

Westborough Advisory Finance Committee  
Minutes of Meeting No. 19, FY2011  
March 10, 2011

Approved  
March 21, 2011

Members Present: John E. Arnold, Chair, Brigitte Casemyr, Peter Allen, Bill Linnane, Ian Johnson (7:10), Jim Tepper, Ed Behn, Kathy Rosenblum Senie. Absent: Jo Lown.

At 7:00 p.m. Mr. Arnold called the meeting to order in the Selectmen's Meeting Room.

Mr. Arnold welcomed Kathy Rosenblum Senie as the newest (and 9th) member of the Committee. Ms. Senie has lived in Westborough for 14 years. She has been on the Board of the Westborough Education Foundation for 13 years. Ms. Senie has not yet been sworn in, and therefore will not be participating in any votes taken at the meeting tonight.

### **Call to Order/Open Forum**

There were no requests to address the Committee.

### **Approval of Minutes**

#### **Meeting No. 17, March 3, 2011**

Ms. Casemyr moved to accept the minutes. The vote to approve the minutes was 6 in favor, with 6 being present. (Mr. Johnson arrived just after the vote was taken.)

### **AFC Preparations for Annual Town Meeting budget and article reviews**

#### **Departmental budget discussions**

##### **Police**

Chief Alan Gordon appeared before the Committee to present his department's budget. This budget totals \$2,724,352 (Salaries/Wages of \$2,619,768 and Expenses of \$104,584) and is in agreement with the Town Manager's recommendation. Chief Gordon explained that the increase in Salaries/Wages is due to contractual issues, and the fact that his employees received a .5% raise for this year. He added that, last year, the salary of one officer was mistakenly omitted from the budget. The resulting shortage was dealt with by covering the amount from other budget lines, but the salary has been included in the current budget, which also accounts for the increase.

Chief Gordon explained that a grant from the State Telecommunications Board pays for one dispatcher's position, although benefits are paid for by the Town. Last year the Board of Selectmen added \$6,000 to the Police budget to cover overtime for the School Liaison Officer, but Chief Gordon has not kept that increase in the current budget. He explained that the department consistently goes over budget for overtime every year, but typically funds from other line items are used to cover the overage.

Regarding the number of officers needed in his department, Chief Gordon told the Committee that 3 officers are required on the day shift, 3-4 on the evening shift, and 3-4 on the night shift. He added that 1.7 - 2.0 officers per 1,000 population is the recommended formula, which Westborough is in line with. He also gave the Committee an update on the possible closing of the Westborough Court House, which if implemented would increase costs for the Town by requiring officers to travel further to go to court. For now, the state has been convinced to keep the court open, he said, but there are no guarantees for the future.

Chief Gordon explained his plans for converting one of his department's Lieutenant positions to that of Deputy Chief. All lieutenants, sergeants, patrolmen and dispatchers are union employees. As the Lieutenant's Executive Officer is responsible for internal investigations (including citizen complaints),

and as he too is a union member, there is the potential for problems. The Deputy Chief would be a non-union position. This change would not increase the number of staff, although it would result in an increase to Salaries/Wages. Chief Gordon hopes to have this proposal ready for the Fall Town Meeting.

In answer to a Committee query about safety details, Chief Gordon explained that his department budgets nothing for these details. Most are third-party details, paid for by the DPW, Verizon, or National Grid, among others. (The DPW details are paid for out of the DPW budget.) He added that the Town assesses a 10% administrative fee on these details. Planned increases to these fees, including increases to charges for presence of a police cruiser for some details (e.g. on Rte. 9), will mean more revenue for the Town. Presently \$60,000 is generated annually for the personnel aspect of safety details, another \$2,000 related to the presence of a police cruiser. Mr. Behn felt it was important to note in the Town Meeting booklet that the salaries listed for police officers include money earned from these safety details, and do not represent the total expense to the Town.

Chief Gordon spoke briefly about the Warrant Article his department is bringing forward, for \$79,730 to purchase 2 police cruisers and related equipment. Two old cruisers will be retired. The Committee noted that Town Manager Jim Malloy coordinates the Town's excess assets and should be consulted about the possible auctioning off of the old vehicles.

### **Board of Health**

Paul McNulty appeared before the Committee to present his department's budget, which is essentially the same as last year's. Salaries/Wages are per the Town Manager's recommendation; all line items are level-funded except for Mosquito Control, which will now be included in the budget rather than being brought forward annually as a Warrant Article.

Mr. Johnson noted that the Committee's concerns about the DPW taking on responsibility for disposing of dead animals had been addressed. Rabies is a blood-borne disease which dies with its host, and gloves should provide sufficient protection.

Mr. McNulty informed the Committee that Massachusetts had received funds from the Federal Center for Disease Control to promote the regionalization of local health departments. Massachusetts has no active County government; its more than 350 cities and towns each have its own Board of Health. The State Department of Public Health has requested proposals in a five-year plan to establish a regional health district. After an initial 5-month study, 3-4 groups will be chosen to implement the region. Worcester is the lead community in a group of twelve towns, of which Westborough is one; this group will be applying for the grant. The State is to decide by April 1 which groups will be funded. Mr. McNulty expressed some skepticism that a plan of this type would be cheaper for Westborough than its current system, and Mr. Johnson noted that there is some doubt as to whether the State will even be able to fund the first year of the program at 100%. The services provided by such a program are public health services much of the rest of the country offers through County Health Departments.

Mr. McNulty noted that if the Worcester group is chosen for implementation of the program, the Board of Selectmen and the Westborough Board of Health would make the decision whether to participate, and the funding required would need approval at Town Meeting.

### **Landfill contract**

Mr. McNulty noted that Hazardous Waste Day is now included in this budget. He also explained that he had been using an estimate of 6,000 tons of trash disposed of per year. After examining the actual numbers from past years, he has dropped that figure to 5,800 tons.

There was some discussion about whether residents were disposing of trash without purchasing a dump sticker. The Committee noted that the recycling sticker is free, and encouraged residents to recycle. Mr. McNulty added that the Board of Health plans to raise the price of dump stickers.

**Updates on Committee member liaison work/meetings to date**

Mr. Arnold reviewed the meeting schedule to date.

Ms. Casemyr distributed a School Budget packet, presented by the School Administration to the School Committee. This budget has not yet been approved by the School Committee.. She noted that schools are committed to holding the supply budget flat from last year.

Mr. Tepper met with the Senior Center and noted that they will want to discuss their budget with the Committee.

**Review of upcoming meeting schedule**

There was some discussion as to whether a meeting is necessary on March 17<sup>th</sup>. The decision is postponed until Monday's meeting.

**Walkthrough of latest draft warrant**

Mr. Arnold briefly reviewed the draft warrant.

**Additional info re: health insurance breakdown request**

Mr. Arnold noted that the insurance report prepared by Maryanne Bilodeau in past years' had not been located as yet. He added that Ms. Williams, Asst. Town Manager, is working on more detailed insurance information for the Committee.

**Comments and Concerns of Committee Members**

Mr. Behn plans follow up on the Library HVAC article. He also will look into clarifying the listing of police salaries in the town meeting booklet.

**Adjournment**

Ms. Casemyr moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:27 p.m. Vote to adjourn was 7 in favor, with 7 being present.

**Document List**

Westborough Police vehicles list, prepared by Police Chief Alan Gordon.  
Background Budget Information sheet, Board of Health.  
Background Budget Information sheet, Landfill Contract.  
AFC Liaison Status Spreadsheet, prepared by John E. Arnold.  
Warrant Article Summary.  
School Budget Information packet, prepared by Brigitte Casemyr.  
Snow & Ice Budget update.