

Westborough Advisory Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting No. 14, FY2011
February 10, 2011

Approved
February 17, 2011

Members Present: John E. Arnold, Chair, Bill Linnane, Jo Lown, Jim Tepper, Ed Behn. Absent: Brigitte Casemyr, Peter Allen, Ian Johnson, Kevin Cronin.

At 7:00 p.m. Mr. Arnold 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. 12, January 10, 2011

Ms. Lown and Mr. Linnane requested amendments to the minutes. Ms. Lown moved to accept the minutes as amended. The vote to approve the minutes is 5 in favor, with 5 being present.

Meeting No. 13, January 24, 2011

Mr. Tepper moved to accept the minutes. The vote to approve the minutes is 4 in favor, 1 abstention (Lown), with 5 being present.

Discussion/Action on Request for Snow/Ice Account Deficit Spending

Mr. Walden of the DPW has asked for the AFC's approval of a deficit spending in the amount of \$125,000 in the Snow/Ice account. It was explained that the legislature allows deficit spending by Towns in that particular account to allow towns to budget for a 'normal' winter rather than a 'worst case' winter. A vote to allow deficit spending in the Snow/Ice account allows the Town to pay its bills now and determine the source for the funds closer to the end of the fiscal year. Ms. Lown moved to allow the DPW to deficit spend \$50,000 in Wages and \$75,000 in Expenses in the Snow & Ice Budget. The vote to approve the deficit spending is 5 in favor, with 5 being present.

Transfer from Reserve Fund

The DPW has requested a transfer from the Reserve Fund in the amount of \$30,564 to go to Acct 14203-5205 in the DPW General Budget. This sum would allow the DPW to purchase a new Ford F350 pickup truck to replace immediately a vehicle scheduled to be replaced in the upcoming budget, but which has broken down during this winter's storms and has become unusable without extensive repair.

The Committee noted that ordinarily a request of this nature would be dealt with at Town Meeting, and a presentation explaining the need for a new vehicle would be made to the AFC by the DPW. There was a feeling that the Committee would like to hear the Town Manager's views, as well as those of the AFC members not currently present. The vote is postponed until the Committee meets next Thursday. No action is taken.

AFC Preparations for Annual Town Meeting budget and article reviews

Discussion of initial review of Town Manager's proposed budget

Mr. Arnold referred the Committee to the Town Manager's Recommended Budget which was presented at Tuesday's Selectmen's meeting. Ms. Lown noted that the FY12 budget seeks appropriation up to the levy capacity and the 5-year forecast includes a tax increase each year. She also noted that the forecast assumes annual increases in property valuation and revenues, and that both have decreased over the past few years. Mr. Behn expressed concern that outstanding, long-term obligations such as Health Insurance

(\$49 million) and Retirement (\$21.6 million) are not being addressed in current funding plans. Ms. Lown noted that bond rating agencies may be considering such obligations in its bond ratings.

Updates on Committee member liaison work/meetings so far.

Mr. Linnane will meet tomorrow with John Walden (DPW) and Building & Grounds.

Ms. Lown met with the Trustees of Soldiers Memorials; they have returned their Budget Background form and are ready to go. Fire/Ambulance has returned the Budget Background form. She will meet with Police Chief Gordon next Tuesday, and on February 17th, she will attend the meeting of the Municipal Building Committee. The Cultural Council is ready to go.

Mr. Behn met with Library Director Maureen Ambrosino and Library Trustees Chair Pat Fontes. Their budget came back \$4,000 lower on Expenses; Mr. Behn asked them to note the impact of that on their Budget Background form. Another issue is the library's HVAC system which needs repair. The Committee suggested the library seek advice from the new Building Commissioner and the Municipal Building Committee. The Youth Commission Budget has no issues and should be ready to go. The Historical Commission has a meeting next Wednesday—no issues there either. Mr. Behn reported on Mr. Allen's departments: Planning Board (no issues); Conservation Commission (no major issues); and Recreation Department (should be ready to go).

