

Minutes
STOW FINANCE COMMITTEE
Public Hearing
March 19, 2009
7:00 PM
Town Building
Approved

Call to Order

Charles Kern called the meeting to order at 7:20 pm. Present were, David Walrath, James Salvie, Ann Deluty, Christopher Sarno and Elizabeth Tobey, Secretary.

Charlie explained that the purpose of the Public Hearing is to listen to the people on concerns with the Town Warrant. The Warrant had not been approved and has handed out a Preliminary Copy of the Warrant.

Ellen Sturgis stated that the Elementary School Building Committee in 2007 had taken a vote for the Center School renovation for the best proposal. Bond Counsel has stated to them that they cannot spend any of the money on Pompositicut Elementary School. The MSBA has not responded regarding Pompositicut School.

The MSBA has given notice that some study may be done on Pompo. They are hoping for a change in the article language to include Pompo, strictly to loosen a phrase on the proposal.

Ellen stated that she is unsure how much has been spent to date. MSBA is supportive of the Master Plan. Nothing is on paper yet. They want to make sure the report is up to date and that they have the money to do it.

Jim asked if the MSBA are leaning toward 2 schools. Do they want something as to why we are not considering it? Ellen's answer was yes.

Ellen stated that Article 37. School Building 2 – Add \$80,000 to ESBC acct, if necessary, has been removed from the warrant.

Discussion of Town Warrant articles for May 4, 2009 Town Meeting

Article 1 – Town Officers Not elected by Ballot

Article 2 – Reports of Selectmen and Other Officers and Committees

Article 3 – Reports of Special Committees – Land Use Task Force final report

Article 4 – Wage and Salary Schedules – Add 3 percent to FY 09

Article 5 – General Budget for fiscal year 2010 – See Bill's Budget

Charlie explained that there is a 3% cost of living adjustment this year.

Janet Stiles asked to speak about the Recreation Commissions personnel budget. She stated that she feels the position of Recreation Director should be eliminated. The 45k full time position is fully benefited and appointed by the Recreation Commission. She suggested that Bolton and Harvard recreation activities are all run by volunteers that perform the same duties that our recreation department does. The duties can be divided into 3 categories; Seasonal, Fees and Contracts and League Management. We shouldn't have to pay for it, people using the services should direct them.

Janet Stiles also stated that she feels there should be a freeze on all salaries.

Beginning Of The Consent Calendar

Article 6 – Reserve Fund

Article 7 – Tax Title Proceedings

Article 8 – Audit of Financial Records

Article 9 – Revolving Fund for Inspection Fees

Article 10 – Revolving Fund for Advanced Life Support Services

Article 11 – Transfer to Conservation Fund – Land Maintenance

Article 12 – Addition to Conservation Fund

Article 13 – Transfer from Wetland Protection Fund

Article xx – Update of Property Valuations

Article xx – Town Records Binding and Repair

Article xx –

Article xx – Highway Road Machinery and Private Ways

Article xx – Highway Road Construction

Article xx – Federal Safe Drinking Water Act

Article xx – House Hold Hazardous Waste Collection

Article xx – Public Health Nurse

Ellen Sturgis suggested that last year the nurse was from Concord Health Care. She feels that the Public Nurse should be moved out of the consent calendar.

Article xx – Solid Waste Disposal Container

Article xx – Medical Reserve Corps Expenses

Article xx -

Article xx – Stow Cultural Council

Article xx – Selectmen's Eng Expenses

Article xx – Planning Board Eng/Consulting and Master Plan Exp

Article xx – Purchase of Information Technology Equipment

Article xx -

Article xx – Legal Services

Article xx – Policemen and Firemen Medical Payments

Article xx – Agricultural Commission Expenses

Article xx – Weights and Measures Testing

Article xx – Swiftreach 911

Article xx – Community Preservation Committee Expenses

Article xx – Community Preservation Reserves

End of – Consent Calendar

Article 35 – Capital Requests

Bill Byron asked how many times the Hale roof is going to be repaired. Should we consider pitched roofs?

