

Westborough Advisory Finance Committee  
Minutes of Meeting No. 20, FY2011  
March 14, 2011

Approved  
March 21, 2011

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

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. 18, March 7, 2011**

Ms. Casemyr and Mr. Linnane had emailed corrections to the minutes. Mr. Johnson moved to accept the minutes as amended. The vote to approve the minutes was 6 in favor, 2 abstentions (Lown, Rosenblum Senie), with 8 being present.

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

#### **Departmental budget discussions**

##### **DPW**

John Walden, DPW Manager, Richard Voutas, Assistant Manager, Dennis Cote, Operations Manager, and Maria-Elaina Riggieri, Business Manager, appeared before the Committee to present their departments' budgets. Mr. Walden noted the slight increase in Salaries/Wages due to step increases. The department's mission had been to level-fund or cut if possible. The Fuel & Heating Oil line has decreased due to new infrared heaters which have just been installed, replacing the old forced-hot-air heaters, a move resulting from an energy audit by National Grid. Mr. Walden explained that the impact of the new heaters would not be apparent for another year, but anticipates energy savings of \$5-6,000/year. The Committee asked the DPW to review cost saving estimates made during the presentation of the funding request for the new heaters and see how those projected savings compare to the actual savings.

Mr. Walden explained that the funding for the new road maintenance program described by the Town Manager in the budget booklet would come not from appropriations but from Chapter 90 funds, which are expected to increase to \$900,000. He will provide the Committee with a breakdown of intended road improvements and repairs. Mr. Walden added that expenses for this program are not in the General Budget; rather, the Maintenance Materials budget in the General Budget is for site-specific roadway failures (such as sinkholes, or frost heaves).

##### **Snow & Ice Removal**

Mr. Walden explained that it is difficult to know how much to budget for snow removal. This line is informed by a five-year average, with some adjustments made to the average for peak years. Ms. Casemyr noted that the DPW crew did a phenomenal job keeping the roads clear during the recent heavy snows.

##### **Water Enterprise Operations & Maintenance**

Mr. Walden explained that the Water and Sewer Enterprise Funds support themselves and are not part of the budget. The DPW generates the expense information which is given to the Town Accountant. The Town Accountant informs the Town Treasurer of the total debt amount (including her time, the wages of the DPW staff specifically assigned to Water/Sewer, etc). All this dictates what the water rates will be.

Mr. Walden noted the increase in Salaries/Wages due to step increases. The biggest share of the increase in Expenses is due to the Water Contract Operator. The water purification facilities are operated by Veolia and a formula in the contract is used to determine the Town's costs. The contract is based on CPI fluctuation which is calculated each year.

### **Sewer Enterprise Operations & Maintenance**

Again, Salaries/Wages have increased due to step increases. Mr. Walden noted that the line was held fairly well on Expenses. Mr. Walden explained that the department looks carefully at what work can be privatized (line painting, ball field maintenance), but has determined it is more cost-effective for the DPW to handle Sewer operations. He added that the DPW has four people who maintain 33 pump stations and 80 miles of pipe.

### **Conservation Commission**

Derek Saari, Assistant Conservation Officer, and Warren Keyes, Conservation Commission Chair, appeared before the Committee to present the department's budget. Mr. Saari explained that the Commission's requested 32 hrs/week administrative assistant position had been reduced to 19 hrs/week by Town Manager Jim Malloy. In future, the Membership Dues line item may be increased to enable more Commission members to attend conferences to keep abreast of current laws.

Mr. Saari informed the Committee that Westborough has the only program in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for regular storm-water drain reviews. The Town has 218 sites which are inspected annually for storm-water compliance. Mr. Saari added that careful attention to the drains has reduced the amount of flooding the town experiences. He feels Westborough's drainage system is a neglected utility, and in future would like to see an Enterprise Fund established for its maintenance. There was discussion about the determination of a fair system for assessing fees that would go to this new Enterprise Fund.

Mr. Saari explained that the Commission has an unusually cooperative relationship with the DPW. In order to save money for the Town, the Commission had recently worked with CSX to replace a culvert in Walkup Drive related to the 500-acre watershed there. The Commission has also been involved in negotiating with the State over its redevelopment of the spillway on Mill Road. The State agreed to replace a culvert on Arch Street in exchange for loss of wetlands at the Mill Road site, a significant savings to the Town.

Mr. Linnane noted the valuable contribution the Commission makes to the Town, and encouraged Mr. Saari to prepare information on the Commission's work to be available at Town Meeting.

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

The Committee determined that no meeting was required for Thursday, March 17<sup>th</sup>. (Ms. Lown left the meeting at 8:15 p.m.).

Mr. Arnold reviewed the departments still needing to meet with the Committee.

Ms. Casemyr met with Tim Singleton, Westborough's representative on the Assabet Building Committee. A final estimate on the project is expected by November. Ms. Casemyr noted that an article may be brought to Fall Town Meeting to inform residents of the issue, as the school needs the Town's approval before it can proceed in getting firm bids on the project.

### **Warrant article discussions**

Mr. Arnold reviewed the warrant, and encouraged the Committee to consider which proponents should come in for a meeting, and any questions they have about each article.

**Review of upcoming meeting schedule**

Mr. Arnold noted that the Wastewater Treatment Plant and Council on Aging will be appearing at the meeting on March 21. Other remaining departments will be scheduled as soon as possible,

**Chairman, Committee Liaison, and Department Liaison Reports**

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

Mr. Arnold called the Committee's attention to the useful insurance breakdown report received from Assistant Town Manager Kristi Williams. He asked Committee members to let him know if any other information about this is needed.

**Comments and Concerns of Committee Members**

Mr. Linnane informed residents that the Westborough Garden Club is sponsoring a presentation by the Editor of *Farmer's Almanac*, to be held on March 30, 2011, at 7 p.m. at Mill Pond School.

Ms. Casemyr noted the number of unfunded State mandates Town departments have had to support while keeping expenses down, and feels a list of such mandates should be prepared and included in the booklet for Town Meeting. Mr. Arnold suggested this topic be added to the Department Liaison Worksheet when it is next reviewed.

Ms. Casemyr announced the Open House Mill Pond School is having on April 7, 2011, from 8 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Mill Pond was designated a National School of Character in 2010 and will be celebrating 6 years of successfully creating a brand new culture from students drawn from 3 different schools.

**Adjournment**

Ms. Casemyr moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m. Vote to adjourn is 7 in favor, with 7 being present.

**Document List**

DPW Meeting Notes, 2-25-11.  
Budget Background Information sheet, DPW Water-Sewer.  
DPW Liaison Worksheet.  
DPW Liaison Worksheet, Attachment A.  
DPW Liaison Worksheet, Attachment B.  
Insurance Breakdown, 2011.