

Westborough Advisory Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting No. 12, FY2014
November 4, 2013

Approved:
December 2, 2013

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

At 7:00 p.m. Mr. Behn called the meeting to order in Room 23 of the Forbes Building.

Call to Order/Open Forum

There were no requests to address the Committee.

Approval of Minutes

Meeting No. 10, October 10, 2013

Mr. Wells moved to accept the minutes. The vote to approve the minutes is 7 in favor, with 7 being present.

Meeting No. 11 (STM), October 21, 2013

Mr. Arnold had a question on the re-vote taken by the AFC during the Special Town Meeting on Article 10 – line items e, j, and l regarding the increase in salary for the Assistant DPW Manager. It was decided that voting on approval of the minutes from 10-21-13 would be deferred until the notes and votes from that evening could be verified.

Reserve Fund Transfer

Town Manager, Jim Malloy, appeared before the Committee to discuss hiring a charrette to aid in the process of planning the future use of the former State Hospital land. Mr. Malloy may be seeking a Reserve Fund Transfer in the amount of \$10,000-\$20,000 to cover the cost of the charrette. Mr. Malloy explained that he has used a charrette in the past. He said that the purpose of a Charrette is to provide a “neutral facilitator for a meeting with residents where they’re able to bring out the interests of residents and then produce a report that can be used as a basis for future use”. Mr. Malloy has a meeting scheduled with Dr. Mullin on 11/14 and he will have a better idea of the cost after meeting with Dr. Mullin. Dr. Mullin is a professor at UMass Amherst and Mr. Malloy has used him as a charrette in the past. Right now there are a lot of different views on what to do with the former State Hospital land. The charrette would provide a general consensus of what the Town wanted after meeting with and listening to discussions from a diverse group of residents. The Committee felt that since the development of the former State Hospital land would have an effect on the Town’s character for years to come, that the use of a Charrette would aid the Selectmen in making their decisions on how the former State Hospital land should be developed.

Review of Fall STM

There was general discussion on lessons learned and suggestions on what could be done better in preparation for Town Meeting. Mr. Arnold felt there was room to improve on the information provided to residents so they know what to expect at Town Meeting. He mentioned that the Town Manager’s statement and the recording of the Selectmen’s vote just started happening about 4 years ago. Mr. Arnold mentioned that the AFC could provide additional information by reaching out to different committees and commissions prior to the Town Meeting and giving both sides of an Article – proponent vs. opponent – and stating the actual effect of an Article. He felt there was a public service in providing as much information as possible to residents.

Mr. Tepper agreed with the idea of “pro vs. con”. He felt that the information provided to residents should be kept simple and that bullet points could outline what would happen if an Article passes and what would happen if it doesn’t pass.

Mr. Allen suggested that if there are two votes among the AFC in the minority that a description is provided about why at least 2 AFC members voted against an Article so residents can be better informed.

Mr. Arnold said he realized during the STM that there were different views from different town groups and organizations and town residents should be aware of how different committees voted.

Mr. Wells felt that reaching out to any department affected by an Article should become part of the routine in preparing for any Town Meeting. He mentioned that liaisons should reach out to their assignments and invite them in to discuss their concerns.

Mr. Tepper mentioned that he felt Articles relating to fiscal items and the budget should be heard at the Town Meeting in the spring and Articles such as zoning could be heard in the fall. He also mentioned that he didn't like bundling of Articles like Article 10.

Mr. Behn will outline "points of concern". He also felt it would be helpful to put together bullet points and have liaison meetings with the Selectmen. Mr. Behn asked AFC members to take a look at what other towns do. He felt educating residents is worth it to help inform for voting purposes.

School Budget Update

Mr. Behn provided the Committee with the School Department Budget and Actuals for FY10 through FY13 and Budget for FY14 as a reference for future discussion. He is meeting with Irene Oliver, Director of Finance and Administration, this week. Mr. Behn mentioned he would like to see the actual numbers before deductions for federal grants or receipts to get an idea of the "real spend", then deductions can be figured in and the net figure would be what the School Department needs from the Town. Mr. Wells asked if Mr. Behn could find out if Ms. Oliver has the actual numbers for FY14. Committee members were in unanimous agreement that they need to see line item detail before offsets. Mr. Behn suggested that when AFC members looked at what other town's do for their reporting to residents for Town Meeting that they also look at the School Budget and the level of detail provided.

