

Westborough Advisory Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting No. 27, FY2013
May 6, 2013

Approved
June 3, 2013

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

Resident Paula Less presented a Boston Globe article which reported that the town of Newton was paying for additional staff, the rebuilding of three elementary schools, new Fire Department buildings, and street and sidewalk improvements with an \$11.4 million override approved by voters. Ms. Less wondered why Westborough was only able to build a single Fire Station with \$8 million, and asked the Finance Committee to look into this issue. Ms. Kaiser pointed out that the \$11.4 million was an increase over other funds already allocated for the Newton projects. She added that some towns have fire sub-stations, which are much cheaper to build than a single, central facility. Ms. Blazejewski felt a valid comparison could not be made without further detail. Mr. Allen will forward Ms. Less' concern to the Municipal Building Committee. Mr. Arnold felt Town Manager Jim Malloy should be included in the discussion.

Approval of Minutes

Meeting No. 26, April 1, 2013

Mr. Wells and Mr. Malone had requested corrections to the minutes. Mr. Arnold moved to accept the minutes as amended. The vote to approve the minutes is 8 in favor with 8 being present.

MIS/GIS Budget Transfer Request

Mark Stockman appeared before the Committee to present this request. The transfer request was for \$7,000 rather than the \$13,300 previously mentioned, since he had been able to cover the two Akuity Technologies projects within the department's existing budget. The \$7,000 will pay James W. Sewall Company for annotation and data adjustments to parcels (\$5,800) and to update assessor maps (\$1,200).

Mr. Tepper asked about the salary refund, due to the department's other employee being out on workman's compensation. Mr. Stockman indicated that \$11,800 would be returned, unspent. Mr. Malone felt this money could be transferred from the salary account to expenses to cover the transfer request; he preferred to do this, thus preserving Reserve Fund monies to meet the Snow & Ice expense deficit, which is not yet known. Such a transfer requires Board of Selectmen approval.

Mr. Behn moved to approve an intradepartmental transfer from Account 11542-5103 MIS/GIS Wages/Clerical to Account 11543-5219 MIS/GIS Professional Services, in the amount of \$7,000. The vote to approve the budget transfer is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present. Mr. Behn will notify Mr. Malloy and Selectman Ian Johnson of the vote.

Elections Transfer Request

Town Clerk Nancy Yendriga was present to present this request. She explained that her department's request for \$5,720 was to cover hiring additional staff to handle two extra elections which were not in the budget. Ms. Yendriga noted that reimbursement, if any, would come after fiscal year end. Mr. Arnold moved to approve the request to transfer the sum of \$5,720 from the AFC Reserve Fund to Account 11621-5103 Elections and Registrations Wages/Clerical. The vote to approve the budget transfer is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Planning Department Transfer Request

Town Planner Jim Robbins was present to request reimbursement for expenses incurred when his flight from Chicago to Boston was cancelled due to airport closure. Mr. Behn moved to approve the request to transfer the sum of \$550 from the AFC Reserve Fund to Account 11723-5210 Planning Department Travel Out of State. The vote to approve the budget transfer is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

DPW Transfer Request

Mr. Behn moved to approve the request to transfer the sum of \$47,843.66 from Account 64309-5505 Fincom Reserve Fund Sewer Operations & Maintenance to Account 64303-5236 Sewer Operations & Maintenance Expense Item Contractual Services, for the purposes of expenses incurred in the Flanders Road sewer line collapse. Mr. Arnold would like clarification that Westborough is not bearing sole responsibility for this expense. The vote to approve the budget transfer is unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.

