

Westborough Advisory Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting No. 31, FY2011
May 2, 2011

Approved
May 14, 2011

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

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

Mr. Arnold reminded residents to vote tomorrow.

Call to Order/Open Forum

There were no requests to address the Committee.

Approval of Minutes

Meeting No. 29, April 25, 2011 - Deferred.

AFC Preparations for Annual Town Meeting budget and article reviews

Discussion, deliberation, voting of any departmental budgets and recommendations

The Committee reviewed the budgets to confirm votes and determine if re-voting is necessary.

Council on Aging. The Committee had previously voted in favor of the Town Manager's recommendation. Ms. Lown summarized the rationale for the vote: there was some question as to whether even if the dollar amount requested is approved at Town Meeting, an increase of hours for the position is possible, since the position has been approved only for 19-hrs/week; there were questions about how many actual hours of service to the Town would be realized from the increase in hours; and the Personnel Board had confirmed that at 25 hrs/week full benefit coverage would be required. Ms. Casemyr noted the additional 19-hrs/week position which was available to the Council. Mr. Behn added that the Committee had only recently learned that the Council could circumvent the Personnel Board's authority by unionizing the position, and felt that all the facts had not been laid out sufficiently. Mr. Tepper requested a re-vote. Mr. Arnold moves to recommend the Town vote Council on Aging Salaries/Wages of \$220,099 and Expenses of \$31,424.

Mr. Arnold felt that the Personnel Board, the Council on Aging and the Town Manager should discuss this issue and come up with a firm proposal for Town Meeting as to the best level of funding and the best strategy for implementing it. Mr. Allen noted that, to be consistent, additional personnel might also have to be considered for other departments, if this was approved. Ms. Rosenblum Senie felt a good case had been made for the need for increased hours, and was dismayed that the Council had not been made aware of the correct procedure earlier in the process. She would like to go on record as being in support of the increased hours. Mr. Tepper reminded the Committee that 35-hrs/week had been the original request of the Council; he felt that increases have been made in other departments, and that this line needs further examination. Mr. Behn felt the 35-hrs/week request was reasonable, in order to provide level-services to this growing segment of the Town's population, and doubted that personnel of sufficient training and experience would be willing to work for only 19-hrs/week. Mr. Arnold noted that the Committee seems to support the concept of increasing the hours, but has questions about the procedures. The vote to approve the budget recommendation is 7 in favor, 1 opposed (Tepper), with 8 being present.

Legal Services. Ms. Lown felt the \$1,200 requested for legal books could be accommodated within the existing budget, by using excess funds from the legal fees line. Mr. Arnold added that an end note in the report could state that, based on an analysis of past spending patterns, the Committee believes that this department can absorb the needed funds from what is already in the budget. No action taken.

Discussion, deliberation, voting of any TM warrant articles and recommendations

The Committee reviewed the articles yet to be voted.

Article 4. FY11 Budget Transfers. Mr. Arnold moves to recommend the Town vote to transfer from free cash and appropriate the following sums: Assessors, \$1,409; Treasurer/Collector, \$1,229; MIS/GIS, \$574; Town Clerk, \$1,039; Planning Board, \$1,201; Building & Grounds, \$1,304; Building Commissioner, \$1,839; DPW, \$19,962; Board of Health, \$1,774; Council on Aging, \$598; Recreation, \$1,132; Library, \$7,052; Street Lights, \$10,000; and further that the town vote to transfer \$5,643 from Water Retained Earnings and \$9,100 from Sewer Retained Earnings for the purpose stated in the article as printed in the warrant. The vote to approve the article recommendation is 7 in favor, 1 abstention (Lown), with 8 being present.

