

MINUTES OF MEETING OF WAREHAM FINANCE COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: October 13, 2010

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M.

II. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Donna Bronk, Chairman
Marilyn Donahue, Vice Chairman
William R.C. White, Clerk
David Trudell
Dick Paulsen
Bonnie Cottuli (Arrived at 6:45 P.M.)
Frank Heath
Sam Gray
Dominic Cammarano (Arrived at 6:50 P.M.)

Also Present: Mark Andrews, Town Administrator (Arrived at 6:43 P.M.)
Jane Donahue, BOS Liaison (Arrived at 6:43 P.M.)
John Sanguinet, BOS Assistant

III. PUBLIC HEARING ON 2010 FALL TOWN MEETING WARRANT

MOTION: Mr. Paulsen moved to open the public hearing on the 2010 Fall Town Meeting Warrant. Mr. Trudell seconded.

VOTE: (6-1-0)
Mr. White opposed

No-one was in the audience.

Brief discussion ensued re: whether to close the public hearing or keep it open since no-one from was present in the audience. Mr. Trudell suggested waiting another 15 minutes to close the hearing. The FinCom members concurred.

IV. BUSINESS

A. FY10 Figures.

Discussion ensued re: the FY10 figures. The FinCom had been under the assumption these figures would be presented this evening. Mr. Sanguinet stated he was not aware of the figures being presented this evening. He noted that Ms. Zaleski will not be present at this meeting.

B. Motions for Articles.

Mr. Sanguinet discussed motions for articles. The Town Moderator has suggested making all motions Favorable Action even though some FinCom & BOS votes were in the negative.

Discussion ensued re: who will be making the motions. Mr. Sanguinet stated as he understands, the proponents of the articles will make the motions, for example, Nan Miller will be making the motions for the Community Preservation Committee articles. The FinCom can then make their points for the article if they voted in the negative.

MOTION: Mr. Trudell moved to close the public hearing on the 2010 Fall Town Meeting Warrant. Mr. Paulsen seconded.

**VOTE: (6-1-0)
Mr. White opposed**

NOTE: Mr. Andrews & Selectman Donahue arrived at this time.

Discussion continued re: motions.

NOTE: Ms. Cottuli arrived at this time.

Discussion again ensued re: the FY10 figures. Ms. Bronk addressed Mr. Andrews & stated that the FinCom was supposed to get the FY10 figures this evening. Mr. Andrews stated the FY10 books are still being worked on. He noted he will have these figures before Town Meeting. As soon as they are available, he will get them to the FinCom.

Mr. Trudell questioned if there is a major problem w/ the closing of the FY2010 books. Selectman Donahue stated the DOR just certified the Onset Fire District's books, so the Town is not that far behind.

V. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

A. Funding Goals.

Mr. Andrews stated the goals relative to the Stabilization Fund & union contracts settled will be able to be met.

Mr. Andrews stated he is working on the capital funding schedule & these amounts will be met as well (for the communications system).

B. Article 2 – Amend FY2011 School Budget.

Ms. Bronk asked Mr. Andrews for an update relative to the School Department budget. Mr. Andrews stated that he has already given the FinCom the complete budget timetable provisional, the Federal statute re: the grant to the School Dept., etc.

Mr. Andrews explained that the spirit & intent of the Federal law (grant) was the right way to go. Teachers & programs were not cut. He noted the School Dept. should not try to put this (grant) money aside. This (grant) money was specifically set aside to satisfy the FY2011 needs.

Ms. Bronk asked if the Town Administrator & the BOS are any closer to coming to an agreement w/ the School Dept. Selectman Donahue stated no they are not & the School Dept. wants more money.

Mr. Trudell explained that a sub-committee of the School Committee came before the FinCom. At that meeting, he asked this sub-committee what the status of negotiations were & his question was declined & not answered.

NOTE: Mr. Cammarano arrived at this time.

Mr. Trudell stated he could not get a clarification from the sub-committee.

Mr. Gray stated as he understands, the School Dept. wants a \$277,000 decrease to their budget. Selectman Donahue stated the School Dept. wants the Town to fill a hole. Some FinCom members disagreed. Mr. Paulsen stated Mr. Andrews previously had stated that "they (he) knew the money was coming".

