

Westborough Advisory Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting No. 29, FY2010
May 3, 2010

Approved
June 28, 2010

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

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.

Approval of Minutes - Meeting No. 26, April 15, 2010

Mr. Arnold requested a correction to the minutes. Mr. Johnson moved to accept the minutes as amended. The vote to approve the minutes was 7 in favor and 1 abstention (Meachen), with 8 being present.

FY11 Budgets (Article 6) – Final Review

Mr. Arnold reported that Fire Chief Perron indicated that the \$5,250 difference between the Town Manager's newest number and the original budget was for reductions in the "Hose" (\$4,250) and "Fire Prevention" (\$1,000) lines. Mr. Arnold moved to recommend Fire/EMS Salaries/Wages of \$2,989,711 and Fire/EMS Expenses of \$301,464 (total of \$3,291,175). Vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

ATM Warrant Articles – AFC Deliberation/Voting

Article 7F. Hazardous Waste Day

There was discussion as to whether the Police Department or DPW's personnel cost is included in the \$17,000 request. Mr. Arnold thought that amount is what would be paid to the company to run Hazardous Waste Day, and did not include other personnel costs. Ms. Casemyr moved to recommend the Town vote to defeat this Article. Vote to recommend defeat of Article 7F is 5 in favor, 3 opposed (Cronin, Johnson, Brown), with 8 being present. Mr. Arnold suggested that information be included in the Report on what can be disposed of safely at the Board of Health, or elsewhere, aside from the Hazardous Waste Day.

Article 16. Local Option Meals Tax

Ms. Casemyr moved to recommend the Town vote to defeat this Article. Mr. Meachen felt there was no guarantee that increased taxes would go toward savings, and added that if the tax could be earmarked to offset property taxes, or tied to funding future retirement operations, he would be more inclined to vote for it. Ms. Lown noted that this would be a more reliable source of revenue for the Town, as opposed to State aid which can arbitrarily be reduced. Vote to recommend defeat of Article 16 is 6 in favor, 2 opposed (Brown, Lown), with 8 being present.

Article 24. Delete/Add New Personnel Bylaw (Article 13)

Mr. Arnold felt that the new Bylaw does a good job of clarifying the job of the HR department, but it takes power away from Town Meeting without adequate involvement, other than by the persons directly involved. He would like to see the Bylaw revised and brought back at Fall Town Meeting. Ms. Lown felt the current system provides voters with the opportunity to see and debate what they are paying for and does not agree with removing all personnel decisions from Town Meeting. Ms. Casemyr was concerned not to break what is working well, in trying to fix what is not. Mr. Cronin agreed with Mr. Arnold that the proposed Bylaw creates a very vertical decision-making structure. Ms. Lown does not favor approving a Bylaw and then trying to fix it afterwards. She felt the Handbook was a step in the right

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direction, but has serious reservations about the Bylaw. Ms. Casemyr moved to recommend the Town vote to defeat this article.

Mr. Johnson asked whether there would ever be a perfect solution everyone would agree on. He felt the time was right, and noted that the Article is supported by those who are most impacted by it (the Town Moderator and the Personnel Board). Ms. Lown noted that the new "Town Manager model," was only recently adopted, and would like to see it settle out before adding more policy and decision-making to one position. Mr. Brown felt that every plan has problems but these could be dealt with, and this change recognized the frustration of the Personnel Board. Mr. Meachen also saw no problem with going ahead with this now and fixing things as necessary.

Vote to recommend defeat of Article 24 is 4 in favor, 4 opposed (Brown, Lucas, Johnson, Meachen), with 8 being present. There is no recommendation. The Committee will attempt to vote again at the May 6th meeting. Mr. Arnold and Mr. Meachen agreed to write up a brief "for" and "against" on this Article.

Article 27. Adopt MGL Ch. 40 section 22F - Fees

Ms. Lown will seek clarification on whether the Board of Health's authority to set fees is impacted by this Article. Mr. Johnson moved to recommend the Town so vote. Vote to approve the article recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Mr. Arnold and Mr. Meachen confirmed their absence from Town Meeting. Ms. Lown told the Committee to arrive at 12 noon for final discussions and preparations for Town Meeting.

Budget Update

Mr. Johnson noted the following corrections to the budgets sheets for the Report: Accountant, vote 5-3-0; Assessors, vote 8-0-0; Communications and Central Purchasing, vote 8-0-0; Planning Board, 7-1-0; Fire/EMS, 8-0-0; Assabet, 8-0-0; Health Dept. S/W \$256,543 (total \$263,843); Waste Water, 8-0-0; School, 4-0-2.

AFC Report & Recommendation to Town Meeting

Letter to Voters

Ms. Casemyr discussed her draft Letter to Voters for the Town Meeting Booklet. It will include a paragraph referring to the Town Moderator's Post-Town Meeting discussion, the vote of the Board of Selectmen and the Town Manager's Statement, and references to the Glossary. The numbers will match the numbers in the Financial Summary Recap page. Mr. Meachen will send an Excel spreadsheet of his Financial Summary to the Committee.

Mr. Arnold will draft the argument for defeating Article 7F and Article 24. Mr. Meachen will draft the argument in favor of Article 24. Ms. Lown noted that the Committee should be prepared to present "for" and "against" arguments for all split votes. Mr. Cronin will summarize the Board of Selectmen votes for the Report. The Committee will leave its vote on Article 2 as is.

Comments and Concerns of Committee Members.

Ms. Casemyr discussed the quote from Curry Printing for printing the Report and Recommendation to Town Meeting, for 500, 600, and 750 copies. Mr. Cronin will try to reduce the number of pages of the zoning bylaw articles.

Adjournment

Ms. Lucas moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 p.m.