

Members Present: Gary Wells, Chair, Sharon Kaiser, Hank Rauch, Peter Allen, Tara Howard, Jim Tepper. Absent: Beth Blumberg, Ed Behn, Lisa Blazejewski.

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

Call to Order/Open Forum

There were no requests to address the Committee.

Approval of Past Minutes

Meeting No. 2, September 8, 2014

Mr. Wells and Mr. Tepper requested corrections to the minutes. Mr. Tepper made a motion to accept the amended minutes. The vote to approve the minutes is 5-0-1, with 6 being present (abstention: Howard).

Review Fall Special Town Meeting (STM) Warrant Articles with Town Manager, Jim Malloy

Mr. Tepper pointed out that there are 38 articles on the warrant and mentioned that there has been a large increase in articles for STM. He felt that we needed to get back to handling only special items for STM. Mr. Malloy agreed and said that the Selectmen also agree. Mr. Malloy stated that the Selectmen will reiterate what should and shouldn't be included for the STM, along with what could wait until the ATM. Mr. Malloy pointed out that the Town has a good capital planning process and items should go through that process first. Mr. Allen referred to the private sector in business and mentioned that decisions are made more than once a year, so he would support if a clearly positive decision could be implemented earlier than if delayed until the ATM. Mr. Tepper agreed that items may pop up, but felt that the ATM is where departments and groups in Town should be doing their forward thinking and planning.

Mr. Malloy informed the Committee about an email sent to the Board of Selectmen earlier today regarding the State of the Town. The report showed that Westborough was in the best financial shape it's ever been in and that will be favorable for financing future Town projects and renovations. The report indicated a total of \$16.6 million in available assets.

Article 1, MIS/GIS Department Staffing. Mr. Malloy reported that MIS/GIS Director, Mark Stockman, has taken on more responsibilities such as networking copiers, phone systems, and the Town Hall renovations. He currently only has two people in his department and he could use more help. Mr. Stockman is requesting a part time person (10 hours per week) to help with the GIS responsibilities, since that's where he finds he's falling behind. Mr. Tepper asked for the annualized salary for the GIS administrator and Mr. Malloy said he would get that figure and email the Committee.

Article 2, Firefighters Contract Appropriation. Mr. Malloy explained that he, along with Town Counsel, Greg Franks, settled the labor negotiations for the Firefighters Union for FY15-FY17. The contract was settled at 2% per year for the next three years. The \$68,655 increase to the Fire Department's Salary & Wages Account is for FY2015 and is retroactive to July 1, 2014.

Article 3, DPW Manager Contract Appropriation. Mr. Malloy explained that this article covers the increase to the DPW Manager's contract that was due this year and renegotiated. The increase will be split between the General Fund Public Works Salaries and Wages Account, the Water Fund Salaries and Wages Account, and the Sewer Fund Salaries and Wages Account.

Article 4, Library HVAC Repairs. Mr. Malloy explained that the Library has spent \$23,000 from its General Fund, General Building Maintenance Fund, and funds that were intended for computers and a self-checkout unit between 2013 and 2014 to fix the A/C system. After the HVAC was replaced in 2013, the Library started experiencing problems and the Town is taking legal action against the contractor and subs. Since the Library had to utilize more of their expense account to maintain the A/C system to keep it working, the funds requested in this article replace monies already spent. Mr. Allen asked if the HVAC contractor is involved in any of the new construction in Town and Mr.

Malloy assured him they were not, and mentioned that Worcester County Refrigeration went out of business shortly after the Library project. Mr. Malloy pointed out that the Municipal Building Committee (MBC) should be getting involved with future Library renovations.

Article 5, Digitizing Historic Town Records. Mr. Malloy explained that the Library is working with the Boston Public Library to digitize Town records. By digitizing these historic records, it will provide access to other Town organizations, along with accessibility to the general public.

Article 6, Restoring Historic Frames for Re-Use. Mr. Malloy explained that the Library is taking on the project of restoring and refinishing old, historic frames that were found in the attic of the Fire Station.

Article 7, Window Replacement and Restroom Repairs. Mr. Malloy explained that he would like to combine two previous articles, and move forward with both of these projects under the management of one General Contractor and Architect, since they are operating on a tight budget.

