

TOWN OF PRINCETON MA
Princeton Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 17, 2018

AC members in attendance: Jimmy O'Coin, John Shipman, George Handy, Judy Dino, Wayne Adams

AC members absent: Bill Lawton, Don Schoeny

SB members in attendance: Richy Bisk, Edie Morgan, Jon Fudeman

SB members absent: none

Town Administrator: Nina Nazarian present

Joint Select Board and Advisory Committee (AC) Agenda

- Roundtable statements about FY19 budget
- Review draft town budget
- Review draft town warrant article

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Started at 7:55 PM

Richy Bisk led a roundtable discussion where everyone was allotted 3 minutes to make a statement, uninterrupted, about the FY19 budget. AC members did receive answers to most AC submitted questions from 4/15 prior to the 4/17 meeting. All were made aware of the new state house developments that may improve WRSD allocations with possible savings passed-back to Princeton in the \$20K range. A wide range of budget line items were raised including police cruisers, fire truck, town employee health insurance, department salaries, year-to-year operating budget growth, increased ambulance readiness services, facility alternatives, prioritizing department spend (fire, police, highway/road) if the budget resources are finite/less to support all requests, reallocating WRSD savings, and cost and use of additional post office space. TA pointed out that the operating budget w/o WRSD is now <2% y-o-y growth per the new materials provided on 4/13.

SB requested AC to take-up at their April 18th meeting a review of the 5 related facility motions reflected in ATM Warrant version 8 provided via email on 4/13 and hardcopy on 4/17. These motions reflect 1: repair/stabilization expenses for Town Hall, Town Hall Annex, and current Public Safety Building 2: new public safety building, and 3: renovate current Town Hall for increased housed activities. One of the questions is the order of the motions.

Jon Fudeman and John Shipman to meet with Fire Department to better understand the costs and options for increased staffing for ambulance services. A growing portion of the town population could benefit with more timely response to emergency incidents.

Richy Bisk and Jimmy O'Coin to meet with Police Department to better understand the costs and options for cruiser replacement and timing of replacement based on criteria such as usage, maintenance costs, and readiness/availability.

Edie asked AC its opinion on the JWA study, asked if each of the AC has read it, and where the AC stood with options A, B, C. AC did a strawman vote on Options A, B, C and also created options D and E as part of its strawman vote. Wayne to send AC March 14th meeting minutes to SB. AC member Jimmy O'Coin was absent from the AC March 14th meeting and shared his opinions on options A,B,C : 1) first priority is to repair/stabilize town hall, annex, and current public safety building, 2) new public safety building at Princeton Center – saving no current PC structures and to find cheaper building options such as a metal pre-fabbed Morton building; 3) further pursue Post Office place for rental space for a community center for COA and other town functions to use – which may mitigate the JWA recommendation to expand and renovate town hall. There was concern whether a town vote for an item is binding for future years or whether another vote would be required for the funding of an approved item – when borrowing is required. TA gave an overview MA GL for motions that raise and appropriate, and conditions of timing of the expense, whether there would be a prop 2 ½ over-ride or debt exclusion for an item.

AC meeting adjourned at 9:29 PM

Upcoming AC meetings

- Upcoming SB meetings, tbd whether there will be additional budget discussions and decisions: April 30th, 7:30PM
- AC meeting April 18th, 6:00 PM
- FSC/SB/AC meeting Tuesday April 24th, hosted by FSC – discuss facility articles
- AC public hearing for ATM Warrant, May 7th
- ATM May 15th

Handouts and Referenced Documents

- Revised FY19 Operating Budget, 4/13/2018
- Revised FY19 Capital Budget, 4/13/2018
- Revised Draft Warrant Article (version 8), 4/13/2018
- AC list of questions from John Shipman 4/15 with TA answers on 4/17

From: "Nina Nazarian" <townadministrator@town.princeton.ma.us>
Date: April 17, 2018 at 3:21:19 PM EDT
To: jwshipman@aol.com
Cc: emorgan800mail@aol.com, jonfudeman@gmail.com, biskselect@gmail.com
Subject: Re: Questions for Joint AC & SB

Hi John,

Please see below in red for my responses to the compiled questions. There were many other questions that did not seem to get compiled. I appreciate you and Wayne forwarding them for us to be able to discuss in the future, if questions still remain.

Thanks,

Nina

"John W. Shipman" <jwshipman@aol.com> on Monday, April 16, 2018 at 10:56 PM -0400 wrote:

Nina,

As per Richy's suggestion, here are questions for the joint meeting tomorrow evening at 7:50 PM. Questions are distilled below and the attachment has a number of additional questions.

Ambulance personnel and fire funding for weekend coverage in the amount of about \$20K? Does SB approve? No

Utility costs! Police about \$1300./month for electricity and \$750. for phones. Have those expenses been reviewed and if so, is it determined to be excessive relative to other departments? Police dept pays all electric costs for entire building, including fire dept portion, which includes a 24/7 operation. Police has paid on average approx. \$670/month for telephone for their department to date, but this is a variable number to some extent, based on usage. This includes the telephone costs for the conversion to dispatch which required two added lines for police, as well as two cell phones for the department.

Have town owned assets - buildings, land, (PMLD wind turbines) which may not be of value to the town (perhaps they may be liabilities) needed and should be sold; been valued and ready to be marketed? No, due to time constraints. Perhaps we can get help from AC on town owned assets. AC might consult PMLD on wind turbines. Est. asset value may be \$2-2.5 M or about 25% of the annual budget. Could the source of this number please be provided?

Has it been determined that department managers might be more helpful in writing their annual budgets regarding need vs want and giving detailed rationale for capital expenditures? If so, how was the information related to the departments? This can be discussed further. I believe that additional AC involvement in budget preparation would be welcomed. However, there is concern by me and others that this involvement must be conducted in a manner that is respectful to the contributions of town employees.

Have pre-engineered metal buildings been considered rather than a rehab of 150 +/- year old buildings that may need ongoing costly restoration? This question was forwarded to FSC by Richy.

If financial resources are finite, has the Select Board ranked fire, police and highways as to their capital requests. If so, what decisions were made? See TA FY19 capital plan summary for information ranked by TA, requires ratification by Selectboard.

What annual budget increase/decrease does the SB generally agree the tax payer can afford? 1%, 2%, 3%, 4%, 5%, 6%? The SB has requested that the TA make recommendations reflecting a 2 ½ - 3% for operating budget for FY19. Taxpayers will answer the question of affordability going forward at ATM.

Regarding Richy's effort to help tighten the meeting agenda by adding a 3 minute time-line, this list along with the attached list, should more than fill the time allowed.

Minutes recorded by Wayne M. Adams, AC Member