



Town of Wayland Massachusetts

Finance Committee

Tom Abdella
Nancy Funkhouser (Vice Chair)
Thomas Greenaway (Chair)
Carol Martin
Bill Steinberg
Dave Watkins
Gil Wolin

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes, September 10, 2014

Attendance: T. Greenaway (Chair), C. Martin, B. Steinberg, G. Wolin, D. Watkins, N. Funkhouser, T. Abdella (7:22)

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM in the Senior Center of the Wayland Town building. The meeting is being recorded by WayCam.

2. Introduction

Chairman Tom Greenaway described long-range planning process. There was one very well attended forum mid-summer. FinCom has very limited mandate, with jurisdiction only to make recommendations to ATM. It has have no jurisdictional or operational authority. No political authority – or authority is limited to power to persuade. It's not our job to decide what Town should be doing – we are serving as a clearinghouse for concerns expressed by the public.

Bill Steinberg added that it helps the FinCom to hear from the various committees, it helps them to inform FinCom recommendations.

Tom Greenaway termed this meeting to be a status check on the preliminary list of items assembled over the summer. He circulated and described the draft spreadsheet of items established in July, asking if there were any other items that are or should be on this list. The FinCom is scheduled to deliver the report by end of this calendar year.

3. Public Comment and Committee's Response to Public Comment – none

4. Long-Range Planning Project Public Forum

Anne Heller of Board of Library Trustees, spoke in place of Aida [Aida Gennis, Chair], who could not attend: The Board has begun a Committee to look at space and construction issues, hoping to seek a grant to build a new library. There will be a facility construction committee established in the fall, and they plan a town-wide survey about these issues, to be sent out in January 2015. They have met with the COA, and Aida has reached out to Barb Fletcher of the School Committee, and to Park & Rec. Bill Steinberg is liaison, and he intends to attend next meeting. Greenaway asked if any of their items were covered by the former long-range plan, and Heller stated the Trustees feel that current facility hampers their ability to deliver services the way the Town deserves.

Jeannie Downs of School Committee: As a result of this process, the School Committee announces a Summit to be held from 2:00-5:00 pm on 9/21 at WHS to discuss the future of schools in Wayland. There will be a general session, followed by five breakout sessions: Raising the Bar, Enhancing Curricula, Promoting Health and Wellness, Employing Technology and Exploring Early Childhood Education. These topics were informed by a process the Committee went through at the end of the last school year. The session is open to all educators and to the public. She invited everyone to attend.

Bill Sterling, Vice Chair, Council on Aging: COA met with the Recreation Commission, and both voted unanimously to work together to plan a new Senior/Recreation Center at the Town Center. They met with Board of Selectmen to request the formation of a study group, and submitted a capital request for \$5 million 2016 for ATM. The goal is aggressive, as they hope to ask for funds for study of the design at 2015 ATM. Frank Kraskin is Rec Com rep. COA also met with reps from Library trustees, who also expressed support. Tom Greenaway asked if there is a change from Senior Center to Community Center, and if Denise was still involved. COA/Rec. Library now going on their own for a different site, possibly the current DPW site. Sterling stated that next year (FY 2016) would be for design funding, FY 2017 for construction funding.

Sherre Greenbaum, Chair, Conservation Commission: In reviewing the 5-year Capital plan, other than shifting some items and adjusting costs and timetables, they are talking about renovation and restoration at four locations: Heard Farm, Cow Common, Greenways, and Sedge Meadow. They currently manage a total of 800 acres, and these parcels represent 300 acres of that. They plan to start with Heard Field, which is a one of the best bird habitats in MA. They also want to increase the grassland habitat and work on the haying. Brian Monahan, Conservation Administrator, is still working up costs. Mats Borgstedt and Nicky Patterson, volunteer Friends, have been studying the haying. Bales and quality of grass is decreasing. She closed saying that preserving open space is a worthy project.

7:22 pm **Tom Abdella** arrives

Tony Boschetto, Board of Selectmen, indicated that the Town has not yet engaged in efficiencies for the long term, and asked how is the FinCom tracking these. Tom Greenaway responded that the FinCom has pulled the capital budget process forward, making the CIP process integral to the planned long range planning sequence. Rather than focusing on any one project the focus is on the process. Nancy Funkhouser indicated that the FinCom is opening up the discussion, so all can participate in the process.