Article 8, Chapter 90 Reduction. Mr. Malloy explained that the allocation of Chapter 90 funding to Westborough has been reduced by the Governor over the last two years. This article decreases the amount appropriated to match what was received by the Town for FY15.

Article 9, Co-Star Real Estate Market Data. Mr. Malloy explained that the Economic Development Committee performed a study and would like to subscribe to an annual real estate market data subscription. The data received will identify leases that are about to expire in Town so a discussion can occur about the business staying in Westborough rather than moving to another town. This information would also help the Board of Assessors in determining the value of commercial properties.

Article 10, Sick Leave Buy Back. Mr. Malloy explained that this article was for sick leave buyback for a retiring DPW employee/

Article 11, Fingerprint Scanner. Mr. Malloy explained that the fingerprint scanner that the Police Department currently has is old and maintenance is no longer being offered on this piece of equipment. The new fingerprint scanner system they are requesting will provide fingerprints, as well as a print of the whole palm. Mr. Malloy said the trade-in value of the old fingerprint scanner is about \$5,000, which will bring the cost down for the new one. Ms. Howard asked if the Police Department knew this piece of equipment would need to be replaced and Mr. Malloy said they did not and only found out this past summer.

Article 12, Recreation Salaries and Wages. Mr. Malloy explained that the Recreation Department recently lost three senior members of their staff and hired three new members. This article would decrease the Recreation Department's Salary and Wages Account. .

Article 13, DPW Furnace Replacement in the Piggery. Mr. Malloy explained that the Piggery building on the DPW property needs to have its furnace replaced since the current furnace won't make it through the winter. There are two employees that work in that building and the furnace that is there dates back to 1970 and parts are no longer available to fix.

Article 14, Baker Way Pump Station Upgrade. Mr. Malloy explained that the Baker Way Pump Station has experienced blockages to their pumps. By installing a "muffin monster", which acts like a large garbage disposal, objects would be ground down to make sure pumps are not blocked and continue to operate reliably.

Article 15, Water Department Water Line Maintenance. Mr. Malloy explained that this article is for the purpose of water line maintenance where an "ice pig" is pushed through the lines to dissipate any build up. Mr. Rauch asked if this maintenance needed to be done before April. Mr. Malloy said he would check to see, and also whether this maintenance is better performed in the winter months. .

Article 16, Sandra Pond Water Line. Mr. Malloy explained that there was a water line break at Sandra Pond back in June. The piece of the line where the break occurred was removed and it was found that the condition of the line was old and in bad shape. All of the other water lines have been replaced in this area except for this one section which runs from the pump house to Bowman Street. Mr. Malloy said that if there's another break in this line that it could affect the Town's water supply. He mentioned that they have a contractor in the area that is finishing up a job and he can take care of this now and get it done.

Articles 17-20, School Budget Appropriation, Mill Pond Test Drilling and Well Installation, Web-Based Interfaced Direct Digital Control System at the High School and Mill Pond School, and Wireless Access Points. The Committee noted that the School Committee will be in on Monday, September 29, 2014 to discuss these articles. Mr. Wells asked Mr. Malloy about Article 18, Mill Pond Test Drilling and Well Installation. Mr. Wells asked Mr. Malloy when the irrigation system was installed at Mill Pond and what was the cost. Mr. Malloy said that the irrigation system was installed over the summer for a cost of \$22,000 and that the School Department decided to irrigate the fields. Mr. Rauch asked what the Recreation Department's decision was regarding irrigating the fields and if it was necessary. Mr. Malloy said he would follow up with the Recreation Department for their opinion. Mr. Wells asked Mr. Malloy if the irrigation system was on the capital plan, Mr. Malloy responded he believed it was scheduled for 2017 but was not absolutely sure.

Mr. Rauch pointed out that residents have been discouraged from watering their lawns – even if they have private wells, so he wondered about the timing of this request.

Article 21, Amend Salary Administration Plan. Mr. Malloy explained that this article only affects some part time personnel at the Library and amends their pay rate due to the minimum wage increase.

Article 22, Amend Classification Plan. Mr. Malloy explained that this article establishes an additional position for a mini-bus driver for the Council on Aging. Mr. Rauch asked about the long term issue of the mini-buses wearing out and Mr. Malloy noted that new mini-buses are in the capital plan.

