

Upton Fincom Minutes DRAFT
April 6, 2011 at Upton Fire Station

Members present: five

Joan Shanahan, Chair (JS)
Steve Bern (SB)
Paul Flaherty (PF)
Karen Glowacki (KG)
John O'Sullivan (JO)

Members Absent: three

Jonathan Calianos (JC)
Jennifer Malin (JC)
Herman Meisner (HM)

Chairman, Joan Shanahan, called the meeting to order with a quorum at 7:27 PM, and announced the following additions to the agenda:

1. Discussion about acting upon CPA articles.
2. Discussion of Article #3 regarding request from Town Clerk asking Fincom to cover a \$1500 shortfall in funding town meetings

There was a discussion regarding a request from the Town Clerk for \$1500 to fund a shortfall in the election account. Should we leave this as an article on the Special Town Meeting Warrant or fund the request from free cash? **Motion by PF, second by JO to fund the election account for extra town meeting wages from Fincom Reserve.**

Discussion on motion. Is this setting a precedent? We have done it in the past. Should make sure we understand request and precedent. **Motion withdrawn after discussion.**

Attachment 1: Town of Upton/STM 05 May 2011/Warrant

Attachment 2: Special Town Meeting Warrant Background-May 5, 2011

There was a discussion as to how to fund the articles on the warrant for the special town meeting on May 5. Regular stabilization is \$411,000. Should we be using that for the school roof? Since that is an operating expense for the school, should this come out of the school stabilization account or should it come from their budget? There was some discussion about leaving some money in free cash to start next year with money available. Is there money in other accounts that might be available besides using free cash and stabilization? We should ask the accountant for the running balances of all accounts. Stabilization gets interest, but it takes a two-thirds vote to expend it. Should we take money from free cash for school roof? Would we ever take money from free cash for the school?

No one has told us the full cost of article 7, which is the design for the Richard property well field. We have already spent money on testing. If this was a different time financially, we might be able to move forward. What is the cost to cap and not complete? We would have to start over. The owner of the property has an application for a four to five house subdivision. Where is that in relation to the well field? Is the development going to be near the water source?

Questions about article 13; which is the renovation of Leland Field. SB was part of the original project that used CPA money for drainage and a well for irrigation. There is one baseball field in the back and one multipurpose field in the front. The field is not useable, so this needs to be done. Money has come from the school (\$26,000), Pulte donation (\$65,000) and CPC (\$75,000) so this article will provide the remaining funding of \$10,000.

The following motions were made relative to the articles on the special town meeting warrant for May 5.

Article 1: Motion, by PF, seconded by KG, to fund a request for \$35,000 for the insurance account from free cash. The motion passed unanimously.

Article 4: Motion, by SB, seconded by KG, to fund the \$26,446 cost for the schematic design phase of the MSBA Green Repair Program, from the Mendon/Upton School Stabilization account. The motion passed unanimously.

Article 5: Motion, by SB, seconded by PF, to fund the \$50,000 with transfers from other completed projects as recommended by the Board of Selectmen. The motion passed unanimously.

Article 6: Motion, by PF, seconded by SB, to fund the request for \$7000 for the Fire Department Fuel Account, through a transfer of \$4500 from the DPW fuel account, and \$2500 from free cash as recommended by the Board of Selectmen. The motion passed unanimously.

Article 7: Motion, by SB, seconded by KG, to borrow \$300,000, for the schematic design of the Richard property well field. Motion passed by a majority vote of four yes, and one no.

Article 8: No action was taken since this article is a bylaw that does not require funding.

Article 11: Motion, by PF, seconded by KG to fund \$9000 for the environmentally safe disposal of street sweepings, from free cash. The motion passed unanimously.

Article 12: Motion, by PF, seconded by JO to fund \$132,000 or an updated amount for the shortfall in the Snow/Ice Account from free cash. The motion passed unanimously.

Article 13: Motion, by KG, seconded by JO, to fund \$10,000 for the renovation of Leland Field from free cash. The motion passed unanimously.

Article 14: Motion, by SB, seconded by KG, to transfer \$25,000 from free cash to the General Stabilization Account. The motion passed unanimously. (Money remaining in free cash would be \$27,000.)

Following motions on the articles above the discussion returned to articles 2, 9 and 10.

The committee decided to hold for more information on article 2 regarding a request for \$75,000 to fund construction, repairs and drainage to parts of Southborough and Westborough Roads.

Attachment 3: Voting on CPA articles. Attachment 3 is an email from the Town Manager saying that Town Counsel has reviewed the Community Preservation Act (CPA) and

could find nothing that would prevent the Finance Committee from making a recommendation on CPA articles. The Fincom will make no recommendation on article 9 since this is transfers required by law among CPA accounts. There was a discussion about article 10, which is requesting a transfer of \$24,500 from the CPA Reserved Fund-Historical Account to fund an archaeological exploration and evaluation of the chamber located at the park at 18 Elm St and to restore the stones to their original positions, to avoid further damage to the structure and to prevent possible injury.

Joan has contacted Rena Richard, the chair of the Community Preservation Committee, (CPC) asking that members of the CPC come to a meeting to discuss their recommendation of the article. The house on the property was removed, the debris removed, and the cellar hole was filled and graded at no cost to the town. The Historical Commission (HC) has received donations of money and time toward developing the property into a park. Since purchase of the property was with CPA funds, why would we not fund the development of the park using additional CPA funds? Comment from one member that the HC had previously indicated they would not ask for anymore town funds for this project. No decision was made pending the discussion with the CPC.

There was discussion on wages regarding the increases for nonunion employees and the Town Manager relative to future union negotiations. The school union set the tone by agreeing to a wage freeze. The Personnel Board does not give opinion based on town finances but on fairness. Mr. Meisner was going to contact the Personnel Board for an explanation of their recommendations, but he is not here tonight. Should we ask their chairman to come to a meeting?

We have no control over the school budget. If they have money left, they do not have to return it to the town and they do not inform us, if they do.

The committee anticipates we will be receiving a bill for Upton's share to cap the former town dump.

We have \$500,000 in debt service now. We could exhaust the 2.5% override.

It is difficult to make decisions on the school budget because we need to wait to see what Mendon voters do in respect to their override.

Attachment 4: Annual Town Meeting Articles. There is a danger to putting so many articles on the warrant. What, if they all passed?

We need to meet with the Selectmen to resolve some of the issues. We also need the Town Manager to come to our meeting to explain some of the articles before we can act. The Selectmen have posted a meeting for Friday afternoon.

There was discussion regarding adjourning or recessing this meeting so that we could attend the Selectmen's meeting to discuss the wage and school issues.

A motion was made by PF, second by SB to recess until 4 PM, Friday, May 8, to attend the Selectmen's meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Arnold

Attachment 1: Town of Upton/STM 05 May 2011/Warrant, version 3.0

Attachment 2: Special Town Meeting Warrant Background-May5,2011

Attachment 3: Voting on CPA articles

Attachment 4: Annual Town Meeting Articles