

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

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. 25, February 20, 2012

Mr. Allen requested corrections to the minutes. Mr. Linnane moved to accept the minutes as amended. The vote to approve the minutes is 7 in favor and 1 abstention (Tepper), with 8 being present.

Meeting No. 26, February 23, 2012

Mr. Linnane moved to accept the minutes. The vote to approve the minutes is 7 in favor and 1 abstention (Allen), with 8 being present.

Preparation for FY2013 Annual Town Meeting

Town Moderator

Town Moderator Joe Harrington appeared before the Committee to discuss Town Meeting topics, including the process for the Special Town Meeting (STM) to be held during Annual Town Meeting (ATM). Mr. Harrington suggested asking Town Clerk Nancy Yendriga if attendance at Town Meeting is expected to be increased because of the STM articles, requiring more copies of the Committee's report. Mr. Harrington noted that STM will begin at 7 p.m. (on Saturday, March 17) regardless of how much of the ATM warrant has been dealt with before the break. This allows for consultants to plan on being present for that portion of the meeting. If by any chance the ATM articles (2 through 10) are completed before the break, Mr. Harrington would expect a motion to proceed to the Assabet article (13), leaving Articles 11 & 12 for after the Special Town Meeting has acted on its articles due to their similar subjects. There was some discussion of how Articles 11 & 12 would be dealt with if Articles 1 & 2 passed (or failed). Mr. Harrington noted that the margin of approval or disapproval would influence the Building Committee's response. He added that after STM he expects a motion to dissolve that meeting, after which time the Town could not re-visit those articles.

There was some discussion of the mechanics of the debt exclusion override. Mr. Harrington explained that even if the Town approves the appropriations, the Board of Selectmen would be the body to decide to call an election to approve the debt exclusion override. Mr. Arnold noted the Town's more than adequate levy capacity for the Annual Town Meeting articles, and asked whether only a portion of the debt could be excluded. Mr. Behn added that the debt service for the Fire Station portion of the article, for example, would fit comfortably under the current levy limit. Mr. Harrington will consider this further. Mr. Arnold noted that Steve Doret of the School Committee was drafting a third STM article to present to the Board of Selectmen. Regarding the Charter/Bylaw articles, Mr. Harrington noted that the Town Charter and Bylaws currently available do not reflect all changes voted at previous Town meetings, but as yet unapproved by the Legislature, making it difficult to evaluate the impact of the changes being considered for the current ATM.

Discussion/Deliberation/Voting of Budgets

Treasurer/Collector. Mr. Behn noted that the surplus of FY11 in this budget had been eliminated in subsequent budgets, leaving no excess contingency in his view. Mr. Behn moves Salaries/Wages of

\$223,145, and Expenses of \$39,410. The vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Legal. Regarding the contingency some members had noted in this budget, Mr. Allen explained that Town Counsel Greg Franks was reducing the surplus gradually, but didn't feel comfortable lowering his budget any further at this time. Mr. Behn moves Salaries/Wages of \$126,464, and Expenses of \$47,190. The vote to approve the budget recommendation is 7 in favor, 1 opposed (Blazejewski), with 8 being present. Ms. Blazejewski noted that only 50% of the budget had been spent so far, and felt less of a cushion was needed since the department had indicated that outside services were to be used less. Mr. Behn pointed out that if legal issues arise funds could be depleted quickly. Mr. Allen to follow up on Mr. Malone's query, whether Bond Counsel was paid from this line.

Personnel Board. Mr. Behn indicated that the numbers have been confirmed. Mr. Tepper moves Expenses of \$26,178. The vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

MIS/GIS. The Committee's previous discussion of this budget centered on the 5-year equipment plan. Mr. Behn added that the major increase in this budget is due to the permitting software and document management system. No vote taken.