Discussion of school budget format

Mr. Behn distributed budget presentations from other towns for comparison, along with a workbook report from the MUNIS system which has line item detail of the school budget, and an end-of-year financial report the school district is required to produce, to show that state funds are being spent appropriately. Mr. Behn will request that the Finance Committee receive a copy of this report each year. Mr. Malone felt the MUNIS spreadsheet was very helpful; he would like to see salary schedules as well, not just for teachers but for all school staff. Mr. Wells noted that the organization and presentation of numbers is also important for understanding this budget. Mr. Tepper expressed frustration with the inability to do anything with the bottom line; however, detailed information is needed to provide the recommendation the town expects. Mr. Allen felt more detail was not as useful as the School Committee's list of specific items that would be high on their "cut list" if only a 2% budget increase were approved by ATM voters. Mr. Behn noted the importance of actuals, and felt it was reasonable to ask for budget data at organization and object code level, with which the Committee could produce its own reports, and even include in the Town Meeting booklet. He would also like to see a breakdown of the additional monies which come directly to the school from state and federal grants above and beyond these budget numbers. He added that "wild card" expenses, such as special education, could not be controlled, but could perhaps be dealt with by creating a reserve fund of some kind. He proposed to meet with the school administration and School Committee Chair to review the spreadsheet. Mr. Tepper suggested arranging this through the two liaisons. There was Committee consensus for this course of action. Mr. Wells also felt it would be helpful for the Committee to meet more frequently earlier in the budget season, and to start meeting with the School Committee earlier as well.

AFC Bylaw changes

Mr. Malone asked members for their comments on the proposed changes to the bylaw.

Section 2. The Town Moderator would appoint new members between Town Meeting and year end, but those appointments would not take effect until July 1. Mr. Behn was concerned that new members would miss the Massachusetts Municipal Association's annual training session.

Section 4. Mr. Tepper noted that this was a substantive change. Mr. Arnold felt that the wording "consider all matters relating to the appropriations, borrowing and expenditure of money by the town" allowed any involvement the Committee might want to have on this issue. Mr. Behn was hesitant to remove the language, noting that there should be some kind of review process before the town enters into long-term contracts (like the electricity contract, for example). Ms. Blazejewski pointed out that even with the original wording, the Committee had not been consulted. Mr. Arnold felt the language needed to be very specific as to length of contracts, dollar amounts, with a clear explanation of what the Committee's involvement would be. He added that Town Counsel Greg Franks' opinion on this issue would be helpful; also Town Moderator Joe Harrington's feedback.

Charter

Mr. Arnold reviewed some of the changes made by Mr. Malloy to the Capital Expenditures Planning Committee charter, and asked members to consider what other changes might be needed. Mr. Allen would like to address this at a future meeting, as he would also like to examine the wording of Article 6-5.

Chairman, Committee Liaison, and Department Liaison Reports/Comments & Concerns

Mr. Behn announced that Administrative Assistant Julie Sams was moving out of state. He has asked HR Director Kristi Williams to post the opening. Mr. Arnold noted that a Committee member may also act as clerk. The next meeting will be on June 3; the date for the July meeting will be decided at that time.

Mr. Arnold reported that the Westborough Public Library had won a Massachusetts Public Library award.

Mr. Allen reported that the Municipal Building Committee had voted to proceed to construction documents on the Fire Station project, which now totals \$11.2 million. He noted the possibility that bids may come in higher than the amount approved at Town Meeting, which would necessitate the calling of a Special Town Meeting before the end of August.

Mr. Wells had drafted a memo to the Town Manager, Building Commissioner Tin Htway, and Town Counsel Greg Franks regarding the Building Department's job description matrix, which will be discussed at the next meeting.

Mr. Tepper reported that prospective bidders had toured Gibbons school, and a date has been set to present the project to the Massachusetts Building Authority.

Mr. Behn noted that the Spring Festival had been wonderful. Members may like to attend the Board of Selectmen meeting on May 14, where electronic voting will be discussed.

Adjournment

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

Document List

Advisory Finance Committee Bylaw, possible changes document, 8/13/2012.

Capital Expenditures Charter, 8/13/2012.

Draft AFC bylaw.

April 2013 Appropriations Report.

ATFC Workshops.

FY14 School Budget Revenues & Expenses Reconciliation.

School Budget Data spreadsheet.

Boston Globe article, "Newton Making lists after tax hike passed," provided by Paula Less.

Draft Memo to Town Manager Jim Malloy, re: Building Department Performance Measures, provided by Gary Wells.

MIS/GIS Reserve Fund transfer request.

Elections Reserve Fund transfer request.

Planning Board Reserve Fund transfer request.