

Westborough Advisory Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting No. 29, FY2011
April 25, 2011

Approved
May 4, 2011

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

At 7:08 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.

AFC Preparations for ATM budget and article reviews

Town Planner/Planning Board regarding Zoning Bylaw warrant articles

Jim Robbins, Town Planner, appeared before the Committee to present these articles. Mr. Robbins explained that Article 18 would allow businesses on corner lots to have two signs rather than just one. The town has been very strict about allowing only one wall sign per business. However, several variances have been granted, most notably the one to McIntyre Insurance, which has visibility from Milk Street and E. Main Street as well as W. Main, and requested signs on both sides of their building. As there are now many requests, and to encourage the renewal of the downtown area, this article is being put forward. This article does not affect the restrictions on the size of the signs, or restrictions if, for example, the business is in the historic district. Mr. Robbins noted that public hearings have already been held on all four articles he is presenting tonight, and the Planning Board has voted unanimously to approve them.

Mr. Robbins explained that Article 20 (Site Plan Correction) & 21 (Site Plan Change) are attempts to codify zoning regulations and eliminate contradictions and duplications in zoning restrictions. Article 21 also would require developers to bring applications to the building commissioner which are complete, including any applicable fees.

Article 19 changes the zoning bylaws to make them consistent with the town charter which refers to the "Building Commissioner." Presently some bylaws refer to the "Building Inspector." Mr. Robbins noted that this has no effect on the authority of the position.

Town Counsel regarding Legal budget and warrant articles

Greg Franks, Town Counsel, appeared before the Committee to present these articles. Mr. Arnold asked Mr. Franks to comment on the legal components of other budgets which are not part of the Town Counsel budget. Mr. Franks noted that most legal fees were centered in his office, with the exception of the Treasurer Collector and the Assessor; the legal aspects of assessment appeals do go through his department and are performed using his budget.

Mr. Franks explained that Article 15 is an attempt to correct the Town Charter, which contains language added by the Legislature which is not in agreement with what the town originally approved at Town Meeting in May of 2008. Ms. Lown noted that it would be helpful to have a copy of the entire text as corrected. The Committee felt it would be useful for Mr. Franks to write up a timeline to explain the changes to the town charter, to include in the booklet or be ready to present at the Town Meeting.

Mr. Franks explained that Article 16 is to re-establish the Water and Sewer Commissioners, roles which were inadvertently deleted during the Charter updates voted on in 2008.

Mr. Franks noted that the main effect of Article 17 was to reduce the membership of the Open Space Preservation Committee from 9 to 7, although it does also specify the purpose of the Committee, which he considered helpful. Regarding the VFW deed restriction, Mr. Franks noted that if the property ceases to be used for its present purpose, ownership reverts back to the town. Regarding Article 28 (WCLT Property Transfer), Mr. Franks noted that as no appropriation of money is involved, a town vote is not really required on this issue.

John Matson regarding VFW Post warrant article

Mr. John Matson and Mr. George Perry of the Westborough VFW Post 9013 appeared to discuss Article 25 with the Committee. This article seeks to remove the deed restriction on the Post's property at 9A Milk St. The restriction, which states that if the property ceases to be used by the Post, it will revert to the Town's ownership, makes the Post ineligible for a bank loan. Mr. Matson explained that a loan is needed to make much-needed improvements to the Post, part of an effort to increase membership. The building would be brought up to code, and made more handicapped-accessible. Mr. Matson also explained his understanding of the law: that the restriction was set to expire in March of 2014 in any case and that this early removal of the deed restriction would allow the Post to begin its improvements earlier. Mr. Perry noted that there are no plans to vacate the property, rather the intent is to improve the property and expand its usefulness. Mr. Matson added that the Post would like to start their fundraising efforts now, and so are putting this article forward. The Committee had several questions about whether Mr. Matson's interpretation of the law was agreed upon by Town Counsel. Mr. Matson has not spoken in detail about this article with Town Counsel. The Committee advised Mr. Matson to discuss this and Mr. Arnold agreed to send a summary of the Committee's question to Town Counsel.

Library Trustees and Director regarding Library HVAC warrant article

Maureen Ambrosino, Library Director, and Pat Fontes, Library Trustees Chair, appeared before the Committee to present Article 8G. Mr. Arnold noted that this article is now to request \$15,000 to study and plan what to do regarding the HVAC system at the library, rather than to approve funds for the actual work. Ms. Ambrosino explained that the plan is to have specifications drawn up as soon as the article is approved, and to put a bid out in the summer in order to bring an actual number for the full scope of work to Fall Town Meeting. Ms. Fontes added that the Library Trustees are in full agreement with this plan.

Approval of Minutes

Meeting No. 23, 3-31-11, Meeting No. 24, 4-4-11, Meeting No. 25, 4-7-11, Meeting No. 26, 4-14-11, Meeting No. 27, 4-18-11

All deferred until the next meeting.

Discussion, deliberation, voting of any budgets or warrant articles

Mr. Arnold felt that with only 5 members present, the consensus of the Committee was to postpone voting until more members were present at subsequent meetings.

Continue preparation of Report and Recommendation to Town Meeting

There was some discussion of the spreadsheets Ms. Lown has been preparing for the report. Ms. Lown explained that the spreadsheet contains a history of local receipts and the budget going back ten years. The Committee felt that including figures going back five years, and adding a column for how much is actually expended, would be more useful.

Review of upcoming meeting schedule

Mr. Arnold noted that he would not be at Thursday's meeting; Ms. Casemyr will chair the meeting. The Personnel Board will be presenting Article 5 on the Wage and Salary Schedule amendment. The Committee will ask the Board for their position on the Council on Aging's request for an increase of

hours, as well as insight into the process of budgeting staff for 52 weeks of the year. Town Moderator Joe Harrington and Building Commissioner Tin Htway will also be present at Thursday's meeting.

Mr. Arnold asked Committee members to come to Thursday's meeting prepared to volunteer for drafting certain parts of the report. The report should be ready in rough form by Monday's meeting, to be finalized the following Thursday. Mr. Behn will be asked to add a breakout on debt and insurance for the school and town in the pie chart being prepared for the report. The Committee will look at the drafts and decide what level of reporting fits best into the report. Mr. Arnold also noted that a current recap spreadsheet was received from Town Accountant Leah Talbot, with current estimates from the finance team on excess levy, raise and appropriate articles, transfers from free cash, enterprise transfer articles, etc.

Chairman, Committee Liaison, and Department Liaison Reports
Reminder of joint meeting with Selectmen, Tuesday, April 26

Mr. Arnold reminded the Committee of tomorrow night's joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen. He added that voting will be on Thursday's agenda.

Mr. Arnold reported that the Central Massachusetts Mosquito Control project annual reports are now online. Also, information sessions intended for employees from the Worcester Regional Retirement System are being held in May—Committee members interested in learning more about it may wish to attend. There is also an email address and Web site available which may provide interesting information.

Comments and Concerns of Committee Members

Mr. Allen reminded residents of the upcoming Spring Festival beginning April 30th. The Civic Club is hosting a Fishing Challenge at Upton Rd. Reservoir. Mr. Tepper added that breakfast at KFC Hall, a historical bus tour, and a Sunday morning 5k race at the High School are among the other activities planned. Booklets outlining the activities are widely available around town.

Adjournment

Ms. Lown moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 p.m. Vote to adjourn is 5 in favor, with 5 being present.

Document List

Westborough Memorial VFW Post 9013 handout.
Draft AFC Report, prepared by J. Arnold, dated 4-25-11.
Pie Chart FY 2012.