

Members Present: Gary Wells, Peter Allen, John E. Arnold, Lisa Blazejewski, Jim Tepper, Sharon Kaiser, Kathy Rosenblum Senie. Absent: Ed Behn, Hank Rauch. Mr. Wells chaired the meeting in Mr. Behn's absence.

At 7:00 p.m. Mr. Wells 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. 14, January 6, 2014

Ms. Blazejewski and Mr. Tepper requested corrections to the minutes. Mr. Arnold moved to accept the amended minutes from 1/6/14. The vote to approve the amended minutes is 6-0-1 with 7 being present (abstention: Wells).

Approval of Minutes

Meeting No. 15, January 16, 2014

Mr. Behn requested corrections to the minutes. Mr. Arnold moved to accept the amended minutes from 1/16/14. The vote to approve the amended minutes is 6-0-1 with 7 being present (abstention: Wells).

Review of the Department of Public Works (DPW) FY'15 budget:

John Walden, DPW Manager, Richard Voutas, DPW Assistant Manager, Maria-Elaina Riggieri, DPW Business Administrator, and Dennis Cote, DPW Operations Manager, met with the AFC to discuss their FY'15 budget. There was discussion about the DPW's general budget. Ms. Riggieri pointed out that the increase in Salaries & Wages was due to contract negotiations – both union and non-union – as well as step increases. Expenses were level funded for FY'15. The DPW was asked about upcoming projects. Mr. Walden and Mr. Voutas mentioned drainage work and repaving on Mill Road was needed. They also said that road work and repaving for Milk St., Hopkinton Road, and Spring Street was scheduled for spring 2015. They pointed that the DPW is responsible for 96 miles of roadways and in a winter like this where there is a freeze/thaw pattern, you end up with problems with roads.

Discussion then turned to the Sewer and Water Enterprise funds. Ms. Riggieri said that the increase in Salaries & Wages was for the same reasons as the general budget – contract negotiations and step increases – for both sewer and water. The increase in expenses for the Water Enterprise fund was due to an increase of 1.8% for the CPI adjustment from Veolia Water for contractual services. Ms. Riggieri also reminded the Committee that there is a mandatory dam inspection every 5 years that was taken out of the FY'15 budget but will have to be added in the appropriate year. Regarding the Sewer Enterprise fund, there was a slight increase in expenses due to the pump station on Fox Lane that is currently being built that the Town will take over in June/July 2014.

The Snow & Ice budget was then addressed. Mr. Wells provided a chart that he had created with actual expenditures from the last five years. It was noted that this fund has run at a deficit four of the last five years and that the last time this fund was increased was in 2009. AFC Committee members discussed a gradual increase to the Snow & Ice budget and a possible decrease to the AFC fund if there is less of a need to transfer funds to this account. Ms. Riggieri pointed out that they have already reached deficit spending on this account for this winter. There was agreement that an adjustment to the Snow & Ice budget was needed and a vote should be put to the town floor. Mr. Tepper asked what the DPW does for snow removal at the schools. Mr. Walden mentioned that the DPW does most of the work. The School Department takes care of the sidewalks, pathways, and general clean up after the DPW does the plowing. Mr. Walden was also asked about the State Hospital property. He mentioned funds should be put aside in case the Town needs to remove snow on that property. Mr. Walden anticipated that the Town's future responsibility would be the main road, but right now would also include fire lanes and all roads for emergency access.

Chairman, Committee Liaison, and Department Liaison Reports

Mr. Wells mentioned that Mr. Behn had emailed Committee members an updated Article Worksheet. Mr. Behn suggested that the Article list be reviewed to determine which proponents the Committee would like to meet with so we can begin scheduling them.

Ms. Rosenblum Senie and Mr. Arnold will be meeting with their contacts regarding the budget for the Assabet Valley Regional School on 2/6/14. Their budget increased by 4.21%. They will discuss why the budget increased, since it could just be due to the number of Westborough students attending the school. Ms. Rosenblum Senie and Mr. Arnold will update the Committee after their meeting and can invite in if necessary.

There was mention of the Zoning Articles. Committee members would like to invite in the Planning Board to discuss. Mr. Tepper said it would be helpful to have zoning maps and a cheat sheet outlining what problem the article addresses and the areas in town it affects. Mr. Arnold agreed and said that would be a nice addition to the R&R book for residents.

Ms. Blazejewski mentioned that Mr. McNulty from the Board of Health will be attending the next AFC meeting. She will provide Committee members more detail about their discussion regarding the landfill. She also pointed out that their budget does not include trash removal for the schools.

Mr. Wells will be meeting with Jack Goodhall to discuss the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Their budget decreased and Mr. Wells thinks that is due to a decrease in electrical costs. He will provide an update to the Committee after meeting with Mr. Goodhall.

Mr. Wells mentioned that Chief Al Gordon from the Police Dept will be attending the AFC meeting on 1/27/14. He will contact Chief Gordon to let him know that the Committee would like to review his budget and capital expenditures. Mr. Wells will also let Chief Perron from the Fire Department, who is scheduled to come in on 1/30/14, know that the AFC would like to discuss his budget and capital expenditure requests as well.

The School Department is scheduled to come in to meet with the AFC on 2/13/14. Ms. Rosenblum Senie asked Committee members to get questions to her by the end of next week. Mr. Allen had a question regarding the 2.46% increase and what the assumption is on Salaries & Wages since contract negotiations are going on now. Committee members had questions about what services are covered by the Town and what services the School Department budgets for like trash and snow removal. Mr. Wells would like more detail on their Contractual Services line item and a description of what services are performed when hiring someone from the outside. Mr. Tepper asked about the growth in the student population and what the School Department budgets for, especially with two new developments coming in to the Town. He asked if they had a 5 year projection on student growth and what planning goes in to the budget.

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 8:03 p.m. Vote to adjourn was 7 in favor, with 7 being present.

Document List

DPW Snow & Ice Removal – 5 Year Actuals & Average – Gary Wells

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Thomas
AFC Administrative Assistant