

Minutes
STOW FINANCE COMMITTEE
March 22, 2011
7:30 PM
Town Building
Approved

Call to Order

Chairman Gary Bernklow called the meeting to order at 7:36pm. Present were,
Members: Christopher Sarno, Ann Deluty, Rick Connelly and Peter McManus
Associates: Eric Sears and Rick Rollins
Secretary: Elizabeth Tobey
Guest: Laura Greenough, Brian Burke, Michael Wood, Lynn Collette and Susan Wysk

Correspondence

Notice of Planning Board Public Hearing on April 12, 2011, re: Wedgwood Pines Country Club
Beacon Newsletter, March 2011
May 2, 2011 Town Warrant Draft for review from the Selectmen's office

Meeting Minutes

After a review of the minutes Richard Connelly moved to approve March 15, 2011 minutes as Amended. Christopher Sarno seconded the motion.
The motion carried unanimously (Bernklow, Deluty, Sarno, Connelly)

Review of Budgets

Library – Susan Wysk

Susan explained that her budget is very cut and dry with very little wiggle room. She is the only full-time employee. The others are part-time. The 1.69% increase in payroll is the 1% cost of living and 3 out of 5 employees with longevity.

Building update:

- *This is the first winter with no repairs*
- *Craig Martin is waiting for spring to finish the repairs*
- *A Capital Project request has been submitted to replace the leaking slate roof*
- *It will cost approximately \$25k for the roof repair and removal of the mold*
They will have to treat the building, replace drywall and paint
- *Approximately \$20k from the insurance funds will be used for the repairs.*

Some residents have expressed concerns regarding the leaks and are not coming to the Library because of it.

Susan expressed that the town needs a bigger space for the library, which will mean more employees. The residents will decide if that will happen at Town Meeting. When asked about the Trust Fund and if they are used for anything other than books, Susan explained that the funds are not used for repairs. Each year the Trust spends \$40k on materials and \$6k of that is from the town.

When asked if she or the trustees have taken a position of the building she expressed that they want to leave the building. If they don't get any grants they will not be able to move anywhere. If Town Meeting votes "no" they won't be moving.

Peter asked if there was an estimated cost for capital repairs and for moving to Pompo. Susan said that the estimated capital project to repair the building from Craig Martin is \$100k. Ann expressed that the Pompo Use Study Committee has estimated that it will be 5–6mil to move them into the school. Theoretically they will get a grant for 60% of that

Susan exited at 8:18pm

Recreation – Laura Greenough

Laura commented that there was very little change for last year and that most of the programs for Recreation are self-funded.

Laura explained that the new addition of Camp Stow Summer Camp is a joint effort with the Maynard Boys Club. All revenue will come into the Recreation Department and managed by Laura. She has worked the numbers to be sure they will have enough funds to run the camp. The town will share equipment with the Maynard Boys Club, saving costs of purchasing new. The Boys Club bus trips are ½ full and they asked if Stow would join in to full the buses.

The Snow property costs a lot to maintain. The electricity cost is up. Full maintenance is \$41k for all 3 facilities. In the past it has been around \$20k. Fees were raised 2 years ago, significantly. The increase has not effect the use. Lacrosse is outsourced and they pay rent for use of the property and the town sponsors Field hockey.

When asked if she anticipated any capital requests Laura expressed a need for Irrigation at Memorial Field and potentially Pine Bluffs. They would also like to install guardrails at Stow Community Park. Maintenance from vandalism is high. They are thinking of installing night vision cameras at Pine Bluffs. There have been incidents of people driving on the fields and destroying the field, to the point of them being unplayable. The lake complains of the one small light we have on the shed at Pine Bluffs. The dock was stolen and eventually found. Vandalism is very costly in repairs.

Chris suggested she published the cost of repairs from vandalism to the town.

NRSD – Michael Wood, Brian Burke, Lynn Colletti

Christopher Sarno recused himself

Mr. Wood gave a review of the budget as follows:

- Net 2.5% increase. Stow's Assessment rose \$180k this year.
- Another town asked for a zero assessment with no stimulus money
- Biggest driver is insurance and benefits (still negotiating)
- Have lost job grant
- \$400k increase for personnel costs this year
- \$162k for distant placements. (Working hard to keep kids in our district)
- Cut 2.5 % out of the budget (a little over 1mil)
- Holding down costs (locked into a fixed price before they rose)
- Assistant superintendent is also a principal
- Looking through enrollment yearly and make shift changes
- Level serviced budget
- Try not to use funds to cause large changes
- Reasonable class sizes
- Comprehensive programming

Brian stated that they are cutting the rate of increase. They are trying to slow the rate of increase. Have had a .75% increase over the last few years. The government is talking about a 5% increase over last year. (5% of chapter 70). We have to pass the budget with out knowing what the figures are. We have budgeted no increase for next year. No new contracts or provisions for next year.

Gary stated that they have more than \$300k reduction next year and asked if they had spent reserves to make up the losses. It will be likely next year that there will be an increase to make up the losses this year. Michael wood acknowledged that they had.

Ann asked if they were trading teaching bodies for health insurance. Michael said, "yes". We thought we found an answer for that, but this year we are facing an increase. GIP does work for us but it is more expensive. Brian explained that they are going to be doing a GIP investigation next year.

- Health care increase is rising and there are more people to cover – individual to family plans
- We cover 70% of the cost

When asked if other students for other districts pay us, Michael responded yes.

Bill Byron suggested that the big driver is health insurance. He asked how Michael felt about an 11% increase. Do you think it's justified?

Michael suggested that the provider's information makes us aware of the high risk. Circumstances changed and we went with the collaborative. The increase was at 18% and now went back up to 11%. Brian commented that there is a question of; is it reflective of overall trends?

Bill Byron asked how much of that rate depends on the usage of personnel of the plan. Michael explained that everyone's plan is based on the amount of usage. Bill asked if everyone's rate went up. He said that everyone in the collaborative gets the same rate.

Michael was asked about the \$700k in salary cuts. He stated that they are actual reductions.

When asked what the plan was when the budget doesn't go through. Michael suggested that in May if the second budget passes he would not go back to towns looking for more funds to cover the costs. Eric asked if everything was on the table at negotiations. Michael explained that in the process you decide what's on the table.

Brian explained that 70% is pursuant to the contract. We are committed to do the best job we can for the towns.

Gary asked if there were any capital projects in their future. Michael stated that in the next couple of years they would have to replace a field. For the future, the classroom space increased by 3 during the renovations. In the next five years we will have to look at monitoring enrollment. Hale will need some small changes in classrooms. We will also need to retrofit HVAC on the 2nd floor.

Wood, Colletti, Burke out at 9:05pm
Chris returned to the meeting 9:05pm

Town Meeting – Gary explained the process of Town Meeting and what the member's responsibility is. He asked that the members read the warrant articles.

Liaison Reports

ESBC- Rick Rollins asked about Center School Capital. Gary commented that \$5k was spent for an appraisal of prospective land purchases.

CPC – There may be a CPC meeting. There doesn't appear to be anything affecting the Warrant.

Fire – Bill has not set a date for the Fire Dept task force.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Christopher Sarno at 9:22pm. Ann Deluty seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously (Bernklow, Deluty, Sarno, Connelly and McManus).

Future meetings:

April 5, 2011 (if needed)

April 7, 2011 Public Hearing

April 12, 2011

April 26, 2011

May 2, 2011 Annual Town Meeting

Action Items:

Beth to schedule 4/5 meeting, to be cancelled if not needed

Members to read the Warrant articles

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth A. Tobey,
Secretary