

Westborough Advisory Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting No. 21, FY2012
February 6, 2012

Approved
February 13, 2012

Members Present: John E. Arnold, Chair, Ed Behn, Peter Allen, Bill Linnane, Jo Lown, Jim Tepper, Kathy Rosenblum Senie, J. J. Malone, Lisa Blazejewski. Absent: None.

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. 19, January 30, 2012

Mr. Linnane moved to accept the minutes. The vote to approve the minutes is 7 in favor and 2 abstentions (Tepper, Allen), with 9 being present.

Meeting No. 20, February 2, 2012

Mr. Linnane and Mr. Behn requested corrections to the minutes. Mr. Behn moved to accept the minutes as amended. The vote to approve the minutes is 6 in favor and 3 abstentions (Allen, Lown, Blazejewski), with 9 being present.

Preparation for FY2013 Annual Town Meeting

Library Trustees/Library Director

Budget and Draft Warrant #6 articles 9C and 9D

Maureen Ambrosino, Library Director, and Pat Fontes, Library Trustee Chair, appeared before the Committee to present this budget and related articles. Karen Fay, Library Trustees Vice Chair, Dee Kohler, Helena Engberg, Lisa Freeman, Karen Griegal, Dorothy Mello, Jim Holmes and Anthony Vaver, Library Trustees, were also present. Mr. Arnold noted that this department has attempted to present a budget which more accurately reflects what is actually being spent in the various line items. Ms. Ambrosino gave a recap of the Library's achievements during 2011, which included the first-ever teen and adult summer reading program, a therapy dog reading program, and author visits. During the October snowstorm the library became a focal point for the community as residents gathered there to keep warm, charge phones, and use the computers. The library has added a fax machine for public use, and now provides e-readers for loan (made possible through a grant and Friends of the Library). Social media such as Flickr, Facebook and Foursquare have been utilized to promote the library.

Library Budget. Ms. Ambrosino explained that, in past years, surplus funds from some budget lines had been used to offset shortages in other lines, but were not charged properly by account. This year the Library has estimated and will account properly for each line. Ms. Ambrosino noted that the \$9,000 surplus in Grounds & Building Maintenance would be used for any further work required on the HVAC system pending the installation of the system funded at the last Special Town Meeting. Increases are being requested to fund additional shelving in the children's room, the replacement of 3 public internet workstations, and the addition of another computer workstation in the young adult area. A surplus of \$1800 in Books & Periodicals has been re-directed in order to purchase more ebooks. Ms. Ambrosino felt there would be more demand for e-content going forward. She noted that the amount budgeted for content (books & periodicals, CDs, audiobooks, and ebooks) was 16.5% of the total budget, just above the 15% required in order for the Library to qualify for state aid, and to remain accredited.

Library Custodian. Ms. Fontes reviewed a list of custodial responsibilities. She noted that the Library Trustees have voted to retain the current custodial arrangement. Ms. Fay pointed out that a contract worker coming in 1 or 2 hours per night could not provide the same services as the current custodian, who works 40 hours/week; hours that are dedicated to the library. The Trustees feel the needs of the library will not be met if this change is implemented, and are requesting that funds be restored to retain the full-time custodial position.

There was some discussion about whether the job description presented had been approved by the Personnel Board. Ms. Fay noted that the list of duties included what is actually being done now, plus additional items the Trustees felt were needed. Mr. Linnane understood that Town Manager Jim Malloy is attempting to find ways to save the Town money, but felt more time was needed to reflect on the specific needs of the Senior Center and the Library in this regard. Mr. Behn noted that many of the duties currently being provided by the Library's custodian are not included in the official job description, and felt it was the Personnel Board's responsibility to look into this issue. He pointed out that the Library (as well as the Senior Center) is a gathering place for the community, unlike the Town Hall. Ms. Lown noted that departments need time to adjust to the changes being made. Mr. Malone added that though the overall budget is termed a "level-service budget," the switch to contract custodian did not in fact provide level services. Mr. Arnold felt perhaps more time was required to finalize the job description developed by the Library in the fall and to give the Trustees time to determine their overall funding priorities given their desire to maintain a full-time custodian.

Article 9C. Parkman Street Entrance Replacement (\$4,800). Ms. Ambrosino explained that the current exterior door, installed in 1981, is now being held together with duct tape. The interior glass door has also proved difficult for handicapped patrons to open, so an opener will be added to that door also.

Article 9D. Library Main Level Carpet Replacement (\$55,000). Ms. Ambrosino explained that the 10-year-old carpeting on the main level, installed with no carpet pad and glued directly onto tile, is now rippling and cannot be repaired. The old carpet will be replaced with carpet tiles which will make future replacement easier, and will also allow for flexibility in the placement of shelving. Mr. Malone felt a check should be made as to whether the tiles under the old carpet were asbestos.

Police Department

Budget and Draft Warrant #6 articles 4 and 9E

Alan Gordon, Police Chief, appeared before the Committee to present this budget and related articles. Following up on the Library Trustees' discussion about custodial services, Chief Gordon noted that the Police Department is opposed to removing full-time custodial services from the Forbes Building. Prisoner cells need cleaning throughout the day, and some offices are locked by 4 p.m. for security reasons and contract cleaners would not have access to them.

Regarding the budget, Chief Gordon noted that most of the Salaries/Wages budget is contractual. Overtime has been a significant expense, with staff having to cover the loss of two officers due to retirement, another who left to join the state police, and one out for basic training. Three new patrol officers have been hired at a lower step scale, providing substantial savings which will compensate for increases in overtime and court time (\$8,000 was added to the Court budget anticipating that officers may have to travel to Worcester courts if the local district court closes). Chief Gordon also explained that this year the state is requiring dispatchers answering 911 calls to be EMV (Emergency Medical Vehicle) certified, training which will be funded by the state. Two people will now be required to handle emergency calls, one to stay on the line with callers and another to dispatch the ambulance/Fire Department. Any extra equipment required must be paid for by the Town.