Mr. Tepper has been in contact with Dexter Blois (Country Club Operating Committee). He meets with the Personnel Board tomorrow. He is also in contact with George Perry of Veterans Services, but has not heard from the Board of Appeals.

Mr. Arnold noted that he received the Budget Background form for the Wastewater Treatment Plant from Ms. Casemyr. The Town Accountant has completed the Budget Background form. Mr. Arnold met with the Chief Assessor and drafted up the form and had her check it to expedite the process. He has also met with Joanne Savignac who is ready to go on the current debt service. He is waiting to hear back from Joe Harrington, the Town Manager, and the Assistant Town Manager/HR Director.

Discussion of the ideas to streamline the review process from Jan. 24 meeting

Mr. Arnold explained that the Town's larger departments may come before the Committee more than once. Smaller departments would work closely with their liaisons and only come once (if all questions are answered at that meeting) — or, if the Committee has no questions and at their option, could choose to not come in at all. However, any department who wishes to present their budget to the Committee will be welcome to do so.

Planning the meeting schedule (and possible departmental invitations) for the initial set of departmental reviews.

Mr. Arnold reviewed the AFC meeting schedule. Town Meeting is May 14, and the AFC booklet would need to be ready for the printer by Friday, May 6. Based on this, meetings will be posted for February 17, 28; March 3, 7, 10, 14, 17, 21, 24, 28, 31; April 4, 7, 11, 14, 25, 28; and May 2, 5, for a total of 19 meetings. As each meeting approaches, an agenda will be posted. If there are no pressing agenda items for some of these meetings, they will be cancelled with as much advance notice as possible.

Mr. Arnold noted that each liaison should send their respective departments an email asking them to contact the AFC Administrative Assistant with the dates they are available. If a small department for which there are no Committee questions chooses not to appear at a meeting, the liaison should let the AFC Administrative Assistant know this, too. Small departments will be allotted approximately 15 to 30 minutes for presentation and questions, larger departments will be scheduled for 30 minutes to 1 hour.

Chairman, Committee Liaison, and Department Liaison Reports

Mr. Arnold reviewed the email from Town Moderator Joe Harrington regarding the proposed pre-Town Meeting joint meeting of groups, which could include the AFC, Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, School Committee, and Town Manager. Mr. Behn noted that care must be taken not to appear to be making decisions outside of Town Meeting. Ms. Lown welcomed the opportunity for more open communication.

Mr. Arnold felt it would be helpful for the Capital Expenditure Planning Committee to explain their process and results earlier in next year's cycle.

Mr. Linnane updated the Committee on the Wastewater Treatment Plant, which is running 2 months ahead of schedule. There are two parts to the Project Contingency: one the normal project contingency (\$2.5 million), and the other, an additional \$2.5 million added by the Town. With late or unavoidable items uncovered, the first contingency has been depleted, and approval to use the second is being pursued. There was a roof failure on an existing clarifier due to the heavy snowfall, which will need repair. This work is expected to be covered by insurance. Any un-recovered monies can be included in the stimulus monies.

Comments and Concerns of Committee Members

Ms. Lown noted there will be a public hearing on the CSX proposal of which the public should be aware. She attended the Cultural Council Grant Reception and was impressed with the variety and quality of the performances promoted by the Cultural Council. Some of the upcoming events are: Animal Adventures, a Living History presentation, music, an art discussion on Georgia O'Keefe, and craft classes. Ms. Lown added that Arts in Common was very successful, and the Council will be looking for more citizen volunteers to be part of that initiative.

Adjournment

Mr. Tepper moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 p.m. Vote to adjourn is 5 in favor, with 5 being present.

Document List

Capital Expenditures Planning Committee Meeting Minutes, February 1, 2011.
Updated AFC Liaison Assignments.
Advisory Finance Committee Annual Report 2010.
AFC Budget Background Request FY 2012.
Fire Department Budget Background Information.
Baypath Elder Services Public Service Invitation.
Snow Budget Deficit Spend Request from John Walden.
DPW Reserve Fund Transfer Request.
Year-to-Date Expenditures, January 2011.
Roof Collapse document.
Snow Budget update.