

Westborough Advisory Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting No. 12, FY2012
October 27, 2011

Approved
December 5, 2011

Members Present: John E. Arnold, Chair, Ed Behn, Peter Allen, Bill Linnane, Jo Lown, Kathy Rosenblum Senie, J. J. Malone, Lisa Blazejewski. Absent: Jim Tepper.

At 7:02 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 - deferred

Reserve Fund Transfer Request

Unanticipated Retiree Sick Leave Buyback

Mr. Arnold had received an updated Reserve Fund Transfer request for \$3,000 for a Sick Leave buyback. Town Manager Jim Malloy explained that when a Town employee retires they are eligible for a sick leave buyback. Usually the employee gives the Town advance notice of retirement and funds for the buyback are included in the budget. In this instance, the Town was not notified in advance so reserve funds are needed. Mr. Behn moved to transfer from the Reserve Fund the amount of \$3,000 to the Board of Selectmen/Town Manager Sick Leave Buyback Account #11223-5235A for the purpose of a Sick Leave buyback. The vote to approve the transfer is 7 in favor, 1 opposed (Lown), with 8 being present.

AFC Recap of Special Town Meeting

Committee member thoughts, observations & suggestions for improvements

Mr. Arnold felt a brief recap of Special Town Meeting would be useful. There was some discussion about accepted procedure if an individual member of the Finance Committee wishes to speak to an article at Town Meeting as a resident and not as a Committee member. If members wish to speak and feel that they are not being seen by the Moderator, Mr. Arnold encouraged members to notify the Chair so he/she can make sure they are recognized by Town Moderator Joe Harrington. Another acceptable solution is for an AFC member to simply stand in front of any microphone designated for audience use.

Many Committee members were impressed with the thoughtful, detailed questions posed by residents at Town Meeting. There was some discussion about how to get more information to voters before Town Meeting so they are better prepared to make good decisions.

Ms. Rosenblum Senie noted that she had attended a Capital Planning presentation at the Association of Town Finance Committee's Annual Meeting which was very good, and felt a presentation by the Capital Expenditure Planning Committee to the Annual Town Meeting would be a good idea. Mr. Linnane will follow up on this. Ms. Lown pointed out that a joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen, Capital Expenditures Planning Committee, Advisory Finance Committee and Town Manager is supposed to be scheduled in order to provide an overall financial picture.

Review/Discussion of Advisory Finance Committee FY2013 Budget Submission

Discuss proposed budget and Vote/consensus of budget to be submitted to Town Manager

Mr. Arnold noted that department budgets are due on November 7th. He explained that a number of Committee members had advocated that efforts should be made to limit budget increases to 2.5%; however, even if only the non-wage expenses in the AFC budget are level-funded, a level service (number of hours) increase in wages paid to the Committee's Administrative Assistant would increase the overall budget by 3.46%. There was some discussion about ways to trim expenses from the Printing/Copying and Dues/Memberships lines, as well as Salaries/Wages for the Administrative Assistant. Mr. Arnold

noted that the \$351 in the budget for Dues/Memberships has paid for dues and has allowed 3 members to attend the conference of Town Finance Committees.

Mr. Behn moved to accept budget Salaries/Wages of \$3,013, Membership/Dues of \$360, and Printing of \$1675. Mr. Arnold noted that the Salaries/Wages of \$3,013 reflected 2.9 hrs/week for the Administrative Assistant (down from 3 hrs/week), a \$40 reduction in Dues (the amount for one person to attend the Association of Town Finance Committees conference), and a \$25 reduction in Printing, resulting in an overall budget increase of .3%. Mr. Malone moved to amend the Printing/Copying line to \$1,650 to achieve a 4.29% decrease in expenses and an overall decrease in the budget. The vote to approve this amendment is 3 in favor, 4 opposed (Arnold, Lown, Behn, Blazejewski), 1 abstention (Allen), with 8 being present. The motion fails. The vote to approve Mr. Behn's motion, with Printing/Copying of \$1675, is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present. Mr. Behn will look into alternatives to reduce printing costs.

Proposed schedule of meetings December 2011 through March 2012

Mr. Arnold felt a November meeting would not be necessary. The next meeting will be scheduled for Monday, December 5th. The budget book is planned to be available around New Year's; Mr. Arnold will reserve the meeting room every Monday and Thursday evening beginning Monday, January 9th. ATM is scheduled for Saturday, March 24th. The booklet should be completed by Friday, March 16th. Ms. Blazejewski noted that a public hearing presenting the budget is scheduled for January 10th. It is possible that the first meeting of the Committee may be deferred to January 12th.

Chairman, Committee Liaison, and Department Liaison Reports/comments concerns

Mr. Arnold noted that Town Accountant Leah Talbot had sent the October Appropriations Report. He added that an in-depth review of the Assabet Valley Repair Project would be provided at two breakfast meetings to be held at Assabet School, Friday December 2nd from 8:00-9:30 a.m., and Saturday December 3rd from 8:30-10:00 a.m.

Ms. Blazejewski had been in touch with Youth & Family Services via email.

Ms. Lown had spoken with Police Chief Alan Gordon and Fire Chief Nick Perron and noted that they will be sending their budgets.

Mr. Behn noted the Town Finance Team meeting set for next Tuesday.

Mr. Allen will be attending a meeting of the Conservation Commission Tuesday evening. They will be discussing their budget.

Adjournment

Mr. Behn moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 p.m. Vote to adjourn was 8 in favor, with 8 being present.

Document List

Transfer request from Town Manager Jim Malloy.
Memo from Leah Talbot regarding Sick Leave Buyback.
Initial draft budget documents for the Advisory Finance Committee budget.
FY2013 Salaries and Wages Request.
Curry Printing invoice for 2011 STM Booklet.
Curry Printing estimate for 2012 ATM Booklet.