

Members Present: Jo Lown, Chair, F. Robert Brown, Bill Linnane, Brigitte Casemyr, Judy Lucas, Ian Johnson, John E. Arnold, Michael Meachen. Absent: Kevin Cronin.

At 6:58 p.m. Ms. Lown called the meeting to order in the Selectmen's Meeting Room.

Call to Order/Open Forum

There were no requests to address the committee.

FY2011 Proposed Budgets & Warrant Articles

Planning Board Budget

Jim Robbins, Town Planner, and Ed Newton, Chair of the Planning Board, appeared before the committee to present their budget request for FY11. All cuts were taken out of expenses to keep the staffing level and services consistent. In FY09 the expense budget was \$9,850. In FY10 they were asked to cut that by nearly 50%, which they did, to \$5,300. This year's 1.8% cut brought their expense budget down to \$1,500 dollars. Some money will be available for Advertising, but most line items are merely placeholders. Clothing Allowance was negotiated by the unions and can't be touched. The cut to Memberships and Dues will result in Mr. Robbins losing his ability to keep current with professional training and certification. Education is now at \$200, which in effect means no training. The same applies to out-of-state travel and office supplies. The Postage number is what they actually spent last year. The main impact of the cut will be that Mr. Robbins and his assistant Derek won't be able to attend any training sessions, or retain certification with the American Planners Association (APA). The advertising budget will probably not be enough to cover any unforeseen items, and he may come back to the Committee in the future to request more funds. Without the APA membership there is no notification of courses, conferences or training. As a result of the Transfer Development Rights idea, which was gained at the 1999 APA conference, the town now has the property at 169 W. Main St. So, Mr. Robbins believes the benefits far outweigh the cost. The cuts will not impact staffing of the Economic Development Commission (EDC) initiatives, but they could impact training and education. Mr. Robbins believes it is important to be able to see how something actually works in another community before implementing it in our town. For example, the National Conference next year is in Boston, and planners from all over the country will visit Baystate as an example of a successful downtown revitalization project. He believes that the Town will miss out by not having these connections and if he were to cut staffing rather than expenses, the office wouldn't be covered, or they would lose in-the-field staff. The much better drainage during the rains this year was directly due to improvements based on in-the-field observation.

Members stated that the planning department needs to be available for future development, and that the knowledge and information gained from meetings, though intangible, is important. Mr. Robbins noted that the Economic Development Commission and the Planning Board work hard to attract new businesses and retain existing businesses, resulting in more jobs. EClinical is staying in Westborough, and BJ's headquarters is coming—these developments are a direct result of the EDC's outreach. Westborough is the only town to have a booth at the 495 Partnership Trade Show. The Planning Board has absorbed many things without asking for additional money—all they ask is to keep the money that they have. The Committee also noted that some of their staff is shared with the Conservation Commission; all salaries are at max, and they submitted a level-funded budget again this year.

As far as revenue, in the first 3 months of this year they have taken in more revenue than they did all of last year. CSX will be submitting plans for the railroad yard—they are working with them closely and

things look favorable. Mr. Robbins felt that the \$5,300 in the budget would be enough to cover most things, with the exception of advertising and the APA membership, which are the subjects of the budget transfer requests he's submitting tonight. He would need these funds by the end of the month, he said.

The Committee noted that the Planning Board is required by law to advertise zoning changes—at times an unforeseen expense which meets the requirements for a budget transfer. The other budget item request may not fall under the definition of an unforeseen expense, but may qualify for an end-of-year interdepartmental transfer. Mr. Robbins explained that it was difficult to predict advertising costs. If the ad is for zoning, it will be longer. If a proponent defaults on something, we take his bond to pay for advertising; but if we believe he's offended our rules, we must pay. This is an unforeseen expense.

When Mr. Robbins and the Chair of the Economic Development Committee went to Boston to appear before the Governor's Committee on Economic Development to ask for an ETA (economic target area) designation for the town, to attract more businesses, the travel and parking expenses came out of the EDC's budget. When he attends the 495 Partnerships trade shows and the Corridor 9 trade show in Framingham, those fees are paid for by the EDC.

Planning Board Articles

Jim Robbins and Ed Newton appeared before the Committee to present their articles:

Article 31. Industrial D. The eastern portion of Westborough at Rt. 9 is currently zoned industrial B, meaning 60% open space, 40% coverage, with a maximum of 4 stories. Industrial D is an overlay district, not a new zoning district. Rather, it's an augmentation or supplementation of the existing zoning. To take advantage of the additional overlay requirements of industrial D, you would need a special permit from the Planning Board. Industrial D allows 60% coverage, and a building height of 6 stories. Of all the town's industrial districts, this eastern area has the best infrastructure, water and sewer to all parcels, and very good regional carriers. As it doesn't go through the center of town, it creates an economic benefit with no increased traffic. Building up this area under the old zoning would generate \$7 million in additional taxes; with the Industrial D zoning that number becomes \$13 million. Mr. Robbins assured those concerned about open space that the special permit would require the practice of low-impact development techniques. These techniques are listed briefly in the bylaw. The Department of Public Works will evaluate the appropriateness of development on a site-by-site basis. Parcels could be combined to share drainage so all sites could be developed—appropriate easements would then have to be agreed on if lots were ever separated out. There are plans to expand the interchange to two lanes, as a big selling point of the area is the access.

The Committee noted the trade-off between height and volume—more height meaning more parking, reducing the green space which makes that area so attractive. Mr. Robbins explained that 3.5 parking spaces were required for every 1000 sq. ft of office space. If you don't have enough parking, the building can't be built. The buildings must fit on the site leaving 40% open space, and parking is not considered open space. There is still the option to build without the special permit, 4 stories high with 60% open space.

Article 19. Nathan Fisher Property. This article attempts to clean up the zoning district. Everything on Route 9 is zoned Highway Business except for this area, which includes the Nathan Fisher House, Edie's Garden, and the Green Thumb property. In order for the Nathan Fisher House to be used for business, it would need to be re-zoned highway business.

Article 32. Senior Housing Overlay. There is interest in building senior housing along E. Main St. which is not currently allowable under our zoning bylaws. This article would allow multiple buildings on one site. The site must be at least 2 acres and have frontage and access from one of the five major streets

(W. Main St., E. Main St., Milk St., South St., or Brigham St.). This is not unusual—the Town already has the Westborough Nursing Home on Colonial Drive. An affordability component has been included, and the maximum height is 3 stories. This article failed last year due to concern about dimensional setbacks. The current article ties the setbacks to the underlying zoning.

Article 34. Mixed-Use District (MUD). This article designates the area around Lake Chauncy for mixed use development. This land includes the State Hospital, Department of Mental Health and Youth Services, the corn field and power plant on Lyman St., and the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Department of Agriculture. The state hospital land alone is over 300 acres; with the other state agencies it approaches 650 acres. In Northborough there is another 400 acres, already zoned industrial. The land in Westborough has no underlying zoning at all. The state is now thinking of liquidating some of their land, and this site could be affected. The town needs to be prepared if this happens. There will be a blue ribbon committee studying the site, but in the interim the town should make this a mixed-use district. Mixed-use was chosen to allow flexibility to use the area for housing and commercial development, as well as R&D development. With the zoning in place, potential developers would have to come to the Planning Board to get a special permit. This way the town can control the process, negotiating open space and protecting the waterfront. The zoning can be modified in the future, once the study is completed and if the state sells the land. Zoning also makes the land valuable to private developers. Under Chapter 7 the state could use the land for a prison site; if we create value for this property, they are less likely to consider it for noxious use. The state could lease it to someone, but when selling it they would have to abide by the town's zoning decision. Mr. Newton assured the Committee that the special permit requirement would make unlikely the area being totally given over to housing developments.

Youth & Family Services

John Badenhausen, Director of Youth & Family Services, and Andrew Rosenshine, Board member, appeared before the Committee to present their budget request for FY11. The 1.8% cut was taken from the special programs line item in the expenses budget, in the amount of \$2,866. This cut is taken directly from the Hot Summer Nights activities funds. The level-funded budget originally submitted provided no money for a Hot Summer Nights coordinator, but left in money for expenses in order to run the program either with volunteers or with grant funding. They have actually received \$5,550 in grant funds: \$2,500 from Avidia Bank, \$1,000 from the Women's Club, \$1,000 from the Civic Club, \$250 from the Rotary Club, and \$800 in private donations. The program can continue with the reduced budget—they simply won't do out-of-town trips or big activities (they usually do 4 out-of-town trips). They will run local programs with the funds they have. If they get the 1.8% back, they will be more comfortable. They usually spend \$2,500-\$3,000 from the expenses budget, and \$6,500 for the coordinator. Some savings will come from the step decrease due to having a new person coming in to run the programs. The coordinator will work fewer hours per week, and they will cut corners. There will be the same number of activities, but not the same variety.

The Professional Services line includes clinical supervision for Mr. Badenhausen and translation services (some families who come in can't speak English). The Committee commends the Board for successfully involving the community to keep the programs running. Mr. Badenhausen explained that there were two options for increasing revenue. Billing insurances, or third-party payers; or charging a small fee to clients based on a sliding scale, and not dealing with the insurances. He did some investigating and concluded there were many complications when dealing with third-party payers in terms of getting on panels, the reliability of being reimbursed, etc.—not a worthwhile venture. With the second option he estimated they could raise \$4,000 a year. He presented his findings to the Town Manager, who preferred not to consider it for this fiscal year. Mr. Badenhausen works very closely with the police department, both with the Chief and the School Resource Officer, and provides a valuable complement to their services, dealing with problems before they start.

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Mr. Badenhausem also presented Article 9-B, a regularly recurring article. Last year they increased it from \$5,000 to \$15,000 to allow them to receive funds from other sources. It is at \$15,000 again this year which is more than enough. This will be used for Hot Summer Nights and the babysitting program.

Country Club Operating Committee

Dexter Blois, Country Club Operating Committee member, appeared before the committee to present his budget request for FY11. Their budget is voted in May, but 90% of their funds are collected in the spring of following calendar year, so they are 8-9 months off on budget vs. collection of revenue. As a result they usually hold some lines to expend after revenues come in so they don't run short. The golf club is open and the course is in good shape. The drainage they put in over the last few years has paid off—the course dries out quickly. The expenses requested are a little lower than last year, mainly because money for capital projects has been taken out of the budget and put in an article. Last year's article was for drainage improvements to the parking lot. This year's article involves transferring \$53,000 from their retained earnings to pay for a much larger project: rebuilding the 2nd and 3rd greens. To improve drainage on the 2nd green it will be expanded, drainage will be added underneath it, and a bunker sand-trap added. The 3rd green will also be expanded—some trees had already been removed to allow more sun to this area. These improvements should make the course better, not necessarily more difficult. Mr. Blois reminded the Committee that if the course is not maintained, there won't be members or walk-ons paying greens fees. Retained earnings are slightly over \$600,000 as of June 30th. The wait list has been decreasing—next year it's possible they will be without a wait list. The operating committee is looking into advertising to increase membership. There are other golf courses in the area providing stiff competition. These improvements are planned for the fall so play won't be impacted this year.

The Committee noted that line 5700Y has gone up \$500. This line is the amount the town spends on behalf of the Country Club, for payroll, plowing of the parking lot, etc. Revenues from the restaurant go to the General Fund. Payment of liability insurance, insurance for the pro shop, and any town services used, are part of that \$13,000. It truly is a no-cost-to-the-town operation, and maintains green space. Mr. Blois added that there may be further improvements—each year they do a little more work.

Approval of Minutes - Meeting No. 20, March 25, 2010

Approval of the minutes was deferred to the next meeting.

Liaison Updates

Mr. Linnane will be meeting with Maryanne Bilodeau and getting preliminary information.

Ms. Lown relayed the Committee's questions to Jim Malloy. Leah will also attend on April 8th, at which time they will have updates and revised budget information, although there will be no final numbers for insurance. Mr. Malloy will also speak on all articles pertaining to the Town Manager as well as some Selectmen articles. The joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen is on April 13th.

Committee/Chair Reports

Mr. Arnold meets with the Government Study II committee tomorrow night.

Report & Recommendation to Annual Town Meeting

Ms. Lown took the information that Ms. Savignac provided on the Other Post Employment Benefits trust fund and drafted an explanation of the article. Definitions to add are the GASB 45 and the OPEB, both gleaned from the Department of Revenue site. Ms. Lown suggested that the Committee think about including the arguments "for" and "against" each article in their recommendations.

The Committee agreed that establishing the benefits fund is a good idea and will improve the town's bond rating. Ms. Lown asked the Committee to begin thinking about end notes for department budgets now,

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and to think about the key issues impacting the departments they are liaising with. The Committee noted that after Thursday's meeting things should be clearer.

Budget transfer requests

Mr. Johnson moved that the Committee transfer from the Advisory Finance Committee Reserve Fund the sum of \$300 to the Planning Board Advertising Budget 1172-35201 for the purposes detailed in their packet. The Planning Board has had more warrant articles than in previous years—that plus an increase in advertising fees resulted in advertising expenses which could not have been anticipated. The vote to approve the budget transfer request was 8 in favor, with 8 members being present.

The Committee discussed the second request, for payment of the APA annual dues. The Committee felt that this request did not meet the threshold for an unforeseen expense, as these are re-occurring dues which were simply not budgeted for. The Board was encouraged to come back on June 28th to request an interdepartmental transfer. Ms. Lown moved to deny the budget transfer request. The vote to deny the budget transfer request was 7 in favor, 1 opposed (Linnane), with 8 members being present.

Comments and Concerns of Committee Members.

Ms. Lown corrected the posting of the meeting on Thursday, May 6th. She also reported that towns are required to provide one or more suitable places to inter its citizens within its limits, and that there is also provision for non-profits to purchase land to establish cemeteries. So there are two mechanisms for cemetery creation.

Adjournment

Ms. Lucas moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:49 p.m.