

Westborough Advisory Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting No. 22, FY2010
April 1, 2010

Approved
April 29, 2010

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

At 7:00 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 Budget Review

Trustees of Soldiers Memorial

John Matson, Chairman of Trustees of Soldiers Memorials, and George Perry, Veterans Advisory Board, appeared before the committee to present their budget request for FY11. There was an initial reduction to their budget which has been restored. Their request is for \$2,800, as printed on the budget summary. The town memorials include the Gulf War Memorial, the WWI Memorial, the WWII Memorial, and the Korean War Memorial, all located in front of the Forbes Building. The increase in the budget last year was due to the town's taking on responsibility for the Gulf War Memorial, which involves maintaining it and adding names to it. They have no way of knowing how many names they will get or what the cost will be to add them. They are not notified by the Department of Defense who goes overseas, so they rely on the families to give them names to include on the memorial. They periodically put articles in the Westborough News and on the town webpage to this effect. There is also a webpage for veterans. Their budget includes money to buy flags for Memorial Day as well as the maintenance of town monuments. Some money will be needed for flagpole painting. A lot of the work is done in-house to save money. The Garden Club's work in maintaining the areas around the memorials is appreciated. The Committee commends the trustees for a job well done.

Veterans' Services

George Perry, a member of the Veterans Advisory Board, appeared before the committee to present his budget request for FY11. They oversee Chapter 115 benefits for veterans in the Commonwealth and are governed by Massachusetts state laws. As a department of Veterans' Services they must get authorization to spend monies, such as buying flags for the graves on Memorial Day, and then the state reimburses 75% of that to the town. Reimbursements are now coming in for January, February and March of 2009 which amount to over \$9,000. The amount of reimbursement may be higher this year. Health insurance went up, so their expenses went up as well. Veterans must come in and apply for these services, and they must be eligible for benefits according to Chapter 115. If veterans lose their jobs, they help get them back in the workforce as soon as possible. Many elderly veterans and their spouses are on healthcare with them, and they reimburse their medications, co-pays, Fallon Senior Plan payments, medicare bills, etc. They also help pay for burials if necessary (under nursing home care in the budget). It is hard to project this budget because on July 1 the State will change their budget authorization, and what veterans can receive for benefits. They asked for a 20% increase under cash grants in anticipation of a decrease in state funding, but so far that hasn't happened. The Committee noted that if state funding does decrease, there could be an opportunity at Fall Town Meeting to address that, or General Reserve Funds could be made available. The Committee also commends Veterans' Services for doing a great job.

ATM Proposed Warrant Articles

Citizen's Petition/Liquor License

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John Matson came before the Committee representing Mohammad Vakili . In Article 36 Mr. Vakili requests the town to authorize the Board of Selectmen to petition the legislature for one additional package store license, as under the quota all licenses are used up. He has had a wine/malt license since the year 2000 at 65 E. Main St. He is the sole owner of the Sunshine Convenience Food Store Inc., and he would like to have his license upgraded. The language in the article specifying the non-transferability of the license, restrictions usually imposed on restaurants, is acceptable to Mr. Vakili, and applies only to this location. He agrees that if his petition is approved, he will return the wine/malt license to the town and that the package store license will not be able to be transferred to any other licensee.

There are only 5 package licenses currently authorized under the quota; this would be the sixth. The five are: Westborough Package Store, Julio's, BJ's Wholesale Club, Maria Specialty dba The Grapevine, and High Point Liquor Store on Route 9 and Computer Drive. As sometimes longevity in the community can be a factor in these matters, the Committee is asked to note that Mr. Vakili has been in Westborough since 1990, as a tax-payer and an employer (he employs 2 people part-time). Mr. Vakili feels he needs this license to be able to compete with the larger stores. He will not be expanding the store, only putting in new stock. Regarding his record of not serving to minors, Mr. Matson was not aware of any violations. Police Chief Gordon will look into that as part of the application process. Mr. Vakili admitted that soon after getting his first license he did sell to a minor, which he blamed on his inexperience, and one other violation occurred when two people came in the store, but only one person's license was checked. However, for 8 years there have been no further violations.

DPW Proposed articles

John Walden, Department of Public Works Manager, and Carl Balduf, Town Engineer, appeared before the Committee to present their articles.

Draft Article 9-I. (Final Warrant Article 7I) Reconstruction and Improvement of Town Roads (Chapter 90). The amount that will be provided by the State for roadway improvements under Chapter 90 for FY11 is \$632,884. The overview road improvement plan has been started, which involves looking at the roads and drawing up classifications, determining what constitutes a rating "1", a rating "2", etc. Once the classifications are established, Mr. Walden will drive around town with a clipboard and check out the roads as he goes along. The Chapter 90 money will be used for maintenance, sidewalk work, drainage repairs, some paving, leveling of streets, and crack sealing to keep water out. They will also have Water St. and the Mayberry Dr. area to work on. Mr. Walden noted that the Town did very well through the last heavy rainfall. There were a lot of heavy repairs done after last July's flooding and this year the Town reaped the benefits. He noted that what used to be considered abnormal rainfalls are now "normal".

