

TOWN OF PRINCETON MA
Princeton Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
December 13th, 2017

AC members in attendance: John Shipman, George Handy, Judy Dino, Bill Lawton, Wayne Adams, Don Schoeny

AC members absent: Jimmy O'Coin,

ACRC in attendance: Terry Hart, Joe O'Brien, Dave Cruise, Bob Sauer, Ann Littlefield

Town Administrator Nina Nazarian in attendance

Joint Advisory Committee Review Committee (ACRC) and Advisory Committee (AC) Agenda

- ACRC to solicit AC views for whether the Town Bylaws need to be changed to foster a different AC composition and/or for the AC to further fulfill fiscal planning responsibilities as currently outlined in the current Bylaws.

Joint Meeting started at 6:00 PM

Meeting Minutes

- Members of the ACRC asked each AC member their views (based on how the town bylaws are currently written) on the AC member appointment process, the AC's access and empowerment to investigate and analyze fiscal data in support of town projects and the ATM warrant, and whether they had experienced issues related to conflicts of interests and behind-the-scenes requests to make certain recommendations
- Discussion led to related topics including
 - AC conducts business per the current town bylaws and does not take on work beyond the bylaws. AC strives to ensure there are sustainable budgets with either no or small incremental tax impact to voters from year to year
 - the chemistry of the BOS and AC when working on a budget, accepting a charge, and receiving recommendations
 - who is responsible for long term financial planning, capital planning, debt planning, and financial priorities (and financial policy setting)
 - ad-hoc work outside of the AC charter being sanctioned, initiated and pursued without it being sanctioned, and/or having value to the decision makers
 - changing the charge of the AC or creating a finance committee would entail several changes in the bylaws to reflect ownership, process, and dependencies both for the AC or FC and for those entities that have current ownership and dependencies.
 - of the town's \$10M budget, 50% is for WRSD; 95% of the remaining 50% is obligated to town operations and debt. This leaves each year ~ \$250K along with the previous year's certified Free Cash to decide on and prioritize for other town services and infrastructure. 6 months is spent deciding this, requiring the attention of the BOS, AC, TA and

Dept heads. Based on one's perspective, 11 town leaders provide a lot of scrutiny; on the other hand, based on size of the funds to be expended, maybe 11 people is excessive, leaving other important work that the town could benefit from unaddressed.

- examples were referenced to convey understanding for the above listed sub-points including AC Chapter 70 formula work; AC WRSD budget review; AC review of sustainable business for town-built FTTH and alternatives; STM warrant for Fire Truck and alternatives; recommendations by AC for how to adjust the budget process and engage department discussions; AC recommendations for budget reductions to prepare for capital projects; volunteer citizens doing financial obligation projections; a town ad-hoc committee working on a long range financial plan and framework; AC member appointment and member reappointment.
- The AC did not vote a consensus position or recommendation for the questions regarding the current BOS AC appointment process and current AC bylaws.
- Next steps for the ACRC will be to continue to gather data and form a report and recommendations for the BOS.
- AC members are available for future meetings and to review draft versions of the ACRC report for the BOS.

Session adjourned 8:20 PM

Upcoming AC meetings

BOS, TA, and Dept Heads with AC, Town Hall Annex:

Tuesday, January 2nd at 2 PM

Monday, January 8th at 7:30 PM, a regular Selectboard meeting night

Tuesday, January 16th at 2 PM

Monday, January 22nd at 7:30 PM, a regular Selectboard meeting night

Monday, January 29th at 2 PM

Facilities Committee with AC:

1/16/18 @ 7 PM Town Hall Annex

Handouts and Referenced Documents

- ACRC charter and charge per the BOS

Minutes recorded by Wayne M. Adams, AC Member