Colleen Sheehan, Chair Planning Board, said that they were tasked with process of evaluation the town properties, but more framework is needed. There are citizens who want to come, but there was some confusion. She felt that it is critically important that there be ONE place on the Town website that all hosts all the meetings and all the agendas in this process. Their working group is still in process. They agree that there was a master plan for long range capital committee, and her group endeavors to determine if that is the right format, and to define the charter of that committee and how it might work together with five year CIP and long range plans of different boards and committees. They are evaluating formats, to help put some structure on it. Tom Greenaway expressed concerns about OML compliance in such as process. Colleen Sheehan replied that the Town Clerk conferred with Town Counsel, who opined that the groups are not obligated to post because these are working groups, not committees. As it is a best practice, they will post all the meetings so residents can follow. Sheehan will provide an update on Master Plan a FinCom meeting. Some, are long range issues,, and others, like the Rail Trail, are not. The key point is to keep open communications among planning groups, committees and residents.

Linda Segal, Associate member of Zoning Board but speaking for herself, reported on the joint meeting of the Zoning and Planning Boards. She said they had purposeful communications, and more was needed. Sheehan echoed that, saying it was as much about establishing connections and good lines of communications, as well as an umbrella among all standing committees for long range planning as it was about building process and procedure, especially for town-owned properties. Segal then cited the 2004 allocation of \$30,000 to review town bylaws, which was spent on administration rather than substantive review as recommended by the Master Plan.

Alice Bolter, Historic District Commission, expressed a desire than everyone involved in the process be aware not only of the design and build costs of a project, but also the ongoing project maintenance costs. Each proposed project should be compared with others which may be more crucial to the Town. Discussion followed among the Fincom indicating agreement with Boelter’s concerns regarding development and sustainability. Greenaway agreed and stated that the FinCom would keep the affected town committees informed of coming long range project review meetings.

General discussion among FinCom Committee members followed focused on the need for improved process efficiencies, with particular focus on IT and automation. Chm. Greenaway agreed that efficiency improvements and a broader conversation about automation should be included in long range planning.

Other long range planning topics will be divided up among FinCom members during the 10/22 meeting – “divide and conquer” to move forward more effectively.

General conversation followed about involving the new budget analyst in the FinCom’s project review, analysis and evaluation. This is needed before projects are presented at Town Meeting for vote, as the Fincom often learns the details of such projects at that time, which leaves project prioritizing to the voter just before voting. Chm. Greenway said he would add the need for a Capital Review Board to discussion with other town committees.

- 5. Open Meeting Law Complaint Review** This was regarding the May Meeting open meeting violation complaint about the FinCom discussing union negotiations in executive session. The complainant did reduce his original complaint as per the Attorney General’s suggestion, but still held that, as the Fincom has no negotiating authority for school contracts, that it should not enter into executive session to discuss same.

Much discussion followed, wherein Tom Greenaway expressed concern that, despite assurances that the violation was inadvertent and would not be repeated, the complainant continued to press with the Attorney General, as though he was intent on obtaining a high-level public rebuke. It would be better if such concerns were resolved at the lowest level.

Tom Greenaway revised the FinCom’s response letter to respond properly to the revised complaint. Carol Martin moved that the FinCom approved the letter as revised. Some discussion followed re: the complainant’s repeated filings, even when errors were acknowledged, and their potential impact to distract a committee from its primary mission, and call the committee’s competence into question in the minds of some town residents.

Town Counsel indicated that the violation claim is unfounded, but had not yet provided input on the response letter. Tom Greenway agreed to obtain that input.

Nancy Funkhauser, Tom Abdella and Dave Watkins suggested revision to the response letter. Carol Martin restated her motion to approve the letter with these amendments.

- 6. Report of the Chair: other topics not reasonably anticipated in advance.**

Nancy Funkhouser indicated that her position as a school crossing guard might present a conflict of interest with her role as FinCom liaison with the Police Department, and will explore trading department liaison assignments with other FinCom members. She also reported that the Fire Department was seeking reallocation of their turned-back budget funds to other projects, and they were meeting to discuss that on Sept. 11.

Tom Greenaway reported that the town facilities director had now fully retired. In light of that and the fact that Wayland has a new Town Administrator, the FinCom should be very cautious in recommending commencing new capital projects in the near term.

Carol Martin asked if, given those changes, we might be moving too fast with the accelerated budget schedule. Tom Greenaway responded that while there might be exceptions, we should stick to the 9/15 due date.

7. **Adjournment:** At 8:25 pm Tom Abdella moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Carol Martin. The motion was approved unanimously (6-0-0).

Respectfully submitted,

Gil Wolin

Documents: