

Members Present: Jo Lown, Chair, Ian Johnson, F. Robert Brown, Bill Linnane, Brigitte Casemyr, Judy Lucas (arrived 7:25 p.m.), John E. Arnold, Michael Meachen, Kevin Cronin. Absent: None.

At 7:03 p.m. Ms. Lown called the meeting to order in the Selectmen's Meeting Room.

### **Open Forum**

There were no requests to address the committee.

### **Discussion of minutes – Meetings No. 13, FY2010, January 25, 2010.**

Mr. Arnold moved to approve the minutes of meeting No. 13, FY2010, January 25, 2010. The vote to approve the minutes was 6 in favor and 2 abstentions (Lown, Casemyr) with 8 being present.

### **AFC Administrative Assistant position:**

The committee has received two resumes which are included in members' folders for review. Interviews will be held during public meetings on March 1<sup>st</sup> and/or March 8<sup>th</sup>.

### **Committee Member Reports:**

- *Capital Expenditure Planning Committee:*

Mr. Cronin reported that the Capital Expenditure Planning Committee has received a document from Town Manager, Jim Malloy, which outlines his proposed rating system. Mr. Cronin has asked for some clarifications from Mr. Malloy, and has some concerns with the process. There are a total of 122 items on the list, and 10 criteria (rated 1 to 10) on each item. Mr. Cronin will make a recommendation to the Capital Expenditures Planning Committee with judgments on the FY11 and FY12 items first. They were asked to complete the criteria ratings by Wednesday, but will not be able to make this deadline. Mr. Arnold noted that the scope of the committee may have changed from what is outlined in the Town Charter, and Mr. Cronin will bring this to the committee for discussion. Ms. Lown suggested a joint meeting of the AFC and the Capital Expenditures Planning Committee. Mr. Cronin stated his support for the rating system, but feels it may not be able to be implemented effectively in time for the Annual Town Meeting in May.

- *Legislative Committee*

Mr. Johnson reported that a planned meeting was cancelled, and will be rescheduled. Ms. Lown noted that the AFC had selected Cliff Watts as one AFC representative, and asked for volunteers to replace him as he is no longer an AFC member.

- *Government Study II Committee*

Mr. Arnold reported that the committee has not met. There has been no action yet by the Board of Selectmen on their previous recommendations. The committee has noted the possible Personnel Bylaw change, and will discuss the change at a meeting in the next month or so.

### **Liaison Updates:**

Ms. Lown noted that this is the time of year when AFC members meet with their committees to go over the budget in preparation for a presentation to the AFC.

Mr. Brown has attended three Board of Health meetings at which the dump fees were discussed. They have agreed to raise the fee for dump stickers, keeping the two-year sticker term. Mr. Malloy has presented information on the pay-as-you-throw system, and the Board has determined a task force is needed to assess this issue. Mr. Brown has volunteered to be on the task force, which will study the issue for one year. Mr. Brown reported that the Council on Aging has discussed their budget, and is working on a plan to replace the buses in the future. He also noted that there have been some complaints about how the agency is run, which are being dealt with. Mr. Brown has attended the last three Personnel Board meetings. Mr. Brown has met with the Conservation Commission twice, and they are currently discussing new set-back regulations.

Mr. Linnane has met with the DPW, and reports they are discussing an automated meter reading system. Ms. Casemyr asked what has changed since that was brought up last time. Mr. Linnane will ask about break-even costs, and reliability. Mr. Linnane will meet with the Building Committee and Marianne Bilodeau next week.

Ms. Casemyr reported that the WTP has lowered cost of Water Treatment by \$9,000 due to some savings in insurance costs. The WWTP has met with the General Contractor who reports that the construction project is a little ahead of schedule due to the mild winter we've had. Mr. Linnane noted an issue about disposal of soil from the excavation. Ms. Casemyr noted that the School Committee has been in executive session for union negotiations. The School Committee will begin hearing from school principals about budget requests in mid-March. Ms. Casemyr handed out an update on archiving from the MIS Director. All email going through the town email system will be automatically archived, as long as the AFC Administrative Assistant uses the town email account for committee communications.

Ms. Lucas will schedule a meeting with Mary Jo Nawrocki, Superintendent-Director of the Assabet Valley Regional Technical School District.