Article 7D. Reserve Funds. Ms. Lown moves to recommend the town vote to transfer from free cash the sum of \$300,000 to the Advisory Finance Committee General Reserve Fund, transfer \$50,000 from Water Retained Earnings to the Water Enterprise Reserve Fund, transfer \$50,000 from Sewer Retained Earnings to the Sewer Enterprise Reserve Fund, and transfer \$20,000 from Country Club Retained Earnings to the Country Club Enterprise Reserve Fund. Ms. Lown pointed out that transferring from free cash rather than raise and appropriate would minimize the burden to the taxpayer. Mr. Behn noted that the amount of free cash left over at year end could be rolled over, topped up with a levy amount. Ms. Casemyr supports the Town Manager's recommendation, noting his goal of town reserves totaling 7% of the operating budget. She supports lessening the burden on the taxpayer but is also mindful of the town's long-term financial liability issues. Mr. Tepper pointed out that reserves could also be built up by reducing expenses. He supports not raising taxes. Mr. Behn felt the issue of increasing reserves should be decided by voters, not the Town Manager. Mr. Arnold noted that as this is money the town hopes not to spend, being for emergencies, he is in favor of using free cash, at least for this year. The vote to approve the article recommendation is 5 in favor, 2 opposed (Linnane, Casemyr), 1 abstention (Allen), with 8 being present.

Article 7E. July 4th funds. Mr. Arnold moves to recommend the town vote to raise and appropriate \$2,500 for the purpose of this article. The vote to approve the article recommendation is 6 in favor, 2 abstentions (Allen, Linnane), with 8 being present.

Article 8E. Permit Tracking software. Ms. Casemyr felt clearer information was needed. Ms. Casemyr moves that the Advisory Finance Committee make a recommendation on Town Meeting floor. The vote to approve this recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Article 10. Senior Center Parking Lot. Ms. Casemyr moves to recommend the town vote to transfer from free cash the sum of \$41,646 for the purpose of this article. The vote to approve the article recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Article 11a. Water Tank work. Ms. Casemyr moves to recommend the town vote to transfer and appropriate the sum of \$420,000 from Water Retained Earnings for the purpose of this article. Ms. Lown did not feel enough information was provided. The vote to approve the article recommendation is 7 in favor, 1 opposed (Lown), with 8 being present.

Article 11b. Vote Amendment. Ms. Casemyr moves to recommend the town so vote. The vote to approve the article recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Article 12. Energy Audits. Ms. Casemyr moves to recommend the town vote to transfer from free cash and appropriate the sum of \$15,000 for the purpose of this article. Mr. Tepper did not feel this plan provided enough time for any savings to become apparent. Ms. Lown would prefer a test audit of one building, rather than three. Mr. Behn noted there were alternative ways of achieving energy savings, with no upfront risk. Mr. Linnane felt this audit, to be carried out by an independent engineer, would provide a good analysis of what was needed. The vote to recommend the transfer of funds and appropriation for this article is 3 in favor, 4 opposed (Allen, Lown, Behn, Tepper), 1 abstention (Rosenblum Senie), with 8 being present. The motion was defeated. Mr. Tepper then moved to recommend that this article be defeated. The vote to recommend defeat of this article is 4 in favor, 3 opposed (Linnane, Casemyr, Arnold), 1 abstention (Rosenblum Senie), with 8 being present. Mr. Arnold will notify Leigh Emery of the Green Technology Advisory Committee of this vote.

Article 13. Hastings School Project. There was some discussion about whether this should be funded from free cash, or borrowed as per the Town Manager's recommendation. Ms. Lown pointed out that even if free cash is used for this project, the remaining balance of free cash reserves would still be more than the town ended up with last year. Ms. Casemyr moves to recommend the town transfer and appropriate from free cash the sum of \$250,000 for the purpose of this article. Mr. Behn noted that enough additional free cash would probably be generated this year to cover the Committee's free cash allocations. The vote to approve the article recommendation is 7 in favor, 1 abstention (Allen), with 8 being present. It was noted that the Committee unanimously supported this project.

Article 7d. Reserve Fund Consensus vote. Mr. Arnold moves support for funding the Advisory Finance Committee General Reserve Fund at a level of \$300,000. The vote is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Article 14. TIF Plan. Ms. Lown felt more information was needed. Ms. Casemyr moves to recommend the town so vote. The vote to approve the article recommendation is 7 in favor, 1 opposed (Lown), with 8 being present.

