

Town closes budget gap

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Maynard -

Selectmen believe they've solved a deficit created by differences between Gov. Deval Patrick's proposed budget and the House budget, released two weeks ago.

Maynard was among the town's hardest hit by the discrepancy, falling about \$175,000 short of what Patrick's budget had allowed.

Last week, the board met with the Finance Committee and members of the school committee to figure out how to close the gap. According to Chairman Sally Bubier, between deferring some capital expenses and free cash, the problem has been solved.

"We were able to do so without making any real cuts to service, which was our goal," Bubier said.

The primary change: work planned to replace and upgrade the doors and windows at Town Hall has been delayed until fall Town Meeting. The advantage: In the fall, the town will have access to the gift money from John Wolters' development of 129 Parker St. For now, because of a state ruling, that money needs to be certified by the state, which won't be done until fall town Meeting.

"Fall is usually when we wrap up the budget, after state aid is in and free cash is certified," she said.

Selectmen also planed some money away from the library account, the schools and other town departments. Small amounts added up to enough to close the deficit, Bubier said.

According to the chairman, critical to the success of the meeting was work done by the capital planning committee. Those members had a priority list of single-expense capital items. Rather than have long, drawn-out discussions on which capital items to defer, the board simple dropped the lowest priority items from the list.

"I know they might feel like they're just two people and not getting much done, but the work they did was critical for us," Bubier said.

Deferral doesn't mean the Town Hall won't be getting those updated doors and windows, Bubier said. With the Parker Street money and other resources, the work will get finished.

"We were comfortable moving one-time capital expenses to the fall, when we know the money is going to be there," she said.