

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

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**

There were no minutes to approve.

### **Review of FY'15 Budget with the Police Department:**

Police Chief, Al Gordon, met with the Advisory Finance Committee to discuss his FY'15 budget. The Chief let the Committee know that the Salaries & Wages increase of approximately 2.5% was mostly contractual due to step increases and cost of living raises. One officer qualified for the fitness stipend after quitting smoking and staying with it for the past 18 months. The Chief was asked how negotiations were going. He said for FY'15 they are fine. Next year will involve negotiations. The Chief mentioned that the shift differential has gone up a little. Mr. Wells reviewed the overtime budget and pointed out that overtime has been underfunded for many years. Mr. Wells asked if that was due to police details. The Chief said it was not due to police details but rather due to sick, personal, vacation time, along with major events that occur that would require extra officers such as a power outage where police might have to direct traffic due to lights being down. Regarding the sick, personal, and vacation time, the Chief explained that he budgets for holiday pay but sometimes the officers choose to work the holiday and get compensation time instead to use at a later date. This can create a problem in the summer months when his employees all want time off. The Chief mentioned he does limit the number of officers that are out at one time. Mr. Wells felt the overtime was underfunded at \$60,000 and said it usually comes in around \$110,000.

The Chief then discussed Article 9G and the request to replace two police cruisers. He received a quote from MHQ today and the cost for each vehicle is expected to be \$40,004. He provided a copy of the quote from MHQ to Committee members along with a handout from the Police Department with additional equipment required. The total cost for both cruisers with the additional equipment is expected to be \$95,508. The Chief mentioned that there was approximately \$13,000 left in an article from last year. They were supposed to purchase a new vehicle but Dan's Jeep gave them a Grand Cherokee. The Chief said the department did have to pay to put lights and equipment in the Jeep and the \$13,000 represents what was left. There was discussion about transferring funds from the old article to the new article and reducing the amount requested in Article 9G. The Chief let the Committee know that the Police Department auctioned off an old Special Response vehicle that kept breaking down and purchased a Dodge Ram pick-up truck. The truck can carry cones for accident scenes and blockades for large gatherings, which didn't fit in the cruisers. The Chief anticipates a greater trade in value for the truck since it is considered more valuable. Mr. Wells asked if the Chief could incorporate the penciled in numbers off his Westborough Police Fleet chart where he included idling time. The Chief said he would get that to Mr. Wells. He also pointed out that they will most likely replace cruiser #20 and cruiser #29 off of that chart. The Chief let the Committee know that Lt. Robert Fryer is working with Patrick Cullen of the Fire Department with regard to Article 9C for the Public Safety Radio Tower.

### **Review of FY'15 Budget with the Board of Health:**

Paul McNulty, Director of Public Health, met with the Committee to discuss the FY'15 Board of Health budget. Members of the AFC thanked Mr. McNulty for his 34 years of service in Westborough and wished him well with

his upcoming retirement. Mr. McNulty reviewed Salaries & Wages. He clarified the difference on the FY2014 salary figure between the detailed budget book of \$280,498 and the Town Manager's summary budget of \$291,022. Mr. McNulty said the difference of \$10,524 is the prorated amount for a part time health inspector that was approved at the Special Town Meeting in October. Mr. McNulty mentioned that they had four applicants for the part time position - three had no experience and one had very little. The BOH is going to re-advertise and may have to take an inexperienced candidate and train. Mr. McNulty mentioned that the increase in Salaries & Wages also represents step increases. He had budgeted Salaries & Wages at the maximum level. Now that he has decided to retire, that may go down since his replacement may come in at a lower level. He mentioned that Expenses have gone up on professional services. The increase of \$500 represents an estimate for mileage for the part time health agent.

Mr. McNulty then discussed the Sanitary Landfill budget with the Committee. He mentioned the reduction to Expenses and that it is a result of adjusting his FY'15 budget to reflect the tons of trash dumped at the landfill using actual figures from the last few years. He had been using a higher budget figure in prior years which resulted in money left over in that account. Mr. McNulty pointed out that the Police, Fire, School Department and Senior Center pay for their own trash removal. He also said that the recycling program ends up covering its costs.

Mr. McNulty informed the Committee that they will start selling dump stickers beginning in April for the next two year period. Mr. Behn took a look at actual figures for 2010/2011 and 2012/2013. Revenue collected in 2010/2011 was \$310,610 and expenditures was \$1,380,652, and the difference was the subsidy. Figures from 2012/2013 were similar to 2010/2011. Since the goal is to keep the budget as low as possible, Mr. Behn asked if the Town should be subsidizing the difference or if dump sticker fees should be raised to reflect actual costs. Mr. McNulty said that they would have to drastically raise the dump sticker fee from what they currently charge of \$120 in order not to subsidize. He said that the Board of Health is committed to raising sticker fees gradually. The dump sticker price increased from \$100 to \$120 two years ago and they will most likely have another increase this year. There was general discussion regarding; controls at the landfill and whether people who hadn't paid for a sticker were dumping trash, charging extra for yard waste or appliances, or changing the system to be similar to a user fee so taxpayers aren't subsidizing a service they may not use. Mr. Behn stated that he had heard in the past that raising dump fees too high might lead to residents dumping trash on the side of the road. Mr. Behn took a look at what other towns charge. He said that Southboro charges \$250/yr for a dump sticker, and Needham charges \$95/year but also has a "pay as you throw" charge. Mr. Behn said that it is the responsibility of the AFC to recommend to the Town what they feel is right, and after looking at what other towns charge, raises the question as to whether we are charging enough. Mr. McNulty suggested that the AFC discuss the subject and make a recommendation to his Board of Health. He also suggested getting the Selectmen's recommendation as well, especially if the AFC is looking to take a more aggressive approach. Mr. Behn liked the idea of sitting with the Selectmen while they review the budget and getting a more unified decision on increasing the sticker fee. Mr. McNulty will put the Board of Health on notice that this issue needs to be discussed at their next meeting. Mr. Behn asked if Mr. McNulty had any idea how much the Board of Health was looking to raise sticker fees for budgeting purposes since estimates on revenue will not be accurate if the increase isn't factored in. Mr. McNulty didn't know but he said he would inform the Town Accountant that sticker fees will be increasing. Ms. Blazejewski suggested having a more extensive conversation regarding the landfill in April when the Board of Health is back in attendance. Mr. Tepper recommended that in addition to the sticker fee being raised that they look at yard waste and how it is monitored and enforced, and dumping of televisions and computers and perhaps charging extra. Mr. McNulty was once again thanked for his years of service and hard work. He mentioned that it is worthwhile to keep discussing the topic of the landfill.