Article 4. Deputy Chief of Police. Chief Gordon explained that, in 1992, the union successfully petitioned the State Labor Board to have the two lieutenant positions included in the union. As a result, when a lieutenant follows up on any complaint against an officer, a union member is investigating a fellow union member and both members are represented by the same union counsel. To protect the transparency of investigations the department is requesting a non-union Deputy Chief position (any position of lower rank could potentially be unionized). In addition, when negotiating with the unions the lieutenant, who runs the patrol division, is in effect negotiating for himself as a union member, a conflict of interest which would be avoided with a non-union Deputy Chief. Chief Gordon noted that he would not move forward with this request without the approval of the Board of Selectmen. If approved, this position would encompass the present Executive Lieutenant officer salary and stipend, and so would only add \$10,000 to the budget. The size of the department would not be increased at this time (though the Chief is requesting that both Lieutenant positions remain in the Job Classification Plan).

Article 9E. 2 Police Cruisers (\$88,000). Chief Gordon explained that one of the present vehicles is a 2005 Crown Victoria which by year end is expected to have more than 100,000 miles. The second vehicle is a 2007 Crown Victoria which is expected to be at 120,000 miles at year end. The new vehicles are heavy-duty, built specifically for police work, and the cost includes all associated equipment and mobile data terminal. The old vehicles will be traded in, and the size of the Town's fleet will not be increased. As many of the accessories for the vehicles as possible (e.g., light bar) are moved to the new vehicles.

Discussion of proposed Charter and non-Zoning Bylaw changes

Draft Warrant #6 articles 19 through 28

Mr. Arnold noted that, although articles 19 through 28 were specifically mentioned on the agenda, most of these would be taken up at a later meeting since the earlier discussions took longer than expected. Therefore, tonight the Committee's work will focus on the two articles relating to the Advisory Finance Committee.

Article 8D. At a previous meeting the Committee voted 8-0 to request that the wording be changed to include Transfer as well as Raise and Appropriate. Mr. Arnold noted that contrary to what he had thought, last year's article seems to have been the first to include the Transfer option. Mr. Malone still felt the option of a Transfer should be left open, even though in principle he agrees with Mr. Malloy's approach in Raising and Appropriating funds for regularly recurring articles. Mr. Allen felt there was no harm in adding the Transfer wording, which would provide flexibility for the voters at Town Meeting. Mr. Behn also preferred having the option to Transfer from Free Cash, noting that, if the funds are not used, the funds would return to Free Cash. Ms. Lown was in favor too, but wondered if changing the language of the motion to say "use Free Cash in hand" was sufficient. The rest of the Committee was in general agreement. Ms. Lown moves to request that the wording reflect the ability to Transfer as well as Raise and Appropriate. The vote to approve this motion is unanimous, 9 in favor with 9 being present.

Article 20. Mr. Arnold noted that this article would involve a change to the definition of the Advisory Finance Committee. He added that Mr. Malloy was attempting to remove tasks the AFC doesn't actually do. The AFC does not have a recent history of involvement in negotiating contracts, and it is not being suggested that the AFC will not be allowed to provide feedback on those contracts. Mr. Arnold was comfortable with striking the last sentence, leaving the second sentence as is. Mr. Malone, Mr. Allen and Mr. Behn agreed. Ms. Lown would not delete the sentence, but would rather change the language to clarify the Committee's role. She noted that changes to the Town's bylaws should not be done piecemeal, and that it was important the Committee retain oversight of the Town's contracts, especially if contracting out increases. Ms. Rosenblum Senie felt the last sentence could be left out, as it could be construed that departments needed the Committee's approval to enter into contracts. Mr. Tepper wasn't sure any change was necessary. Ms. Blazejewski saw no harm in deleting the sentence, feeling the phrase "all matters relating to" already in the bylaw included everything anyway. Ms. Lown felt the change may conflict

with the Committee's role as defined in State Law and thought the Committee should get a second opinion. Mr. Arnold will ask Mr. Malloy to give the Committee time over the summer to consider this issue. Mr. Behn moves to recommend to the Town Manager that Article 20 be dropped pending further study and discussion. The vote to approve this motion is 7 in favor, 2 opposed (Malone, Allen), with 9 being present.

Chairman, Committee Liaison, and Department Liaison Reports

Ms. Blazejewski will provide a report on the Historical Commission. Regarding the BOH/Landfill, Mr. Behn noted that there is a big gap between what the Town is paying and what is being collected as dump sticker fees. Mr. Arnold noted that the Committee had conversations with the Board of Health in the past about paying for the Landfill with taxes vs. use fees. He feels we should ask if they are continuing to factor this into the fees that are set for dump stickers. Ms. Lown would like to know how the contingency is calculated for this budget.

Mr. Tepper noted that George Perry of Veterans Services is ready to come in.

Ms. Lown distributed a spreadsheet containing information on Available Transfers and the Free Cash and Reserve Balance.

Mr. Behn will attend the Town's Finance Team meeting tomorrow night.

Adjournment

Mr. Behn moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:18 p.m. Vote to adjourn was 9 in favor, with 9 being present.

Document List

Spreadsheet showing % increase for FY2013.
2012 ATM Warrant version 7.
Library Budget presentation.
DPW Response to AFC questions.
Snow Updates.