Mr. Andrews stated Charlie Rengal filed the legislation. He explained the bill was in Congress & it was being tracked. He can provide these documents. Massachusetts was provided w/ \$240 million to backfill needs. It was pound-for-pound what was cut by the MA legislature.

Mr. Andrews stated he has spoken to the Superintendent of Schools, Barry Rabinovich on several occasions & everyone was looking at the grant. Legislation passed on 8/10/10. The law stated \$822,000 was specifically for retaining or bringing back teachers, not for supplies, books, etc. The law was reviewed to see what could be done w/ this money. Each district is different, but pound for pound, this grant filled in for Chapter 70 cuts.

Mr. Paulsen feels that Mr. Andrews knew the amounts (given by the Ways & Means Committee) prior before putting out the budget figures & the issues should have been dealt w/ at that time. Mr. Andrews stated there are two Ways & Means Committees; the House & Senate. The day the House budget set out numbers, a memo was sent out, & the Senate did not put their numbers out at that time.

Ms. Cottuli feels she is hearing two different stories. Brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Andrews stated some towns took back teachers w/ this grant. The sub-committee told them they were adding programs & implementing programs. He felt their attitude was these funds were to advance some of the programs.

Ms. Cottuli feels Town Meeting will be filled w/ education supporters & there will be arguments for putting this money back. She asked how Mr. Andrews will go about putting this money back if it is voted to do this. Mr. Andrews stated there is a need to

read the law. He explained he & Selectman Donahue are trying to work w/ the School Dept. He has offered to put forth \$150,000 for the School Dept.

Selectman Donahue stated the School Dept. is trying to carry forth money for those they hire so they won't have to fear next year. They are looking for the Town to pay for this.

Mr. Gray asked how much money is being sought. Brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Andrews stated Administration is looking to help solve this issue so that the tax rate can be set. Restorations to the cut to the school budget are w/in this \$800,000+ grant. He is offering \$150,000 into the mix, & then work out a plan to settle up FY2011 & use it to go into FY2012 as a buffer. \$150,000 is a starting point.

Mr. Andrews stated he has been hearing about "reverse auctions" which he discussed relative to school transportation. He feels money can be saved relative to school transportation. He feels it should be looked into.

Selectman Donahue stated the School Dept. wants \$415,000 & she was told this yesterday. This money would have to come out of free cash. She still doesn't know what free cash there will be. The grant the School Dept. has could "plug" the hole, but they don't want to use all of it this year.

NOTE: Selectman Donahue departed at this time.

Ms. Cottuli noted the School Department has indicated energy savings of \$300,000, thus a savings to the Town.

Mr. Andrews discussed the energy audit being conducted in Town. He doesn't know what the School Dept. is stating. He will have to look into this. He has not seen what the School Dept. is referring to re: energy savings. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Heath stated the money coming back from the Federal government was to fill in for Chapter 70 cuts that were made. Thus, it seems simple. He feels the School Dept. took a risk.

Mr. Paulsen stated had the Town side taken out the \$700,000, it would have been a Town problem, not a school problem because of minimum net school spending.

Mr. Andrews discussed the Town's contribution to the schools for the past three to five years. He noted the Town has met its contribution.

Mr. Andrews stated that after the Spring Town Meeting, things fell into place, thus now at this Fall Town Meeting, the budget is being adjusted (after the Senate Ways & Means come out w/ their numbers).

Mr. Paulsen stated if the minimum school spending was "x" & the State said they were only giving "y", the Town is responsible for the difference.

Mr. Heath questioned what would happen if the School Dept. recognized the \$700,000 shortfall. Mr. Paulsen stated he asked Mr. Swett this question.

Mr. Paulsen discussed the energy statement the School Dept. made. The School Dept. stated for years they have been working on cost savings & cost avoidance & cutting programs at the schools. Mr. White feels the Town has done nothing in this area. Mr. Sanguinet took exception to Mr. White's statement. He stated when he was Acting Interim Administrator, he had lights turned off at Town Hall as well as computers.

Mr. Trudell feels the Town Administrator will need to have a defense at Town Meeting. Discussion continued.

C. Mock Town Meeting.

It was announced that there will be a mock Town Meeting on Saturday at 1:00 P.M. in the Town Hall auditorium.

Mr. Sanguinet stated the Town Moderator would like this mock Town Meeting to be more of a question & answer session vs. a debate.