#### **Review of the Warrant:**

Mr. Behn reviewed the warrant with the Committee to determine what articles required more follow up and what departments may still need to be scheduled to come in.

Articles 1 through 5 were self-explanatory and required no follow up.

Article 6 – Mr. Behn will get dollar effect from Town Accountant, Leah Talbot, for changing employees.

Articles 7 & 8 were self-explanatory and required no follow up.

Article 9 A & B – John Walden, DPW, and Carl Balduf, Town Engineer, will be in to discuss their capital expenditure requests.

Article 9 C, D, & E – The Fire Department is scheduled to come in and discuss on Thursday, 1/30.

Article 9 F – Maureen Ambrosino from the Library will be in on Thursday, 2/6, and can discuss their request for renovations to their restrooms and bringing them in to compliance with ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) regulations.

Article 9 G was addressed this evening with Chief Gordon.

Article 9 H – Mark Stockman, MIS/GIS Director, is scheduled to meet with the Committee on Thursday, 2/20 and will discuss his request.

Article 9 I & J – The School Department is scheduled to come in on Thursday, 2/13, and can discuss their requests.

Article 9 K was addressed when Town Manager, Jim Malloy, met with the AFC on Thursday, 1/16.

Article 10 - The Fire Department is scheduled to come in and discuss on Thursday, 1/30.

Article 11 – After some discussion, AFC members would like to have the Country Club Operating Committee in to review their request.

Article 12, 13, & 14 – John Walden can discuss when he comes in to meet with the Committee regarding Articles 9 A & B.

Article 15 – This article is seeking repayment to the State for a grant received for the Nathan Fisher house. This is the final step in releasing the deed restriction placed on the property. Committee members wondered what would happen to this property in the future. Would it be sold or leveled? AFC members would like to get a note or memo as to what the plans are for this property and what will happen after the State receives payment and the lifting of the restriction.

Article 16 – AFC members felt this topic had been addressed when Town Moderator, Joe Harrington, came in to inform the Committee of his retirement. Mr. Behn will get a copy of the RFP to Committee members. Members would like more details for what will be purchased and the amount.

Article 17 – Mr. Behn will follow up with the Conservation Commission as to why this land was gifted in 1974 but a request for the land to be surveyed is coming in now. He will let the Committee know the details for this request once he hears back from the Conservation Commission.

Article 18 – Solar Net Metering – Mr. Behn wasn't sure if this article will remain in the warrant and will get more details to the Committee on how the credits will be handled and the reductions to the electricity budgets of Town departments.

Article 19 – Committee members wondered why school transportation for homeless children wasn't included in the school budget. Questions came up on how this item should be accounted for and whether the Town received a reimbursement or refund from the State and how much. The School Department is scheduled to come in on Thursday, 2/13, and will be asked to clarify.

Article 20 through 25 – Mr. Behn will follow up with Town Planner, Jim Robbins, and Lester Hensley, Chair of the Planning Board, regarding these articles and get back to the Committee. Mr. Behn suggested that Committee members may want to attend the Planning Board's next meeting.

Article 26 was self-explanatory and required no follow up.

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

Mr. Behn reviewed the format of the budget and has been doing some mock ups. He'd like to provide footnotes within the budget format instead of at the end. Another suggestion was to condense the information and make it more useful. Mr. Behn will email out to the Committee and noted that he's not changing the content so much as the presentation. Mr. Behn also mentioned that he's been in touch with Town Accountant, Leah Talbot. He has the workbook set up and expects to get numbers from her mid-week.

Since Mr. Arnold was not in attendance at tonight's meeting, Mr. Behn let the Committee know that Mr. Arnold hasn't had any meetings with the Charter Review Committee yet. If Mr. Arnold becomes Town Moderator, then that liaison position will be open.

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

Mr. Wells informed the Committee that he had received an email from DPW Business Administrator, Maria-Elaina Riggieri letting him know that the Snow & Ice Salaries & Wages account was at \$450 and they'll be operating in deficit mode. Mr. Wells forwarded Town Manager, Mr. Malloy, his data from the last 5 years relative to the Snow & Ice budget (actuals versus average) that he had presented to the Committee last week and mentioned there needs to be more detailed discussion between the AFC and the Town Manager.

#### **Adjournment**

Mr. Wells made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:21 p.m. Vote to adjourn was 6 in favor, with 6 being present.

#### **Document List**

MHQ – budget quote for a new police cruiser

Westborough Police Department – Police Vehicles for FY '15 (quote from MHQ plus additional equipment)

Westborough Police Fleet Chart – plus explanation of extended idling

Westborough Landfill Subsidy Analysis

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Thomas

AFC Administrative Assistant