Charlie explained that it is an ongoing multi-year project spread over 3 years.

Article 36 – School Building

Article xx – Transfer \$45,000 from FY09 Ag Expenses to Ag Preservation Fund (to correct an error)

Article xx – MGL Ch 57, s 8a as amended 8/14/08 by MGL Ch310, s.2 to exempt livestock and farm equipment from excise tax

Article xx – Water Hole Maintenance

Article xx – Police Station Energy Upgrades

Article xx – Create Historical Properties Inventory \$50,000 from CPA Historical funds

Laura Spears explained that the Historical Commission approved the historical properties that are to be inventoried. The commission has talked to a consultant and stated that there is much more information on the new surveys.

Article xx – Purchase Stow Musket \$6,759 from CPA Historical funds

Laura Spear explained that the Musket has belonged to a Stow family through generations. It is for sale now. There has been an independent appraisal on the Musket. The Minutemen will pay 50% and the other 50% will be with CPA funds. The musket will then belong to the town. A volunteer offered to make a case for the Musket.

Article xx – Cemetery snow thrower attachment, \$3,000 from Sale of Lots account

Article xx – Add to Unemployment Compensation fund

Article xx – Increase fee on delinquent tax bills to \$10 each

Article xx – Accept MGL 32B, s.18 to require Medicare Part A enrollees to have Medicaid supplement plan thru Town

Article xx – Senior Tax Relief – Allow property tax exemptions

Article xx – Minuteman Regional – Create stabilization fund, under MGL CH 71m s 16G1/2, beginning July 1

Charlie stated that the article is to create the stabilization fund this year. It is not to fund it this year. If it passes they will need 2/3 of the school committee vote to spend the funds as apposed to going to Town Meeting for approval.

Article xx – Street Acceptance – Wildlife Woods (4 streets)

Article xx – Street Acceptance – Cider Mill

Article xx – Street Acceptance – Kettle Plain

Charlie explained that these articles are for zoning bylaw amendments.

Article xx – Allow Selectmen to appoint permitting authority for trench safety regulations

Article xx – General Bylaw Amendment – Require paper ballots for warrant articles \$250,000 or more

Bill Byron stated that the Concerned Citizens debated the dollar value limit and settled on \$250k.

Jim Salvie asked if they really believe at any dollar amount people are subject to intimidation if they don't vote they way others want them to.

Bill suggested that he had heard rumors that there has been intimidation. There have been children making comments to other children that their parents didn't vote right. He also stated that there are resident/businesses owners in town that will not vote for fear of losing customers.

Jim asked if intimidation is the problem is there a more feasible solution. What if we gave the Moderator the power to call a paper ballot at his discretion?

Bill stated that the moderator has the power now to accept or refuse a paper ballot. We want to eliminate the power of the moderator. He now has full control over the meeting.

Article xx – Zoning Bylaw Amendment – Active Adult Neighborhoods

Article xx – Zoning Bylaw Amendment – Developable Site Area

Article xx – Zoning Bylaw Amendment – Zoning District Map

Article xx – Transfer \$74,000 from the Long-term Debt account and \$3,000 from the Interest on Temporary Loans account to the FT09 Snow and Ice Account

Article xx – Transfer to Stabilization Fund – General

Article xx – Transfer to Stabilization Fund – Clean Up of Carryover Articles

No comments

Article xx – Balance the FY 2010 Budget

Article xx – Town Election

Charlie explained again that the Warrant that was handed out is only a preliminary Warrant and asked if anyone wanted them to continue the Open Hearing until the Selectmen voted on the Warrant. There was no request to keep it open.

Adjournment

Public hearing closed at 8:15pm.

A motion to adjourn was made by David Walrath at 8:30 pm. James Salvie seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously – Kern, Walrath and Salvie

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth A. Tobey,
Secretary