

Westborough Advisory Finance Committee  
Minutes of Meeting No. 4, FY2013  
September 10, 2012

Approved  
September 17, 2012

Members Present: Ed Behn, Chair, Peter Allen, Sharon Kaiser, J. J. Malone, Jim Tepper, Gary Wells.  
Absent: John E. Arnold, Lisa Blazejewski, Kathy Rosenblum Senie.

At 7:00 p.m. Mr. Behn 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. 2, July 23, 2012**

Mr. Tepper moved to accept the minutes. The vote to approve the minutes is 6 in favor, with 6 being present.

#### **Meeting No. 3, August 20, 2012**

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

### **Review of 2012 Fall STM Warrant**

Mr. Behn asked members to consider which articles required a meeting with proponents.

### **Review articles on the warrant**

**Article 1. Opening Statements.** Mr. Malloy explained that this article provides time at the outset of Town Meeting for the AFC Chair and the Town Manager to report on the state of the Town's finances, in order to prevent erroneous information being put forward later in the meeting. There was some discussion of whether time would be allowed for open discussion of this article during Town Meeting. Mr. Malone felt it would be difficult to avoid discussion, Mr. Tepper adding that questions from residents seeking clarification would also be hard to avoid. Mr. Tepper felt it would be helpful to hear from Town Moderator Joe Harrington on this article.

**Article 2. Fire Station.** Mr. Malloy explained that the Municipal Building Committee would be bringing back the new fire station project for Town Meeting approval, this time within Proposition 2-1/2. Mr. Malloy will forward the borrowing motion when it is received from Bond Counsel.

**Article 3. General Fund Debt Service Reduction.** Mr. Malloy explained that this article would reduce the General Fund Debt service by \$1,361,820, broken down as follows: \$1,297,556 General Fund, \$28,222 Water Fund, \$36,043 Sewer Fund. Mr. Malone asked whether the town would be eligible for a 0% loan through the Water Abatement Trust. Mr. Malloy noted that to qualify for such a loan at this time, growth control measures needed to be initiated three years ago (and were not).

**Article 4. Insurance Proceeds over \$20,000.** Mr. Malloy explained that a police cruiser had been totaled earlier this year, and that state law requires a town meeting vote when insurance proceeds exceed \$20,000.

**Article 5. EMD Expenses.** Mr. Malloy explained that a state regulation requires any 911 dispatcher to remain on the line if there is a medical emergency, meaning another dispatcher would be needed to field any further calls. The town has negotiated a contract with UMass Medical Center for EMD dispatching at

\$34,000/year. However, the state did not approve administrative expenses of \$4,000. Mr. Malloy noted that these expenses should not be an issue in subsequent years. Mr. Behn wanted to know how much this service has been used.

**Article 6. Assessor's Expenses.** Mr. Malloy explained that this article provides funds for the Assessor's Department to catch up on permits until a new assistant assessor can be hired. There was some discussion as to whether this should be Raise and Appropriate, or Free Cash, Mr. Tepper and Mr. Wells in favor of Free Cash. Mr. Malloy noted that either way the tax rate is unaffected.

**Article 7. Forbes Elevator.** Mr. Malloy explained that this article, originally for the repair of the elevator, may change to include funds for the replacement of the elevator. He explained that the elevator manufacturer had gone out of business, making parts difficult to get, and that the aging elevator has consistently failed the state public safety inspections. He felt the amount for a new elevator would be around \$150-200,000, using the existing shaft.

**Article 8. Road Maintenance.** Mr. Malloy explained that in order to utilize increased Chapter 90 monies, the authorization to use such funds must be increased.

**Article 9. Homeless Busing Reimbursement.** Mr. Malloy explained that last year Westborough's School Department spent \$110,000 busing homeless kids back to their original school district, in accordance with federal regulations. After a state auditor review the state has agreed to fund this mandate, necessitating the setting up of a revolving fund to account for the reimbursement. He added that the town will have to make up the difference between what the state will provide and the actual expenses. Mr. Allen felt an article could be added to the warrant providing for any budgeted amount to be pulled from the School Department's budget.

**Article 10. Fisher Street Water Plant Roof.** Mr. Malloy explained that the 16-17 year old existing flat roof would be almost as expensive to repair as to replace. The cost of replacement is estimated at \$395,000, with Project Manager and contingency bringing the total to \$495,000. Mr. Wells wondered if a metal-framed tin roof could simply be placed over the existing roof, at a much lower cost. Mr. Malloy noted that the town had to comply with various laws but will consider this suggestion.

**Article 11. Flanders Road Sewer.** Mr. Malloy explained that 1200 feet of the old sewer line along Hopkinton Road was disintegrating and in need of replacement, at a cost of \$800,000. He noted that some percentage of this would be paid by the town of Hopkinton. Mr. Behn felt that Town Engineer Carl Baldud could address whether some of the material sent through the sewer by Hopkinton could have contributed to the disintegration.

**Article 12. Crownridge Sewer Project.** Mr. Malloy explained that an easement required for this project had fallen through, necessitating a new pump station. This increases the cost of the project by \$500,000, for a total of \$2.7 million. Mr. Tepper noted that if the article fails, sewer lines would not be extended to the Fox Lane neighborhood. Mr. Behn and Mr. Tepper felt the article should make clear that the inability to secure the easement had led to the increase, not the town's failure to properly estimate the cost of the project.

