

Westborough Advisory Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting No. 14, FY2014
January 6, 2014

Approved:
January 23, 2014

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

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. 13, December 2, 2013

Ms. Rosenblum Senie requested a correction to the minutes. Mr. Arnold moved to accept the amended minutes from 12/2/13. The vote to approve the amended minutes is 7-0-1 with 8 being present (abstention: Kaiser).

Review of FY'15 Fiscal Budget

Mr. Behn handed out an updated budget from Town Manager, Jim Malloy, to Committee members. He mentioned that there were some discrepancies between the handout and the information in the AFC handbook and suggested using the handout that was distributed tonight or the e-copy that Mr. Behn sent earlier to the Committee.

The Committee reviewed the budget by department for increases/decreases, and to determine if a department should be invited to a future AFC meeting for discussion. There were some departments with increases to salaries and wages due to STEP increases. There were also some decreases to department budgets due to a higher paid employee either retiring, or leaving, and a new employee brought in at a lower salary as their replacement. Mr. Behn said he would meet with Leah Talbot, Town Accountant, to review STEP increases. Department liaisons will reach out to their assignments to find out additional information regarding their FY'15 budgets and update Committee members during the budget review process. Town Manager, Jim Malloy will be invited in to cover questions on departments such as Legal, Central Purchasing, Buildings & Grounds, Historical Commission, and Veteran's Affairs. Other departments that are scheduled to be invited in are: Town Treasurer, Joanne Savignac; Department of Public Works (DPW); Building Commissioner, Tin Htway; MIS/GIS Director, Mark Stockman; Police Chief, Al Gordon; Fire Chief, Nick Perron; John Badenhause, Director of Youth & Family Service; Hazel Nourse with the Historical Commission; Library Trustees, Assabet Valley, Council on Aging, Recreation Department Director, Frank DeSiata; and Health Inspector, Paul McNulty.

Mr. Behn requested that AFC Committee members go through their department's budgets and verify that the summary sheet equals the detail in the Budget workbook.

The School Department will also be invited in to meet with the AFC. Their budget was voted in with a 2.46% increase. For the first time, the School Department plans on showing where they will apply grants they expect to receive in FY'15. Mr. Behn has reviewed their grant and revolving fund line items from year to year and some opening and closing balances don't match. He will follow up with Irene Oliver, Director of Finance and Administration. Mr. Behn also had questions on how grants are dispersed on a federal and state level and why funds are sometimes returned. There was continued discussion over projecting the number of new students coming in to town. Mr. Tepper brought up the Gibbons School project and mentioned that due to new housing being built in town that the student population could significantly increase. Currently, he said that the number of new students is projected at 598 but he doesn't know how much of that would impact FY'15. That raises the question as to whether they look at a renovation to the Gibbons School, or building a new school. Committee members agreed that it is difficult to project the number of new students. It was noted that when the School Department meets with the AFC that we find out what number they projected for new students when coming up

with their budget. Mr. Behn suggested that Committee members review the School Department numbers projected for FY'15 in comparison to the actual figures from FY'13 and concentrate on any larger discrepancies. Ms. Rosenblum Senie will forward the Superintendent's presentation to the Committee for their review. If members have additional questions or require more back-up, they can let her know. Committee members would like to see where the bulk of the funds are being spent and the reasoning behind increases in some line items and decreases in others.

There was discussion over the reporting done by other towns. Committee members researched what other towns provide to their residents in their Town reports and the level of detail. Mr. Behn asked Committee members to forward along anything that they see that might be interesting, a benefit to residents, or worthy of discussion. For example, how Town departments are grouped and what's included for information.

Chairman, Committee Liaison, and Department Liaison Reports

Ms. Blazejewski let the Committee know that she has been attending the Capital Expenditures Planning meetings where they have been rating capital requests by importance. The list of projects that will be requested at Town Meeting is already complete in the budget book. Ms. Blazejewski is happy to address any questions that AFC members may have prior to the official review of the Capital article on the warrant.

Mr. Allen mentioned that the Economic Development Committee will be meeting tomorrow and he will have more information to report at our next meeting.

Mr. Allen will also be attending the Municipal Building Committee meeting scheduled on January 8th and will provide an update at the next AFC meeting.

Mr. Arnold said that he continues his work with the Constitutional Charter Review Committee.

Mr. Tepper provided an update on the renovation of the Gibbons Middle School. The request for bids will be released just after the first of January 2015, with construction expected to start much later, perhaps not until the summer. The scope of work and plan needs approval. There are also state guidelines that they need to comply with in order to qualify for state aid.

Comments and Concerns of Committee Members

There were no comments or concerns by Committee members at this time.

Adjournment

Mr. Arnold made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:33 p.m. Vote to adjourn was 8 in favor, with 8 being present.

Document List

Fiscal Year 2015 Budget
Federal and State Grants (School Department)

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Thomas
AFC Administrative Assistant