



Town of Wayland Massachusetts

Finance Committee

Thomas Abdella
Gordon Cliff
Nancy Funkhouser (Chair)
Carol Martin

Bill Steinberg
Dave Watkins (Vice-Chair)
Gil Wolin
Brian Keveny (Finance Director)

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes January 11, 2016

In Attendance: N. Funkhouser (Chair); G. Cliff; C. Martin; W. Steinberg; D. Watkins; T. Abdella; and Finance Director B. Keveny. Not In Attendance: G. Wolin.

Call to Order at 6:45 PM. WayCam was taping the meeting.

I. Operating Budget – Health Insurance

Assistant Town Manager John Senchyshyn and Benefits Manager Donna LeMoyné presented the FY 2017 budget for Health Insurance. Actual health insurance costs for 2016 are running at approximately 96% of budget thus far in FY 2016, and the budget for FY 2017 is based upon that budget. The projection is for an increase from 2016 to 2017 from \$6,925,000 to \$7,150,000. The current plan is to maintain the health insurance with West Suburban, although a definitive decision has not yet been made. According to Mr. Senchyshyn, the Town's health insurance consultant has recommended this decision.

This budget does not take into account any new hires and monies could be added to the budget for new hires that are recommended in various departments.

II. Public Comment –

Anette Lewis, Claypit Hill Road – insurance on prescriptions may be driving up costs. She questions whether the Town might purchase a separate policy for prescriptions. She questions whether a line item for salary adjustments is legal. She also thinks that teacher contracts are too high.

III. Liaison & Members Reports, Concerns & Topics –

- a. Ms. Funkhouser noted that she had heard that the schools might vote their budget at the end of February, which would be problematic; however Ms. Martin noted that the schools planned to take a preliminary vote this evening. She also noted that the schools have posted online questions regarding their budget. Ms. Funkhouser stated that she will discuss with the chair of the School Committee whether the schools would present their budget to the Finance Committee on either January 19th or January 25th.
- b. Ms. Martin reported that the Recreation Department will present their budget to the Finance Committee at our meeting of January 19th (subsequently changed to January 21st). She stated that the Town Administrator has taken the lead on modeling the Recreation budget.
- c. Ms. Funkhouser noted that Mr. Wolin plans to return to Finance Committee meetings during the week of January 17th. He reports that he will not be able to stay

late at meetings due to his recent health issues. The Members were in general agreement that they would not assign any Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article write-ups to Mr. Wolin. The Members will allocate Articles for write-up assignments once we know what Articles need to be written.

IV. Article Hearing -

The Article Hearing began at 7:17 PM when the Board of Selectmen joined the Finance Committee. Selectwoman Lea Anderson presented Articles I and II, both of which deal with Wayland's membership in the Minuteman School District. Article I is for the Town to Accept Amendments to the Existing Regional School District Agreement before March 1, 2016. Article II is for the Town of Wayland to withdraw from the Minuteman School District.

Among the proposed amendments to the existing school district agreement, this is a provision to would allow member communities to withdraw from the district within a narrow time-frame in 2016. Voting in favor of the first article would provide the Town with the ability to withdraw and the second Article would then allow Wayland to withdraw, provided the other member communities vote in favor of the amended agreement. During the past three years, Wayland Town Meeting has voted three times in favor of withdrawing from the District; however that withdrawal was not allowed pursuant to the terms of the current school district agreement.

Comments from the public were:

Anette Lewis – would all 16 Towns need to approve Wayland's withdrawal from the school district? The response is no, provided that all approve the amendment to the school district agreement. She also wanted to know why the State Commissioner of Education would need to approve the withdrawal of the Town from Minuteman and the response was that it would be required by State statute.

Selectman Joe Nolan noted that Wayland students could still attend Minuteman if the Town were to withdraw from the school district.

Paul Dale of 12 Rice Road made some clarifying suggestions to the language of the Article, but then withdrew his suggestions, as he decided that they would not clarify the Article.

Mr. Cliff questioned what the cost would be to Wayland if the amendment were approved and the Town did not vote to withdraw or was unable to withdraw. There was no specific answer to that question, although there was speculation that the probability of such an event was minimal.

Next, there was a discussion of Article III, a petitioner's Article from resident Duane Galbi. The Article deals with proposed changes to the speed limit along Stone Bridge Road; access to Town Counsel by petitioner's of Articles; making changes to the road to allow for a school bus stop; and prohibit night access to the road by trucks. Mr. Galbi is submitting this Article now, as he is feels that the Town did not deal with these issues when he brought them to Town Meeting and to the Board of Selectmen in the past.

Selectmen Joe Nolan commented that the Board of Selectmen did take Mr. Galbi's past requests to the Department of Public Works and they determined that the proposed changes were not warranted.

The Finance Committee informed Mr. Galbi that the Finance Committee would need to vote on a write-up for this Article at its meeting on January 13th in order to provide a written Article write-up in time for the printing of the Warrant.

Resident Alan Reiss suggested that the petitioner remove the access to Town Counsel item from the Article until a later time in order to make the Article more clear to residents.

Resident Linda Segal noted that the Town of Natick has a sign on one of its roads similar to the one being requested by Mr. Galbi. She also requested that the date of the Special Town Meeting be moved to later in February. Finally, she wants to move the meeting from the Wayland Middle School Auditorium, as there is not sufficient leg-room at that facility.

Resident Anette Lewis requested that a map be included in the Warrant with regard to the petitioner's Article.

Mr. Galbi noted that he would like to work with the Finance Committee to collaborate on the 150 words he has in presenting his Article in the Warrant.

The Article Hearing was closed at 8:04 PM.

