

Westborough Advisory Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting No. 37, FY2012
June 18, 2012

Approved
July 23, 2012

Members Present: John E. Arnold, Chair, Ed Behn, Peter Allen, Jim Tepper, J. J. Malone, Lisa Blazejewski. Absent: Kathy Rosenblum Senie (two Committee positions are now open).

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. 36, May 7, 2012

Mr. Malone requested a correction to the minutes. Mr. Tepper moved to accept the minutes as amended. The vote to approve the minutes is 6 in favor, with 6 being present.

Requests for Transfers

Board of Appeals – Intra-Departmental Transfer

Joanne Morris, Administrative Assistant to the Board of Appeals, appeared before the Committee regarding this transfer request. Mr. Arnold noted the request for a transfer of \$186.80 from Account 11732-5103 Wages & Clerical, which has an outstanding balance of just under \$2,000, to Account 11733-5201 Advertising, which has a current balance of \$280.74. Ms. Morris explained that the required advertising of legal notices had been more than expected for this year, and the department now owes \$467.54. Mr. Tepper felt that when the monies for this expense are eventually reimbursed to the General Fund they should be reflected in the receipts page of the department's budget. Mr. Behn moved to transfer \$186.80 from Account 11732-5103 Wages & Clerical to Account 11733-5021 Advertising. The vote to approve the transfer is unanimous, 6 in favor with 6 being present.

Town Manager – Streetlights – Inter-Departmental Transfer

Town Manager Jim Malloy appeared before the Committee to request this transfer. He had determined that the Town is not using more electricity; the increase in this budget line has mostly been due to the change in payment per kilowatt hour, as well as National Grid's charge for distribution. The current request is to transfer \$10,000 from Insurance Expenses to Streetlights Expenses. Mr. Malloy explained the town has been locked into a rate with Constellation New Energy since 2009, which expires at the end of FY13; at that time the Town will be able to find a more competitive rate. Mr. Behn moved to transfer the sum of \$10,000 from Insurance Expense Account 11933-5706 Group Insurance Medical to Streetlights Expense Account 14243-5212. The vote to approve the transfer is unanimous, 6 in favor with 6 being present.

There was some discussion of the Fire Station project, and Mr. Malloy noted that the project would likely be brought forward again at some point within the 2-1/2 levy limit. He added that the Board of Selectmen were considering calling a Special Town Meeting for mid-August to consider some tax increment financing agreements for two or three companies wishing to locate or remain located in Westborough. There was some discussion of revising how department revenues are presented.

Gary Wells appeared for Open Forum at this time. He had appeared at the Board of Selectmen and now appeared to distribute copies of his budgetary proposal to the Committee.

Committee Follow-up from Town Meeting preparation and discussions

Advisory Finance Committee Bylaw follow-up

Capital Expenditures Planning Committee Charter follow-up

Personnel Board 'steps/lanes' schedule follow-up

Mr. Arnold felt he should pull together the current language on the first two items and send to the Committee, including the new members, for future discussion. He proposed contacting the Personnel Board chair to see if they could meet with the Committee in July or August, but Mr. Malone felt the broad impact of the schedule would be in the Union contract, and that this should not be pursued. The Committee agreed with Mr. Malone and, therefore, will not follow up discussions regarding the Personnel Board's approach to the steps/lanes.

Committee Organization for Fiscal Year 2013

Mr. Arnold noted that Mr. Behn had indicated willingness to serve as Chairman if nominated. He asked other Committee members to give serious thought to being Vice Chair and to sharing the burden with the Chair. Mr. Arnold agreed to chair the July meeting but felt a new Chair should be in place for the August meeting, which was tentatively scheduled for August 6.

Chairman, Committee Liaison, and Department Liaison Reports

Mr. Arnold had received a letter from Mary Jo Nawrocki of Assabet Valley Regional School stating that unanimous approval had been received from all seven districts for Assabet's repair project, and thanking the Committee and Town for their support. He had also received a letter from Town Accountant Leah Talbot about end of year procedures. Finally, he had been invited to advise a mock town meeting at the High School, where students presented their proposals for alternative energy projects. This was a fascinating event.

Mr. Tepper noted that the committee for the Gibbons School project was still in the process of getting organized. He had attended a tour through the school but had nothing substantive to report as yet.

Mr. Malone reported that the tour of the Treatment Plant was very interesting. He has a booklet from the event which he will make available to other Committee members.

Comments and Concerns of Committee Members

Mr. Allen noted June 29th was the date for the Town's 4th of July Block party, 6-10pm.

Mr. Behn, in working on his analysis of New Growth, had wondered how unique Westborough was as far as the amount of personal property contributing to the levy limit. He found that our town is #3 in the state as far as its percentage of New Growth; only Bolton and Southborough have higher percentages. He also noted that regarding overall levy growth, almost all other towns with higher levy growth have achieved this through overrides, which Westborough has never done. There was some discussion of his findings.

Mr. Tepper felt the Committee should be better prepared for the next budget cycle, and noted that a level-funded budget might be more in-line with the expectations of Town Meeting voters than the current level-services budget approach. Pertinent information should be acquired up-front, and the Committee should prioritize so time is spent on issues which will have a real impact on the budget.

Adjournment

Mr. Behn moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:01 p.m. Vote to adjourn was 6 in favor, with 6 being present.

Document List

Westborough Advisory Finance Committee minutes
June 18, 2012

FY13-17 Budget Projections.
FY13-17 Budget Projections W-Debt.
FY13-17 Budget Projections W-Debt & Stimulus.
May 2012 Appropriations Report.
Street Light Use & Cost spreadsheet.
Westborough Budget Proposal received from Gary Wells