Article 23, Council on Aging Staffing. Mr. Malloy explained that this article authorizes hiring another driver contingent on the Council on Aging filing a strategic three year plan. Mr. Rauch noted that he would like to see the whole issue of the mini-buses reviewed and brought back in March at the ATM. He mentioned that he understands the value of the service but wondered about the cost efficiency of using a mini-bus to take one individual to an appointment. Mr. Rauch thought that perhaps a smaller fleet of vehicles could be used, and Mr. Wells agreed and suggested a mini-van instead. Mr. Wells said that he was under the impression that the mini-buses provided group transportation and not individual. Mr. Malloy said that he would like to see what the WRTA could provide for transportation since some of their funding is provided through state aid. Mr. Rauch felt that Westborough seemed to be getting in to the shuttle service. Mr. Rauch understood that there are seniors in Town that are not able to drive but he wondered if we – the Westborough community – were willing to allow seniors to live in complexes that don't provide their own transportation and pointed to The Willows as an example. Mr. Malloy said he would forward to Mr. Wells a 15 year chart on rider history, which he said appeared flat.

Article 24, Acceptance of MGL Ch. 32B Section 20. Mr. Malloy explained that the Town needs to vote to legally set up an OPEB (Other Post Employment Benefit) Trust Fund since the FY15 budget includes funding for OPEB. Mr. Malloy pointed out that the Town's AAA bond rating was upgraded due to its funding of OPEB and mentioned that very few towns were able to reduce their real estate taxes while also contributing to OPEB.

Article 25, Exemption from MGL Ch. 138, Sections 17A-17C. Mr. Malloy explained that this article would keep the pressure on State legislature to allow the decision as to the number of liquor licenses in a Town to be voted on at Town meeting. Mr. Malloy felt that the number of liquor licenses should be decided at the Town level and not left to the State. Mr. Malloy mentioned that he typically sees two types of restaurants that succeed - fast food and sit down restaurants with liquor licenses. He said that there was a coal fired pizza place that was interested in opening in Westborough but couldn't get a liquor license so they went to Weston instead. Mr. Malloy pointed out that our State Representatives – Carolyn Dykena and Matt Beaton – are in front of this issue.

Articles 26 & 27, Accept Gift of Easement East Main Street. Mr. Malloy explained that these articles allow the Town to formally receive an easement to locate poles on either side of East Main Street in order to install a blinking sensor system to warn trucks of being over the height limit. Mr. Malloy said that about 20-30 trucks get wedged under the railroad bridge on East Main Street during the course of a year, which causes terrible traffic delays.

Article 28, Accept Gift of Easement Oak Street. Mr. Malloy explained that this article formally allows the Town to accept an easement over a driveway on private land where the school buses enter to park. Mr. Malloy mentioned that the Town legally needs to accept this easement, which is being provided by Spectrum House, in case that property is ever sold.

Article 29, Acceptance of Various Roads. Mr. Malloy explained that this article is for the acceptance of two roads that have been in place for 10 years. These two roads didn't meet Town standards initially but now do.

Article 30, Economic Development Committee Membership. Mr. Malloy explained that this article increases the membership of the business community for the Economic Development Committee and allows Town Counsel to meet with the EDC when necessary.

Articles 31-36 – Amend Zoning & Bylaw Regulations. Mr. Malloy explained that Article 31 deals with dimensional regulations and the other articles relate to zoning changes. Mr. Wells noted that Lester Hensley and Jim Robbins with the Planning Board are scheduled to come in on October 2nd to discuss these articles in depth.

Article 37, Home Rule Petition – Selectmen Emery Retirement. Mr. Malloy explained that, under current laws, Leigh Emery would have to resign from the Board of Selectmen in order to retire from the Worcester school system. Rules were put in place because there was concern over a State employee receiving their retirement, and then working in another municipal capacity and getting a second retirement. Mr. Malloy said they are waiting for clarification but in the meantime filed this article to protect Ms. Emery. Mr. Malloy said that all Town employees must contribute to a retirement system – and the purpose of the laws was to prevent double dipping – but Ms. Emery is not an example of that and would only receive \$12.50/month as pension from her role as a Selectmen.