Ms. Lown will be meeting with all her departments next Monday. She has requested the Town Recap sheet be distributed regularly by Town Accountant Leah Talbot again this year. The Town Insurance budget will not be resolved for a while yet, as there is renegotiation in progress, and will possibly not be known until the end of March. Ms. Lown asked for any comments or questions on the new budget worksheet formats used for the town budget book. Mr. Meachen feels that the format is more clear.

Ms. Lown has spoken with Mr. Malloy. She was asked to get a consensus on the consolidation study and whether it would be approved by AFC as a reserve fund transfer. Ms. Lown noted the committee discussion at the January 25<sup>th</sup> meeting. The study will not be completed in time for the FY10 budget and the potential savings is lower than other items, so it is not a high priority at this time. Ms. Lown recommended it be put on the warrant for Annual Town Meeting and Mr. Malloy agreed.

Mr. Johnson reported that he and Mr. Linnane will be meeting with DPW managers to go over budgets on March 2<sup>nd</sup>. Warrant Articles have already been submitted to the Town Manager, and will be discussed at a later meeting.

Mr. Johnson noted a request from John Walden, Manager, DPW, to allow deficit spending on the Snow Budget Expenses of \$60,000, and that the Board of Selectmen has approved this deficit spending. Mr. Johnson moved to approve this request, noting that these funds will be used to restock the salt and sand supply in town. The vote to approve the deficit spending request was 9 in favor, with 9 members being present. Mr. Linnane commended the DPW for the job they have done this winter with snow.

Mr. Arnold reported that he has met with most of his departments. Overall, they were thoughtful and mindful of town's budget situation, and while unhappy about requested budget cuts they have done it and are ready to explain their choices. He has contacted the Municipal Building Committee and reports they will not have a budget or articles this year. They feel the plan for the Public Safety Building is complete, and is ready to be built when the Board of Selectmen determines it is the right time. Mr. Brown asked about the cost and necessity of well monitoring on the Public Safety site. Ms. Lown explained that monitoring was required by DEP for the clean-up plan, and she will check with Mr. Malloy to see where the situation stands.

Mr. Meachen has been in contact with all his committees, but they will not be ready to make presentations until after the March 5<sup>th</sup> budget deadline.

Mr. Cronin has been in contact with all his committees, and they have made cuts to their budgets but are waiting to see if there will be any reprieve on the cuts.

Mr. Arnold stated he would like to hear from all committees about the cuts made and the rationale behind the cuts and the effect of these cuts on services.

### **Review FY2011 Town Manager Budget & Report**

The Committee discussed the Town Manager's budget report. Ms. Lown liked the format. Mr. Meachen felt the meetings held so far have been productive, and more information has been distributed. He appreciates the longer view of budgeting. Ms. Lown noted the use of free cash for the FY11 budget, and the plan to begin not using free cash in future budgets. Mr. Johnson noted that this would be a good policy as the level of free cash funds can vary greatly from year to year, and the funds could go into a stabilization fund.

The Insurance budget should be resolved by March 5<sup>th</sup>, and so departments may not want to make the requested cuts if they can be avoided.

Mr. Arnold reported that both Police and Fire Departments will have Warrant Articles, and the Library may have one also.

Ms. Lown noted that the only budget currently available from the State is the Governor's budget. In previous years the state budget numbers have changed greatly from the Governor's budget to the final budget. Mr. Malloy has used the Governor's budget minus 10% for his state aid estimates, as last year the Governor's budget was higher than the House budget.

Mr. Johnson also noted that the recent appropriations report will help liaisons look for possible transfers of funds from completed projects approved in prior years.

### **Comments and Concerns of Committee Members.**

Ms. Lown noted a request for transfer from reserve funds for the Board of Health. Mr. Johnson moved to transfer from Finance Committee Reserve Funds the amount of \$825 to budget line 15123-5245 – Other Professional Service (Nursing). The vote to approve the transfer is unanimous, 9 in favor with 9 being present.

Ms. Lown noted information distributed in the members' folders.

Ms. Casemyr has signed up for "Government 2.0 Camp New England" being held on March 6<sup>th</sup>, sponsored by the Harvard Kennedy School's Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics, and Public Policy.

Mr. Linnane commented that the presentations from departments and committees last year sometimes ran long. He suggests that each presenter could be better prepared and held to the amount of time requested. Mr. Linnane also asked for an update on the repairs done at the Library.

### **Adjournment**

Ms. Lucas moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:27 p.m.