VI. CPC Proposed Article for Annual Town Meeting ("ATM") Re: Acquisition of Conservation Restriction on 208 acres of Land at Mainstone Farm –

Chairperson of the CPC (Conservation Preservation Commission), Gretchen Schuler, described to Finance Committee Members the CPC proposal for the Town to acquire a Conservation Restriction on approximately 208 acres of land. She showed a plan that outlined the land to be included within the conservation restriction and public access possibilities. The CPC has not yet decided what it will propose to Annual Town Meeting in terms of a financial plan, but they are leaning towards having the CPC borrow a significant portion of the required funds, with the debt service being paid for by remaining CPA funds. By raising the CPA tax from 1.5% to 2% or 3%, the CPC can pay for the debt service and grow its fund for the future purchase of similar easements on properties in Wayland. If the Town were to not approve the increase in CPA funding, the CPC would likely make a motion to request borrowing from the Town's General Fund in order to finance this acquisition.

There was a discussion of what might be developed on a couple of parcels of land that are not included within the proposed Conservation Restriction and Ms. Schuler indicated that there would be a stipulation limiting the amount of development on such land (probably to a single home on each). There were questions/suggestions regarding the potential to acquire only a portion of the land, possibly leaving the current owner with the ability to sell and/or develop the southwest portion of the property. There was also a question regarding the potential acquisition of the conservation restriction over time, in order to reduce the up-front burden of this acquisition on Town residents.

Ms. Schuler feels that both the purchase and sale agreement and the conservation easement need to be written and published in the Warrant, otherwise, there will not be sufficient information available for residents and the Article would not be presented to Annual Town Meeting.

Ms. Schuler asked the Finance Director if he can provide her with an accounting of the amount of CPA funds in the various accounts managed by the CPC (funds for open space, historic uses, housing, recreation, etc.).

VII. Proposed Articles Regarding Minuteman School District

Selectwomen Lea Anderson and Mary Ellen Castagno (Wayland's Representative to the Minuteman School District) joined the Finance Committee to discuss the details of Articles I and II. The pros and cons of the articles were discussed, and as described from the Article Hearing, the key reason for presenting these at STM is to allow for Wayland's withdrawal from the Minuteman School District. If the Town were able to withdraw from the District, it would still owe monies from past capital obligations, to be paid over a 3-year period, and would allow the Town to withdraw with no additional capital obligations owed to the Minuteman School District. Special Counsel has been hired by Wayland to assist in this process. FinCom Members requested that this counsel provide a written document indicating that the amendment to the current Minuteman School District Agreement will serve the needs and the interests of the Town of Wayland. FinCom plans to vote on these Articles at its meeting of January 13, 2016, and Ms. Funkhouser will have draft Article write-ups for them at its meeting of January 13th.

VII. FY 2017 Operating Budget Items and Quarterly Review of Capital Items - Facilities

FinCom met with the Facilities Director, Ben Keefe. There was a discussion of utilities. Some members thought that electric costs should be less due to overall lower energy costs today and the installation of solar panels. Mr. Keefe noted that delivery charges for electric have gone up significantly, offsetting the cost of the power. He does expect to show some savings from solar panels over the next two years. Mr. Keefe was asked if the Town might save money by hiring in-house engineers and maintenance people to offset the cost of outsourcing (per a discussion FinCom had with the DPW at a previous meeting). Mr. Keefe feels that much of the work is seasonal, and therefore, he thinks that an in-house person would be overwhelmed with work when projects are in process (good weather) and that the Town might not be able to keep such person(s) busy during the winter/cold weather months.

Mr. Keefe looked at the list of open capital projects (handout). He feels that there should be a turn-back of approximately \$775,000 that the Town should be able to use in FY 2017 for other capital projects.

VIII. FinCom Votes to Include Articles For ATM

- a. FinCom discussed the inclusion in the Warrant for ATM an article with regard to funding for OPEB (Other Post-Employee Benefits). Ms. Martin made a motion that FinCom approve for inclusion within the Warrant for 2016 ATM a motion for an Article regarding the funding of OPEB. Mr. Cliff seconded. FinCom approved the motion by a vote of 6-0.

- b. Ms. Martin moved that FinCom approve for inclusion within the Warrant for ATM a motion for an article with regard to the omnibus budget. Mr. Cliff seconded the motion and it was approved by a vote of 6-0.

IX. Liaison & Members' Reports, Concerns, and Topics -

- a. Mr. Abdella discussed the process by which items are included within the agenda for FinCom Meetings. It was pointed out to him that the statute gives that authority to the Chair. In spite of this, there was general agreement that if members strongly want an item added to the agenda, the Chair would generally incorporate such an item onto an agenda in the near term. Mr. Abdella handed out to Members a proposed letter to Town Boards and Departments and to petitioners who present Articles for inclusion in the Warrant, requesting that they follow a procedure for inclusion of such articles in the Warrant. FinCom plans to discuss this letter at its meeting on January 13th.
- b. Mr. Cliff noted that in the Fall, Mr. Senchyshyn had provided information that it might be advantageous for the Town to move its health insurance program from West Suburban to GIC. He is wondering why this was not done and would like an explanation on this subject from Mr. Senchyshyn.
- c. There was a discussion regarding a potential write-up of the petitioner's article for the upcoming STM. Mr. Cliff volunteered to take on this write-up, and he will submit it for discussion and vote at the meeting of January 13, 2016.
- d. Members added to the list of meetings to occur in the future meetings on 2/22/16 and 2/29/16

X. Motion to Adjourn –

At 10:37 PM, Ms. Martin moved that the meeting be adjourned. Ms. Funkhouser seconded the motion. It was approved by a vote of 6-0.

Handouts –