Draft Article 10-D. DPW Dump/Sander. (Final Warrant Article 8D) There had been mechanical problems with #23, a 1973 vehicle. The chassis and the cab were good, but the motor was tired. However, over the winter it had to be repaired so they will keep it a few more years. Instead they will be replacing #84, a 1982 Mack Truck. The dollar amount remains the same. The chassis on this truck has a crack in it. These older trucks are double-framed, and when salt gets in between the channels eventually cracks develop. This vehicle will not pass inspection, so to finish the season they will purchase a late model used chassis. They will try to move some equipment from the old truck to the "newer" one. If they get a good deal on the chassis and have money left over, they will replace the dump body. If not, they will refurbish the body. The Committee discussed adding language about not increasing the size of the fleet, either to the Warrant or the Motion .

Water Department Article (Final Warrant Article 10)

John Walden and Carl Balduf appeared before the Committee to present these articles.

Draft Article 12-A. Service vans. The Water Department has 2 mid-sized service vans, both with over 100,000 miles on them. They were purchased secondhand 8 or 9 years ago, and now need to be replaced. The Astro van has over 150,000 miles and is starting to cost a lot of money for repairs. The other van is a yellow Dodge van, used for water system maintenance. It has over 100,000 miles, has excessive rust and is rotting out. The vans now available are either very small vans, or full-sized. They budgeted for the large van, but they don't really need a $\frac{3}{4}$ ton vehicle, a $\frac{1}{2}$ ton vehicle will do the work. They will have to shop around to find an economical mid-sized van. These will be new, as the secondhand market has dried up. The Committee noted that the dump sander would be funded out of free cash; the service vans would be coming out of the enterprise fund. The Committee discussed wording of these Articles or its recommendations to identify where the funding is coming from.

Draft Article 12-B. Water Main repair. Mr. Balduf and Mr. Walden explained the need to move ahead on upgrading this last segment of the low-pressure water system. The state water system survey requires the Town to do this work. They have deferred maintenance on South St. until this project is completed. With road conditions the way they are, this can't wait any longer. The need for fire protection makes this work all the more urgent: all the hydrants from the center of town and out along South. St. are low-pressure hydrants and do not function.

Mr. Balduf explained that the pipe in South St. is over 100 years old, the last segment of the old original water system fed by Sandra Pond. It is surrounded by the rest of the system but not connected to it. The work will begin from the rotary and continue up to the Moore St. wells. When the work is completed, each side street will be connected and the system will have more redundancy and more circulation. This work has been on the capital plan for a long time and needs to be done. There is no sewer upgrade associated with this. The Committee noted that this borrow is up to \$900,000 and comes through the water enterprise fund debt.

Draft Article 12-C. Water system. Mr. Balduf and Mr. Walden explained that this includes a \$15,000 expense for designing and putting together a bid package for rehabilitating the Ruggles St. water tank. The town's water tanks are periodically inspected by divers—based on the last inspection it was felt that the Town has a 1-2 year window in which to do this work. The longer it waits the more expensive it will become to repair. The Ruggles St. tank is almost 20 years old which is a full life for a tank. It is also smaller than the Rt. 9 tank, which cost \$911,000 to repair. Also included is \$25,000 for the replacement of several variable frequency drives (VFDs) which control the speeds at which the water station pumps operate. The VFDs request is driven through Veola, who operate the treatment and the pump system for the town. Veola has been spending a lot of money repairing the VFDs. And finally, \$20,000 is for a tent generator for the Fay Mountain water tank, to provide back-up power for the alarm system and for chemical treatment. The Fay Mountain water tank has had indicator bacteria show up, but using chlorine to solve the problem adversely affects the houses adjacent to the system. The solution is an injection pump at the tank--this requires a back-up generator. This was not on the past year's capital improvement plan. These facilities are getting older, but rather than attempting a complete upgrade, they are doing the work incrementally.

Draft Article 12-D. ESRI/GIS software. This is for \$30,000 to update the town's digital mapping (and is companion to Sewer Article 13-C, for a total of \$60,000). Photographs were done in 1999, but a lot of information has changed in 10 years. A new flight of the town was done by the same firm that did it before, which was paid for with existing funds. Now the maps need to be updated and a new digital file created with elevations, along with a new set of photographs which have been corrected and adjusted to the actual mapping. Mr. Balduf explained that these will be used for future sewer and water designs, and will reap benefits in other town design projects. He stated that the Town has a \$1 million investment in our GIS system, and should keep it maintained. This article correlates to a new item in the MIS/GIS budget, for the upgrade of the software. This was not in the capital plan, but is driven by the good deal

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they got on the aerial photographs. This project is just for the gathering of data. This updating should be done every 10 years.

