all other towns excluding Greenfield.**

	Super	Worker
ave with <100 mi	$50,239.90	$17.75
Rowe ratio	1.52	1.26

Town of Rowe

FRANKLIN COUNTY
MASSACHUSETTS
01367

Settled as Myrifield 1763 ▪ Incorporated as Rowe 1785

321 Zoar Road
P.O. Box 462
Rowe, Massachusetts 01367
www.rowe-ma.gov
email: admin@rowe-ma.gov
Ph: 413-339-5520
Fax: 413-339-5316
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

February 11, 2010

Department of Energy Resources
Attention: Green Communities Division
100 Cambridge Street
10th Floor
Boston, MA 02114

Re: User Authorization - MassEnergyInsight

To Whom It May Concern:

I, William A. Loomis, as the chief elected official for the Town of Rowe hereby authorize:

Name: Ellen Miller
Title: Rowe Town Coordinator
Email: admin@rowe-ma.gov

to receive full access to the energy data of the Town of Rowe that is included in the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources MassEnergyInsight energy reporting system.

William A. Loomis

William A. Loomis, Chair
Rowe Board of Selectmen

Town of Rowe

FRANKLIN COUNTY
MASSACHUSETTS
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Settled as Myrifield 1763 ▪ Incorporated as Rowe 1785

321 Zoar Road
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BOARD OF SELECTMEN

February 11, 2010

Department of Energy Resources
Attention: Green Communities Division
100 Cambridge Street
10th Floor
Boston, MA 02114

Re: Data Sharing Authorization - MassEnergyInsight

To Whom It May Concern:

I, William A. Loomis, as the chief elected official for the Town of Rowe grant permission to the:

Rowe School District

and its authorized users, pursuant to the most recent user authorization letter on file with the Department of Energy Resources (DOER), to access the Town of Rowe energy data that is included in the MassEnergyInsight energy reporting system.

William A. Loomis

William A. Loomis, Chair
Rowe Board of Selectmen

The Mohawk Trail School System

Mohawk Trail Regional School District | Hawlemont Regional School District
Rowe School District

24 Ashfield Rd., Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts 01370 Ph: (413) 625-0192 Fax: (413) 625-0196
Michael A. Buoniconti, Superintendent of Schools Joanne Blier, Business Administrator

February 11, 2010

Department of Energy Resources
Attention: Green Communities Division
100 Cambridge Street
10th Floor
Boston, Massachusetts 02114

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Town of Rowe

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Michael A. Buoniconti

Michael A. Buoniconti
Superintendent of Schools
Rowe School District

The Mohawk Trail School System

Mohawk Trail Regional School District | Hawlemont Regional School District
Rowe School District

24 Ashfield Rd., Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts 01370
Michael A. Buoniconti, Superintendent of Schools

Ph: (413) 625-0192 Fax: (413) 625-0196
Joanne Blier, Business Administrator

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Superintendent of Schools
Rowe School District