Mr. Andrews stated that no other union contracts have come forward. Mr. Sanguinet stated these article will be withdrawn if the contracts have not been met.

D. Article 3 – WPCF Enterprise Fund

Ms. Bronk stated the FinCom previously voted Favorable Action 4-4-1 on this article.

Ms. Bronk stated there is a need for \$96,000. She questioned if the WPCF is going to get involved w/ selling/disposing of grease, couldn't this cover the \$96,000. Mr. Andrews stated it would, but the \$96,000 will give a ceiling needed for operations & expenses. Mr. Sanguinet explained \$5.4 million was approved & there is a need for an additional \$96,000 for guidelines set by DEP. If Town Meeting doesn't vote on this money, the DEP requirements won't be met.

Present before the FinCom: Bob Brady

Mr. Brady stated the Administration proposed a \$5.47 million & the Administration cut the budget by an amount (which equaled the Superintendent/plant operator salary). He noted he had asked prior if the Town can be guaranteed this \$5.4 million will cover 100% of the plant's operations. He noted DEP has mandated a plant operator be put back.

Mr. Andrews stated there are five personnel at the plan that have proper licenses, even when the plant operator had been there. DEP asked the Town to look at staffing & he told DEP this would be done. The WPCF budget was in bad shape & hard to understand. There is now a re-written budget, there is a better understanding of costs, & better maintenance schedules. The plant is in full compliance & always has been.

Mr. Brady stated Administration cut staffing to cut the EDU rate. The budget approved at Town Meeting is not the same as what the prior Administration submitted. He wants to know if the Administration has requested the Sewer Commissioners increase the EDU rate to cover the budget.

Ms. Donahue discussed actions being taken to get the Town to a better place & in this case, the sewer plant. She understands the issues being faced. Discussion continued.

NOTE: Mr. Sanguinet & Mr. Andrews departed at this time.

VI. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A. Review Town Meeting Dates.

The FinCom secretary told the FinCom that the Warrant was delivered to the printer this morning.

Town Meeting will commence on October 25, 2010.

NOTE: Discussion again ensued re: sewer plant matters.

Discussion ensued re: concerns over lack of numbers for FY2010, preparing for Town Meeting, & what to expect.

Ms. Donahue expressed concern re: getting figures a half hour prior to Town Meeting & expecting the FinCom to know & understand information in a short timeframe. She feels the FinCom should have the numbers being sent to DOR.

Ms. Bronk noted the need for transparency. She feels the FinCom is doing due diligence relative to getting information to Town Meeting & doing their jobs.

Mr. Trudell suggested the FinCom write a letter to the Town Administrator & the BOS re: the need to see numbers being prepared to be sent to DOR so the FinCom can be aware prior to Town Meeting. Mr. Gray feels the letter should also state when these figures were promised. Mr. Cammarano wants to solve the problem, not just save face relative to writing this letter.

MOTION: Mr. Paulsen moved the FinCom write a letter to the Town Administrator & the BOS relative to concerns & actions they hope to be taken relative to the receipt of information. Mr. Trudell seconded.

NOTE: Mr. Trudell feels the letter should request FY2010 figures by 10/20/10 & any correspondence between the Administration & DOR by this date as well & to address concerns as to why the FinCom wants these numbers prior to Town Meeting.

Mr. White supports a letter being sent. There is a need to take a stand. He understands the Town is trying to put together three years worth of information, but there is still a need for the FinCom to have the numbers.

Mr. Heath stated the FinCom can't go into Town Meeting without the numbers.

Discussion continued re: the reason why the letter is needed & what to include in said letter.

MOTION: A motion was made & seconded to move the question.

VOTE: Unanimous (9-0-0)

VOTE ON MOTION: Unanimous (9-0-0)

Mr. Trudell expressed concern re: a previous Reserve Fund Transfer Request for a skunk issue. This request was submitted three months into the fiscal year. He feels this matter could have addressed later in the fiscal year & the budget looked at vs. a transfer request.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: A motion was made & seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 P.M.

VOTE: Unanimous (9-0-0)

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Barrasso
Kelly Barrasso, Transcriptionist

Date signed: 12/8/10

Attest: William R.C. White
William R.C. White, Clerk
WAREHAM FINANCE COMMITTEE

Date filed: 12/9/10
Date copy sent to Town Clerk: 12/9/10