Draft Article 12-E. Smith St. pump. This provides \$70,000 to pay a contractor to run a volume pump test at the Smith St. site. If the short-term pump test goes well, it is followed by a 7-day sustained pump test and water quality analysis. At the end of these tests they will know if they have a well site, and will have enough information to send to DPE to get it approved as a public water supply. Once identified, it can wait to be developed at a later time. If this is deferred to Fall Town Meeting, they risk missing the hot summer weather which helps dry out the site.

Draft Article 12-F. Water mains. This is for \$600,000 for water main work. This is a companion article to the sewer article on the same streets, with the exception of the Summer St. extension (Article 13-D, \$1.6 million). Altogether this is a total of \$2.2 million to borrow on this project. It is part of the comprehensive waste water management plan. They will replace old iron pipe and asbestos pipe, as well as improve surface drainage. They will renew both the water system and install a sewer. There will be extensive survey work and drainage design.

Sewer Dept. Article. (Final Warrant Article 11)

John Walden and Carl Balduf presented the Sewer Articles to the Committee.

Draft Article 13-A. Upgrade Sewer System. Three things are needed. The first is \$35,000 for a commutator, or “Muffin Monster”, a machine which grinds up incoming rags and towels, which clog the pumps. The last two are bypass valving and access points for Denny Brook and Maynard, to allow the shut off of the force main, and to access cleaning devices and the “pig” (a mop used to clean the pipe)..

Draft Article 13-B. Sewer system extension. This mainly concerns Fox Lane, but it connects to serve Crown Ridge and the rest of the area. This was on FY13 in the Capital Plan, but was moved up due to the problems homeowners in the area are having. There are eminent domain issues involved here.

Draft Article 13-C. ESRI/GSI Software. This includes \$30,000 for an imagery flyover, and the Sewer Enterprise share of the cost for the project, which was explained under Article 12-D.

Draft Article 13-D. Municipal Sewer system extension. This is \$1.6 million for infill areas which do not currently have sewer. The sewer comprehensive plan was put on hold while the treatment plant was going forward. Now that the engineering team knows what improvements are needed on the plant, these improvements can be re-activated. They are trying to do this work incrementally as much as possible.

Draft Article 13-E. Vacuum Truck. This is \$53,751 for the fourth of five-year lease/purchase payments for a sewer/water vacuum truck for the Sewer division of the DPW.

Draft Article 16. Cemetery. (Final Warrant Article 15) The town has 10-12 years left before space runs out at Pine Grove Cemetery. The plans are completed and some of the conservation work has been done at Nourse St. The next step is survey work, and determining what portion to develop for a future cemetery. The Committee questioned whether Westborough was required to provide this cemetery space. Is this a core government service? Mr. Arnold is to pursue as time permits. The amount of the request is \$50,000, an increase from last year.

Approval of Minutes – Meeting No. 19, March 22, 2010

Mr. Linnane moved to accept these, the last of Pamela’s minutes (and the end of an era). The vote to approve the minutes was unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

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Liaison Updates/Committee/Chair Reports

Ms. Lown reported that there will be no vacation week meetings. There will be a Thursday, May 10th meeting. The final meeting for the year is June 28th. Booklets will be printed before the May 10th meeting. The joint meeting is Tuesday, April 13th. The selectmen meet June 22nd. Everyone should have their ethics test submitted by tomorrow noon. Mr. Meachen to find out if MUD was in previous warrant.

Mr. Arnold met with Dexter Blois of the Public Safety/Municipal Building Committee. He is ready to meet with the Committee. The meeting of the Government Study Committee II to review various personnel issues, is next Tuesday evening, at 7:15 p.m., in the Forbes Building.

Mr. Meachen met with John Badenhause, of Youth and Family Services, which has raised funds privately for Hot Summer Nights. This is not the full amount the Town usually provides, but it is enough for it to happen this year.

Mr. Cronin reported that the tax deadlines have been moved to May 11th for 6 counties, including Worcester.

Comments and Concerns of Committee Members.

Mr. Brown needs the Report and Recommendation booklet from last year to review—Ms. Lown will forward him the .pdf file.

Mr. Linnane asked Mr. Meachen to make sure Jim Robbins has the approval of the Zoning Board. He also commended the Garden Club for the great job they do maintaining the town memorials and other spaces in town.

Adjournment

Ms. Lucas moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 p.m.