Conservation Commission. Mr. Arnold noted that the increase in Dues and Memberships was to provide training for the Conservation Commission staff and Commissioners, and that the Clerical wages request had gone down. Mr. Behn added that overall this budget has decreased. Mr. Behn moves Salaries/Wages of \$18,553, and Expenses of \$1,850. The vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Zoning Board of Appeals. Ms. Blazejewski noted that of the \$12,000 budgeted for Clerical staff, only \$3,500 was spent in FY12, and felt the line should be adjusted. No vote taken. Mr. Tepper felt that other departments are also over-budgeting by working from the assumption that staff will work a fully scheduled 52 weeks/year.

Building & Grounds. Mr. Arnold noted that the Library's portion of Custodial funds previously in this budget had been moved to the Library's budget. Ms. Rosenblum Senie noted that the Senior Center has formally requested to keep their custodian. The Committee will wait to see the outcome. No vote taken.

Insurance. There was some discussion of the Recap number Town Accountant Leah Talbot had provided the Committee, of \$10,191,200. Mr. Allen felt it was unnecessary for this budget to be approved now with excess contingency, thereby raising taxes, since there was opportunity to obtain more funds in November at Special Town Meeting. There was some discussion of the open enrollment date, and how that would affect when funds were needed.

Building Department. Mr. Arnold noted that the expectation is that the Assistant's stipend will become unnecessary if the Intermunicipal Agreement with Ashland is amended as expected. Vote deferred until Board of Selectmen give their final approval to the agreement with Ashland.

Assabet. Mr. Arnold will ask Mary Jo Nawrocki and Pat Collins of the Assabet District School Committee to help craft a footnote explaining the increase in Westborough's assessment, which is due to changes in transportation cost reimbursement, state funding, and the foundation budget formula. Ms. Rosenblum Senie noted that Assabet's foundation budget increased by 5.8%. Mr. Behn moves Assabet Vocational Regional School Assessment Expenses of \$686,162. The vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

DPW. Mr. Behn moves Salaries/Wages of \$1,513,198, and Expenses of \$682,268. The vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Youth & Family Services. Ms. Blazejewski noted that the town is being asked to resume funding for Hot Summer Nights, and an additional \$450 is being requested for Training and Education (\$150 each for three people). Mr. Behn moves Salaries/Wages of \$161,728, and Expenses of \$6,750. The vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Library. Mr. Arnold has asked the Library Trustees to prioritize their requests for workstations, furniture, and keeping their custodian. The Library Trustee Chair and Director responded to the question about the likelihood of asbestos issues if the main floor carpet is replaced as requested and that there are no asbestos issues; there appears to be a wooden floor under the current carpet. No vote taken.

Historical Commission. Mr. Behn moves Salaries/Wages of \$18,783, and Expenses of \$5,725. Regarding clerical staff, Mr. Behn pointed out it might be prudent in future for the town to specify how many days its part-time, hourly-wage staff are expected to work per year. Mr. Arnold added that when developing budgets, departments could subtract from the 52 weeks/year the vacations and holidays such staff don't get paid for in cases where the time is not expected to be made up on other work days. Mr. Tepper felt some clarity was needed on whether departments are spending right up to the budgeted amount, or are really determining how many hours are required for staffing, adding that some economies must be found. Mr. Arnold noted that the preferred way to address this budgeting issue would be made by systematically changing how hourly staffing budgets are done across departments. The vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Debt Services. Mr. Arnold noted the need for a footnote, adding that contingencies or changes in borrowings may allow this item to be reduced at Fall Town Meeting. Mr. Behn moves General Fund Debt Principal & Interest Expenses of \$11,455,901. The vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Country Club Operating Committee. The Committee will wait on the Country Club Operating Committee's vote on the Town Manager's recommendation. No vote taken.

Sewer Operations. Mr. Behn moves Salaries/Wages of \$680,025, and Expenses of \$318,771. The vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Sewer Debt and Interest. Mr. Behn moves Expenses of \$782,026. The vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Wastewater Treatment Plant. Regarding the Committee's discussion of CPI/PPI, Mr. Malone noted that because the PPI is such a volatile rate it has a bigger impact than might be expected. No vote taken.

Water Enterprise. Mr. Behn moves Salaries/Wages of \$534,234, and Expenses of \$1,881,895. The vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Water Debt & Interest. Mr. Behn moves Expenses of \$1,991,042. The vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

School Department. Awaiting answers to Committee's questions. No vote taken.

