

TOWN OF PRINCETON MA
Princeton Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
November 7th, 2017

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

AC members absent: Don Schoeny, Jimmy O'Coin

Advisory Committee Agenda

- Committee Liaison Reports
- BOS motion for AC to prepare financial plans
- AC Officer Elections
- Other new/old business

Meeting started at 6:00 PM

Meeting Minutes

- Committee Liaison Reports
 - Bill and Judy reported on the Facilities Committee progress, whereby they have awarded a contract to an architectural firm, per a RFP. In coming weeks, the firm will be interviewing town leaders as part of the requirements gathering effort and the firm will be reviewing open land options in the town should new buildings and sites be needed. The information gathering process will encourage all town residents to share their opinions on what the town needs and priorities are with respect to facilities. Bill and Judy to continue to attend the weekly meetings.
 - George reported on the 5 town WRSD Roundtable. Princeton presented a district view that if the other 4 towns paid per pupil what the Town of Princeton's assessment is, this would close a \$15M gap. Part of the Roundtable discussion revealed the state has not increased any funding to the region since 2014, despite there being 2.5% escalators each year; in aggregate, the 5 towns have funded a \$7M gap; towns are exhausting their ability to fund more. State House legislators had office representatives in attendance. No future meetings planned. Unclear if WRSD Administration will adjust plans or requests of towns for next fiscal cycle, based on what they have learned.
- John read the BOS motion for the AC to consider preparing a capital plan, a strategic financial plan, and a long term financial plan. George motioned, Wayne seconded the AC accept the request to prepare 3 plans. The resulting vote was 0-Y, 5-No, 0-Abstain. Before the vote was taken, discussion on these points factored into the cast votes:
 - AC by current bylaw charter is not tasked with creating financial plans or budgets.
 - The BOS have made no indications in their motion how the plans would be

used in near-term decision making, beyond, nice-to-know information. In prior years, when ad-hoc plans based on town public records were presented for long-term financial obligations and possible new big-ticket town projects, the BOS discounted its accuracy and took no new actions in their budget formation or priority setting.

- The example of the town of Franklins financial strategy plan did not offer much quantitative guidance or policy setting direction, only an opinion that a town should do financial planning. The merits of such a plan in Princeton is unclear.
- The awareness of other towns like Newton and Arlington financial plans are comprehensive based on town records and systems that can provide depth of accurate information quickly. A time-intensive work effort to create an accurate plan. Unclear how much time the town staff and systems would be available to create such a plan, nor availability of department heads to do detailed planning and alternatives.
- Capital planning is already planned as part of the operating budget cycle and would build on the 5-year planning started last year. Unclear if this plan would be duplicative effort of work already planned and the AC is part of. AC is unclear which Collins Center plans will be taken by the town, whether the capital plan was still in play or not.
- The timetable for the Facilities Committee study and recommendation could be months away and not be accurately reflected in financial plans developed now.
- BOS to seek ad-hoc committee to do financial planning if AC does not take on financial planning. BOS should reconsider what is best for the long-term in town where financial planning is done and how it factors into yearly planning cycles through official committees and or staff the BOS has chartered with preparing those plans. Unclear if the Collins Center if the plan for operation analysis and financial planning is in consideration.
- The recommendation to incorporate town department head discussions in budget formation does not appear to be formally called out in the Town Administrators letter to collect operating budget and capital requests from Department Heads.
- Officer elections (abstentions reflect each candidate cast the abstention for themselves)
 - Chair for fiscal year, re-elected John Shipman, 4-0-1
 - Vice-chair for fiscal year, re-elected George Handy, 4-0-1
 - Secretary for fiscal year, re-elected Wayne Adams, 4-0-1
- Discussed any insight to the progress and outreach of the AC Review Committee
 - AC Review Committee reflect they are working on a SWOT Analysis
 - Of the 5 AC members in the meeting, none have been contacted by the review committee to gain insight to AC work and or opinions for whether the AC should become a Finance Committee
 - John Shipman in September passed along guidance to Terry Hart to review the AC meeting minutes and Town Annual Reports (for the AC Report) for background on what the AC does currently.

Meeting adjourned 8:00 PM

Upcoming AC meetings

None scheduled,

though BOS meeting on November 13th may further discuss the AC decision on financial plans preparation and Collins Center proposals.

November 14th, Facilities Committee public meeting on requirements analysis results and current building assessments.

Handouts and Referenced Documents

- Draft minutes of BOS October 30th meeting, specific BOS motion for AC to decide on financial planning work

Minutes recorded by Wayne M. Adams, AC Member