Article 15. Charter Corrections. Ms. Casemyr moves to recommend the town so vote. The vote to approve the article recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Article 16. Charter Addition. Ms. Casemyr moves to recommend the town so vote. The vote to approve the article recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Article 17. Open Space. Ms. Casemyr moves to recommend the town so vote. The vote to approve the article recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Article 18. Signage. Ms. Lown moves to recommend the town so vote. The vote to approve the article recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Article 19. Title Change. Ms. Casemyr moves to recommend the town so vote. The vote to approve the article recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Article 20. Site Plan Correction. Ms. Casemyr moves to recommend the town so vote. The vote to approve the article recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Article 21. Site Plan Change. Ms. Casemyr moves to recommend the town so vote. The vote to approve the article recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Article 22. Corporate Cafeteria. Ms. Casemyr moves to recommend the town so vote. The vote to approve the article recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Article 23. Water Use Restriction. Ms. Casemyr moves to recommend the town so vote. The vote to approve the article recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Article 24. Use of Insurance Proceeds. Ms. Casemyr moves to recommend the town so vote. The vote to approve the article recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Article 25. VFW Deed Restriction. Mr. Arnold supports the VFW, but would prefer to have the legal questions resolved and re-visit the issue at Fall Town Meeting. Mr. Tepper felt the worst case was the town giving a very small parcel of land to charity, and supports the article. Mr. Arnold felt the town could look into helping the VFW get their loan, thereby retaining the option of getting the property back. The Committee consensus is to make a recommendation at town meeting.

Article 26. Bylaw Numbering. Ms. Casemyr moves to recommend the town so vote. The vote to approve the article recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Article 27. Libbey Property transfer. Ms. Casemyr moves to recommend the town so vote. The vote to approve the article recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Article 28. Land Trust Gift. Ms. Casemyr moves to recommend the town so vote. The vote to approve the article recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Preparation of Report and Recommendations to Town Meeting

Mr. Arnold noted that much work was still to be done on the report. Ms. Lown reviewed her recap spreadsheets with the Committee and noted their input. Ms. Casemyr felt labeling the columns alphabetically would make reference to the spreadsheet easier. Ms. Lown will send an updated .pdf of the spreadsheet for the Committee to review. The Committee reviewed the endnotes. Mr. Behn reviewed the

charts he had prepared, noting that Chart 2 showed that residents are spending twice as much on town services as they were in 1998.

Mr. Arnold explained that the price of the requested police cruisers has gone up \$4,000 apiece. The Committee will re-vote if necessary at town meeting floor.

Mr. Allen presented his pie chart to the Committee, which includes town and school elements combined, along with insurance and debt. Ms. Casemyr noted that the town's budget is separated into its constituent parts, while the school budget is represented as one piece. Ms. Rosenblum Senie felt the proportions did not reflect the school as 43% of the town's total \$92m budget. Ms. Casemyr reviewed the narrative she had prepared for the report.

Review of Meeting Schedule

Mr. Arnold felt the Committee needed to meet on Wednesday night to finish drafting the report. Any additional comments should be emailed to Ms. Lown or Mr. Behn. Thursday's meeting will include a review of updates to the spreadsheet. Mr. Tepper noted that some response to the survey results should be incorporated into the report.

Chairman, Committee Liaison, and Department Liaison Reports

Mr. Arnold informed the Committee that the end of April Appropriation Report is now available.

Ms. Casemyr noted that 500-600 copies of the report may have to be printed. She has received a quote for 60 pages, self-covered, b/w. Mr. Arnold added that \$1,173 was available for printing costs.

Comments and Concerns of Committee Members

Mr. Arnold reminded residents to vote at tomorrow's election.

Adjournment

Ms. Casemyr moved to adjourn the meeting at 11 p.m. Vote to adjourn was 8 in favor, with 8 being present.

Document List

2011 ATM Motions, Draft of 4-29-11.
Draft AFC Report, 5-2-11, prepared by Mr. Arnold.
AFC Book Trends spreadsheet, prepared by Mr. Behn.
AFC Liaison Status spreadsheet for ATM Prep.
AFC WIP Review Budget Pages for 2011 ATM, prepared by Ms. Lown.
Free Cash Stabilization spreadsheet.
FY12 Draft Budget End Notes, prepared by Ms. Lown.
March 2011 Trust Funds spreadsheet.
Non-union COLA school spreadsheet.
Pie Chart Format for AFC R&R to 2011 ATM, prepared by Mr. Allen.
Warrant Article Summary spreadsheet, prepared by Mr. Arnold.