There was some discussion of the MIS/GIS budget, particularly the 5-year plan. Mr. Behn noted that if a 6-year plan was used, a savings of \$4,000/year could be realized. He added that the primary increase of this budget was for software maintenance, an increase anticipated by the Committee last year when they had voted to pass over the article that authorized the licensing of permitting and related document management software. Mr. Allen felt the follow-on costs had not been accurately presented when approved at the last Town Meeting and is inclined to vote against, especially since the Committee had recommended against the expense.

Ms. Rosenblum Senie felt it was important to assess the impact of the budgets the Committee had voted on. Mr. Behn had calculated a 1.56% increase to the tax bill, excluding the STM articles. There was some discussion of the valuation estimates and their impact on the tax rate. Mr. Arnold noted that current numbers will be available at Saturday's meeting for the Committee's deliberations, and that Town Assessor Linda Swadel would give further information at Thursday's meeting. Mr. Behn pointed out that the Recap spreadsheet doesn't show the effect of borrowing in future years, and Mr. Arnold added that residents should be prepared for the future effects of principal and interest payments.

Discussion/Deliberation/Voting of Warrant Articles

Article 4. Amend Classification. Mr. Behn moves to recommend the Town so vote. The vote to approve the article recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Article 7D. AFC Reserve Fund. Mr. Behn felt that, in principle, this action should be a Free Cash transfer, a replenishment of what was spent by raise and appropriate. The fund should not be viewed as an operating budget. Ms. Blazewski felt funds needed every year should not be taken from Free Cash, and that the town should not raise and appropriate money it probably won't use. Mr. Malone added that monies the town

hasn't used have been cycled into Free Cash, so why not use Free Cash to replenish the Reserve Fund? However, he is in favor of raise and appropriate for recurring expenses. Ms. Senie was comfortable with a raise and appropriate this year, but felt that the option to use Free Cash should be left open. Mr. Arnold was not generally in favor of raising and appropriating funds which are not expected to be spent for the operations of the Town and sees the Reserve Fund as money the Town is hoping not to spend. In years when the money is not spent and is, therefore, returned retained as 'Free Cash', he feels it isn't necessarily appropriate to ask the taxpayers to tax themselves again for the same amount in subsequent years. Mr. Malone pointed out that the "Rule of the Meeting" (now a Town Bylaw) could be invoked allowing the town to switch the mode of appropriation if necessary. Mr. Tepper wanted to know the impact of having used Free Cash for the Reserve Fund last year, noting there may have been collectively conservative over-budgeting across departments. He is in favor of Free Cash. No vote taken.

Article 7H. Health Care Reimbursement Account. Mr. Behn moves to recommend the Town Raise and Appropriate the sum of \$100,000 to fund the Health Care Reimbursement Account, and further to Transfer \$100,000 from the FY12 Insurance Expense Account to the Health Care Reimbursement Account. The vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Article 8. Capital Improvement Plan

Article 8A. Hurst Tool. Mr. Behn moves to recommend the Town vote to transfer from Free Cash and appropriate the sum of \$69,500 for the purposes of this article. The vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Article 8B. Ambulance. Mr. Behn moves to recommend the Town vote to transfer from Free Cash and appropriate the sum of \$100,000, and transfer from the Ambulance Fund the sum of \$90,000, for the purposes of this article. The vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Article 8C. Library Parkman St. Entrance. Mr. Behn moves to recommend the Town transfer and appropriate from Free Cash the sum of \$4,800 for the purposes of this article. The vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Article 8D. Library Carpet Replacement. Awaiting Library priority list. No vote taken.

