

TOWN OF PRINCETON MA
Princeton Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 4, 2018

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

AC members absent: Bill Lawton, Don Schoeny

Advisory Committee (AC) Agenda

- Review draft town budget
- Review draft town warrant article

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Started at 5:20 PM

Approved AC Minutes for March 28th, 2018

John Shipman led a discussion through the draft warrant article. Group made votes to approve or defer a decision per each article. For the articles approved/voted yes to support, Chair will advise Town Administrator to reflect those in future versions of the warrant. AC at a future meeting will resume review of the warrant articles left as ToBeDetermined (TBD). These articles lacked enough financial detail or final numbers to make a decision. In general terms, about 50% of the article was voted Yes for AC to recommend/support; these articles tended to be inconsequential in fiscal size and or standing items from year to year. The major items left to be decided are the operating budget, the capital budget, free cash allocations, and facility engineering/construction budgets.

During the review the warrant articles sequentially, the group discussed the approach to decide the operating budget and the capital budget. Discussion included a top down approach to cite percentage growth over last year and not worry about line items, alternatively is to cite specific line items to not approve that quickly converge on the financial objective of a not to exceed percentage. Group is challenged to know which line items can be reduced due to lack of insight to the department including workflow, manhours required for tasks in the department, and alternatives approaches that should be pursued that would be more efficient and less costly. George suggested we set FY17 as a baseline and allow 2.5% growth y-o-y. John suggested from his guidance to the SB to have 1.5% growth from FY18. Wayne and Jimmy were suggesting 0% over FY18. Judy suggested we do a bottoms up review of the draft, question items that have grown fast y-o-y, and accept the budget where it comes out regardless of y-o-y growth given the diligence department heads put into planning their budget for level service. For FY18 as a baseline, there is the town approved budget and then a new assessors calculation that sets the budget higher. [Proper accounting would have been with a higher property valuation, then the tax rate should have been reduced to match the town approved budget.] With all the

approaches being discussed, all were in the ballpark where total spend of operating budget and capital as of 4/2 is about \$400K over AC recommended total.

AC requested more information on the ambulance article from Town Administrator.

A new article not reflected on the town warrant version 4/2 was developed by the SB, to sell Mechanics Hall. Discussion was had, and AC was in favor to support, voting Yes.

AC meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM

Upcoming AC meetings

- Upcoming SB meetings, tbd whether there will be additional budget discussions and decisions: April 17th 7:30PM
- AC public hearing for ATM Warrant, May 7th
- ATM May 15th

Handouts and Referenced Documents

- Latest version of town budget spreadsheets, from TA on 4/2/2018
- Draft Warrant Article, from TA on 4/2/2018

Minutes recorded by Wayne M. Adams, AC Member