**Article 13. Town Water System.** Mr. Malloy explained that past articles authorizing certain pumps to be replaced were being combined in order to use those funds to install more energy efficient pumps.

**Article 14. Bow Hunting.** Mr. Malloy explained that this article would allow deer hunting with bow and arrow on public property. There was some discussion of what land was considered public property. Mr.

Malloy clarified that the article removes the need to obtain written permission for bow hunting on public property, during hunting season.

**Article 15. Sewer Regulations.** Mr. Malloy explained that this article seeks to reduce the town's liability when residents install fixtures below the existing street sewer line. He added that the town had paid for a new washing machine for the same individual more than once due to the sewer backing up.

**Article 16. Non-Criminal Disposition.** Mr. Malloy noted that the original article had failed due to fears that the Building Committee would enforce it too strictly. This article deals with sign violations only, and Mr. Malone noted that a warning is given first, before any fines are levied.

**Article 17. Animal Control.** Mr. Malloy explained that this changed the dates for dog licenses to correspond with census form mailings, for greater efficiency.

**Article 18. Photovoltaic Installations.** Mr. Malloy explained that this article provides standards and oversight for large-scale solar panel installations. Mr. Tepper felt the AFC had no need to debate this article, as it had no impact on the budget.

**Article 19. Veterans' Tax Work-Off Program.** Mr. Malloy explained that this would provide a tax work-off program to veterans similar to the senior tax work-off program currently in place. Ms. Kaiser would like to know if the two programs can be combined. Mr. Tepper wondered if there was a maximum pool for this program.

**Article 20. Freedom Park Deed Restriction.** Mr. Malloy explained that currently the park's deed prohibits structures on the property. This article seeks to remove those restrictions in order to take advantage of the Rotary Club's offer of an exercise station at the site.

**Article 21. Town Charter Amendments.** Mr. Malloy explained that this removes mention of two committees in the Charter which no longer exist.

**Article 22. Summer Street Abandonment.** Mr. Malloy explained that a land swap between the town and the owners of the arcade building on Summer Street would enable the building of a handicap ramp and subsequent improvement of the property. He noted that the building owners planned to include two-bedroom condos on the second floor of the property.

**Article 23. Fisher Street Easement.** Mr. Malloy explained that this article would grant National Grid an easement to connect the Transit Oriented Village.

**Article 24. Alcohol License.** Mr. Malloy explained that there was some confusion over this article, which was not formatted properly by the proponent, Bangkok Thai Restaurant. He added that the Board of Selectmen, understanding the intent of the article, may allow it to go forward as is, or an additional article may be added to clarify.

**Article 25. Additional Alcohol License.** Mr. Malloy explained that this article restored a liquor license to Bay State Commons which had been allotted to Tavolino's restaurant. He noted that the license was important for attracting upscale restaurants to the development.

**Article 26. Liquor License Override.** Mr. Malloy explained that this article sought to allow the town to exempt itself from the quota system on liquor licenses.

Mr. Allen asked about the project for increasing the capacity of the reservoir. Mr. Malloy noted that this water development article was never submitted, but will look into it.

Mr. Behn asked about the Explorer Post. Mr. Malloy will discuss with the Board of Selectmen the request for a warrant article to extend the lease to the post for another 10 years.

#### **Set dates for upcoming meetings**

Mr. Behn suggested meetings on Monday, September 17, Thursday, September 20, Monday, September 24, and Thursday, September 27. He would like as many members present as possible when voting. The School Committee will be attending the September 27 meeting.

#### **Chairman, Committee Liaison, and Department Liaison Reports**

Mr. Malone noted that the Wastewater Treatment Plant punch list items are almost done, and that the cover on the other clarifier is now also on the punch list.

Mr. Behn asked members to send in liaison requests this week so the liaison list can be finalized. He also noted that the Association of Town Finance Committees Annual Meeting would meet on October 20 in Franklin, and will forward further information to members. He received a Guide to Fiscal Management for Municipalities as well and will send out a link.

#### **Comments and Concerns of Committee Members**

Mr. Tepper was concerned about comments at the joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen and Town Manager, that the town might be too expensive for some residents, which he felt did not set the right tone. He had also understood the joint meeting to be aimed at increased dialog and input from the Finance Committee, and was disappointed that the budget message seemed to have already been communicated to departments, asking them to level-fund.

Mr. Allen reminded residents of the Municipal Building Committee hearing on the moving of town offices to Bay State Commons, to be held on Wednesday at 7 p.m. He agreed with Mr. Tepper's concerns and felt the Committee might need to make tougher recommendations this year.

Mr. Wells voiced agreement with Mr. Tepper and Mr. Allen.

Mr. Behn noted that at least the larger departments could be asked to provide options for budget reductions. He wished Mr. Malone a belated 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.

#### **Adjournment**

Mr. Malone moved to adjourn the meeting at 9 p.m. Vote to adjourn was 6 in favor, with 6 being present.

#### **Document List**

August 2012 Appropriations Report.  
Fall 2012 STM Articles.  
Fall 2012 TM Warrant.