AFC FY15 Budget Review and Approval

Mr. Behn was working on a proposed budget for the AFC for FY15. There was a decrease in clerical wages between the former administrative assistant and the new admin. Printing and copying costs also came in lower for FY14. Printing and copying costs for FY14 were budgeted at \$1,600. Approximately \$400 was spent for the 2013 Fall Special Town Meeting. Mr. Behn had budgeted clerical hours for FY15 at 2.9 hours/week but the Committee suggested 3 hours/week since that was the full authorization allowed. Mr. Wells also mentioned that if the AFC is going to provide more information to residents in the R&R report for Town Meeting that printing and copying costs may increase. Mr. Wells made a motion that the Advisory Finance Committee level fund its budget for FY15. The vote is 7 in favor with 7 being present.

Chairman, Committee Liaison, and Department Liaison Reports

Mr. Behn mentioned he was at the Annual Meeting for the Association of Town Finance Committees held in Franklin, MA. He said they went over town budgeting and heard from Shrewsbury's Town Manager. The meeting was very interesting and informative. He attended the session on OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits) and got a better understanding of the calculation of ARC (Annual Required Contribution). Mr. Behn mentioned that lots of towns are funding and they may need to get this in front of the Selectmen.

Mr. Behn also informed the Committee that Mr. Rauch had no issue with his liaison assignments. Mr. Wells volunteered to take over the assignment as liaison for the Police Department since he used to assist former AFC member, JJ Malone. Mr. Behn felt, since Mr. Wells handled the liaison assignment for the DPW and, that could be time consuming, that perhaps Mr. Rauch shadow Mr. Wells as a back-up liaison for the DPW and Police Dept. Mr. Behn will inform Mr. Rauch. Mr. Wells passed out the description of the "Liaison's Role" as outlined in the

minutes from the February 2011 meeting. Mr. Arnold mentioned that this was a brain storming session and that AFC Committee members could add to the description if necessary. Mr. Allen volunteered to be the liaison for the Economic Development Committee.

Ms. Blazejewski updated the Committee on the Capital Expenditures meeting she attended. She heard presentations from various Town Departments. There will be a question and answer session and then the voting process as to what gets put in to the Article for the Annual Town Meeting. She mentioned that the DPW is looking to purchase new equipment. She will inform DPW liaison, Gary Wells, on when their next meeting is since they will view the equipment and he'd like to attend.

Mr. Wells mentioned that, as the Building Department liaison, he was asked by the Committee during the last budget season to draft a memo regarding fatalities and injuries specifically referring to the Building Department, Performance Measures, Pg 96, Detailed Budget Book. He asked the Committee to review the memo he wrote and provide changes.

Mr. Tepper updated the Committee on the Gibbons Middle School renovations. The project is coming in at close to what was budgeted. Mr. Tepper said there may be a request for additional funds or a scaling back on the list of items included in the renovation project.

Mr. Allen provided an update on the Municipal Building Committee. Their next meeting is 11/6 at 8:30am. The walk through for possible bidders on the renovations for the Town Hall occurred on 10/23 and it went well. Subcontractor bid openings for the Town Hall renovations will be held on 11/6 at 2pm at the DPW Building and the General Contractor bid openings will be held on 11/20 at 2pm at the DPW Building.

Mr. Allen mentioned that Derek Saari, Conservation Officer, will be doing a site walk through at Sandra Pond at 3pm on 11/ 5. Mr. Saari will be discussing the work that will be done at the reservoir as outlined in Article 14.

Comments and Concerns of Committee Members

Mr. Arnold mentioned the "Light Up Your Library" event on 11/9 from 11am-2pm at the library. There is also a contest going on for the month of November. Residents can vote and, if the library wins by obtaining the most votes, they will receive an "Energy Star" lighting make-over from National Grid.

Mr. Behn informed the Committee that this Saturday, November 9th, is Scouting for Food pickup day.

Adjournment

Mr. Wells moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:14 pm. Vote to adjourn was 7 in favor, with 7 being present.

Document List

Town of Westborough Possible Charrette Email from Town Manager, Jim Malloy
School Budget Data Report – Budget & Actuals FY10-FY14
AFC FY15 Budget
Proposed Liaison Assignments
Draft Memorandum from Gary Wells

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Thomas
AFC Administrative Assistant