Article 8E. Police Cruisers. Mr. Behn moves to recommend the Town vote to transfer from Free Cash and appropriate the sum of \$88,000 for the purposes of this article, and that the size of the Town's fleet not increase. The vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Article 8F. Drainage Evaluation. Mr. Behn moves to recommend the Town vote to transfer from Free Cash and appropriate the sum of \$70,000 for the purposes of this article. The vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Article 8G. DPW Truck. Mr. Behn moves to recommend the Town vote to transfer from Free Cash and appropriate the sum of \$100,000 for the purposes of this article, and that the size of the Town's fleet not increase. The vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Article 8H. DPW Truck. Mr. Behn moves to recommend the Town vote to transfer from Free Cash and appropriate the sum of \$25,000 for the purposes of this article, and that the size of the Town's fleet not increase. The vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Article 8I. Fisher St. Water Plant Roof. Mr. Behn moves to recommend the Town vote to transfer from Water Enterprise Fund Retained Earnings the sum of \$15,000 for the purposes of this article. The vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Article 8J. Street Sweeper. Mr. Behn moves to recommend that \$227,000 be borrowed and appropriated for replacing the 1999 Sterling Vacuum Street Sweeper, and that the size of the town's fleet not increase. Mr. Malone was not comfortable with a borrow and suggested the possibility that the sweeper be funded by a transfer from free cash. Mr. Behn withdraws his motion. Ms. Senie wanted to know the impact to Free Cash reserve levels if this were changed to Free Cash. Mr. Arnold felt that since more borrowing was now intended than was anticipated when this warrant was initially drafted, reconsideration was appropriate. He will follow up with Mr. Malloy.

Article 8K. DPW Mack Truck. Mr. Behn moves to recommend the Town vote to transfer from Free Cash and appropriate the sum of \$55,000 for the purposes of this article, and that the size of the Town's fleet not

increase. The vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present. [Note below that this vote was later rescinded by Committee vote when a discrepancy was found in the expected motions and the Town Accountant's spreadsheet regarding the funding source for this item.]

Article 8L. Cemetery. Mr. Malone felt this project could be delayed in view of other more pressing expenses. Mr. Allen noted that this might be a project the DPW staff can work on as time allows, and was in favor. Mr. Linnane pointed out that the project is expected to proceed in stages, but added that the cemetery will not be needed for some time. Mr. Arnold to follow up with Mr. Malloy. No vote taken.

Articles 10, 11, 12. No vote taken.

Article 13. Assabet Project. Mr. Behn moves to recommend the Town so vote. The vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Draft Report and Recommendation

Mr. Arnold and Mr. Behn hope to have a rough draft of the report by Thursday or Saturday. Committee members were encouraged to consider what should be included in the report. The final vote on the report must be at next Thursday's meeting in order to get it to the printer by Friday, March 9th.

Mr. Behn noted that Article 8K (Dump Truck) was voted as Free Cash, not as Transfer from Retained Earnings as specified by Town Accountant Leah Talbot. Mr. Behn moves to rescind the previous vote on Article 8K. The vote to rescind the previous vote is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Chairman, Committee Liaison, and Department Liaison Reports

Mr. Arnold noted the request for a Reserve Fund transfer from the Police Department, for funds to pay for Fitness for Duty evaluations for three new police officers, which will be dealt with at Thursday's meeting.

Comments and Concerns of Committee Members

Mr. Tepper will continue to try to contact the Zoning Board of Appeals regarding the realistic hours of work expected for their part-time administrative assistant.

Adjournment

Mr. Behn moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:10 p.m. Vote to adjourn was 8 in favor, with 8 being present.

Document List

2012 ATM Motions Final.

AFC Dept Meetings Budgets ATM FY13 spreadsheet.

Cemetery position duties. (from DPW)

Fire-TH-Rec Debt spreadsheet. (from Town Manager)

FY13 AFC Voted Budgets so far.

Proposed Work Plan & Schedule, from Jacunski Humes Architects.

Cost Estimate of Schematic Plans (Fire Station), from Jacunski Humes Architects.

Cost Estimate of Schematic Plans (Recreation Center), from Jacunski Humes Architects.

Cost Estimate of Schematic Plans (Town Hall), from Jacunski Humes Architects.

Cost Estimate of Schematic Plans (Forbes Building), from Jacunski Humes Architects.

STM 3-17-12 Draft Warrant.

Town Warrant Article 2-23-12.

Warrant Article Summary spreadsheet, ATM FY13.