

Sturbridge Finance Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
September 8, 2011  
Town Hall  
7:00 pm

Meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm with the following members present: Kevin Smith (KS), Prescott (Scott) Arndt (SA), Mary Redetzke (MR), and Mike Serio (MS), Patti Affenito (PA), Arnold Wilson (AW), and Joni Light (JL).

Members Absent: Larry Morrison (LM) and Rich Volpe (RV).

Audience members: Tom Creamer (TC), BOS Chair; Mary Blanchard (MB), BOS member, and Mike Caplette (MC), Town Moderator.

The following items on the Special Town Meeting Warrant are considered administrative items by the Charter Review Committee (pages 1-3). The FinCom called this section Article A.

KS suggests beginning with the administrative items on the Special Town Meeting Warrant. The FinCom makes no changes to Article 1-Definitions, Section F; Article 1-Definitions, Section G; Article 3, Section 3-2 Presiding Officer; Article 3, Section 3-5 Town Meeting Warrant Posting; and Article 4, Section 4-1 (A) Elective Offices.

The board recommends amendment of the STMW by removing Article 4, Section 4-1 (C); Article 4, Sections 4-10 through 4-12.

FinCom recommends changing 'Article 4', Section 4-13 Recall Petition by specifying in which article this language belongs (Article 4), removing the word 'number' and changing the word 'her' to his.

The board recommends the amendment of the STMW by removing Article 5, Section 5-1 Town Administrator-Appointment; Qualifications; Term.

Discussion about Article 5, Section 5-3 (J) centers on current and proposed language because it adjusts timing of the FinCom seeing contracts to after they have been voted upon. PA asks if there is a reason to see a contract before it is signed. MB says no, because this is not in the scope of FinCom. MC states that scope starts at the existing condition/language and looks at the future condition/language. KS states that based on MC's comment, that removal is not within the scope of the FinCom. MC says yes it is. Article 5, Section 5-3 (J) Powers and Duties is amended by removing the word 'proposed' and keeping the language 'before final action is taken'.

The board makes no changes to Article 5, Section 5-3 (K) Powers and Duties or Article 5, Section 5-3 (M) Powers and Duties.

Article 5, Section 5-4 Acting Town Administrator is amended by keeping the language: due to illness or extraordinary circumstances.

The board makes no changes to Article 6, Section 6-1 Appointments by the Town Administrator or Article 6, Section 6-1 Appointments by the Town Administrator. For the next Section 6-1 Appointments by the Town Administrator, the board suggests removing the word 'regular' for the Police Department, and amending 'Other Inspectors' by excluding the BOH appointees. The next two Sections 6-1 Appointments by the Town Administrator are not amended. The last Section 6-1 Appointments by the Town Administrator is amended by striking the Capital Planning Committee and adding the Zoning Board of Appeals, with two members of seven appointed for terms of three years each.

The board makes no change to Article 6, Section 6-3 Power to Rescind Appointments.

PA asks whether a section should be added in Article 5 with regards to the BOS having a seat on the TA search committee, since they have a vote both as a search committee member and as a Selectman on the BOS (as they are the final appointing authority). PA disagrees with the view that the search committee just presents candidates.

In Article 7, Section 7-2 Assistant Assessor, the FinCom suggests amending this section by striking the word 'assessors' and adding 'Selectmen' in its place.

The following items on the Special Town Meeting Warrant are considered procedural enhancements by the Charter Review Committee (pages 6-7). The FinCom called this section Article B.

The FinCom recommends Article B, Section 5-3 (B) Powers and Duties be removed.

AW makes a motion to take no action on Article C (page 8) Charter Amendment-Finance Committee Appointments, it is seconded by PA. AS states the same reasons for no action. Discussion ensues: JL asks why should the process be changed? KS answers that the CRC believes the Town Moderator has too much authority and by adding two people the consolidation of power is diluted. He, however, goes on to say that the process has worked for the life of the Charter and previously as well. MC makes the point that the system has worked well for quite some time and that he strives to be fair and un-biased when he makes appointments. KS makes the point that only here is power consolidated with the BOS. PA makes a comment that she is not voting to approve the Articles from the CRC that mirror those that were submitted by petition for the ATM in June 2011. She goes on to say that she finds it interesting that these petitions were brought forth by some of the CRC members; if that committee is supposed to unbiased and objective, then why would members be petitioning issues for immediate action that were being postponed to a Special Town Meeting? This suggests to her that there is personal bias and causes concern about the validity of the CRC's recommendations. Vote to take no action is 7-0-0.

AW makes a motion to take no action on Article D (page 10) Charter Amendment-Appointment of Zoning Board of Appeals, it is seconded by MR. Vote is 7-0-0.

MR asks why the BOS took no action on Article E (page 11) Charter Amendment-Appointment of Town Counsel. TC answers that the TA has more contact with Town Counsel and therefore

should have input into the choice. AW makes a motion to take no action, it is seconded by MR. Vote 7-0-0.

There is no discussion regarding Article F (page 12) Charter Amendment-Committee Appointments. AW makes a motion to take no action, it is seconded by MR. Vote 7-0-0.

New Business:

November 7 is the tentative date for the Special Town Meeting. It is hoped that the book outlining the Articles will be available in a more timely fashion.

Old Business:

SA will serve as the temporary school building liaison for LM. KS will serve as the liaison to the Trails Committee.

KS makes a motion to adjourn at 10:20 pm.