Article 38, Easement Funding – Open Space Reserve Account. Mr. Malloy explained that this article would be transferring \$32,000 from the Open Space Reserve Account to secure easements for trails. Mr. Rauch wondered if there was a map as to where these trails are located. Mr. Wells suggested inviting Bruce Tretter from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee to meet with the AFC.

Mr. Malloy noted that he would get back to the Committee regarding the annualized salary for the GIS administrator in Article 1, whether the pigging process in Article 15 is better performed at certain times of the year (ex. winter and colder weather versus summer and warmer weather), and the opinion of the Recreation Department on the irrigation system at the Mill Pond School in Article 18.

There was discussion about obtaining Town residents email addresses and the convenience of having that information. Mr. Malloy suggested asking for email addresses on the Town Census. It was mentioned that the School Department has email addresses that are confidential but could have an "opt in" for Town notifications similar to the "Code Red" system. Mr. Malloy said he would check with MIS/GIS Director, Mark Stockman, as to the number of residents that have signed up for the email alert service on the Town website.

Mr. Wells asked Mr. Malloy when the Board of Selectmen plan on voting on the warrant and Mr. Malloy said October 14th. Mr. Wells mentioned that the AFC Report & Recommendation book will need to close that night and October 14th is the last day for anything to be added to the R&R book. Mr. Wells also mentioned that there is an AFC meeting scheduled for October 14th which may need to be held at the Library since the BOS have Room 23 at the Forbes Building. However, if much of the work on the R&R book is complete by October 9th, then he could possibly cancel the October 14th meeting. Mr. Wells thanked Mr. Malloy for attending tonight's meeting. Mr. Allen congratulated Mr. Malloy on his handling of the Fire Department's salary negotiations.

Open Discussion – Follow up to determine which Articles require additional input from various Town Departments and scheduling those meetings. Ms. Kaiser asked the Committee who they felt should come in to meet with the AFC regarding the articles in the STM warrant. Committee members agreed on the Council on Aging, Library Director, Maureen Ambrosino, Bruce Tretter with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, DPW Manager, John Walden, and Chief of Police, Al Gordon. There was discussion about alternative ways for the Police Department to pay for the Fingerprint Scanner, such as defeating the article and having the Police Department pay for it out of their budget. If their FY15 budget comes up short, they could ask for a reserve fund transfer. Mr. Wells also suggested looking at their budget and history to see if there's an account where funds are not spent. It was noted that the School Committee is coming in on Monday, September 29th. Ms. Howard will email questions from the AFC to Superintendent Bock and the Chairman of the School Committee, Stephen Doret. Mr. Wells reminded the Committee that Lester Hensley and Jim Robbins with the Planning Board are scheduled to come in on Thursday, October 2nd.

Regarding the schools, Mr. Wells would like to receive more information on the articles. He wondered if there was a final number for Article 17 for the teacher contracts. He understands that the contracts are in final negotiations, but wondered if there was an estimate as to what they are looking for. Mr. Wells mentioned that he emailed Irene Oliver, Director of Finance and Administration, to see if she could update their salary budget so he can identify where changes took place. Mr. Wells asked Committee members to formulate questions for Superintendent Bock, Ms. Oliver, and Mr. Doret and email them to Ms. Howard and also copy him.

Mr. Tepper mentioned the Planning Board articles and said that last time he had asked for maps, details, and numbers, he never received that information because it came down to crunch time. Mr. Tepper wanted to know specifically if landowners are notified if their zoning changes. Mr. Tepper suggested that they need to find a simple way to explain the Planning Board articles at STM. Mr. Tepper also wanted a better understanding of what the \$68,655 represented in Article 2 for the increase to the Fire Department's Salary and Wages Account since a 2% increase is also noted. Mr. Wells will double check against the Fire Department's current budget, and if he still has any questions, he will email Mr. Malloy for clarification.

Mr. Wells reviewed the Financial Revenue & Expenditure Estimates for FY2015 and the Local Receipts Updates from the Town Accountant with Committee members.

Chairman, Committee Liaison, and Department Liaison Reports

Mr. Allen had a brief update from the Municipal Building Committee. He mentioned that the move in date for the new Fire Station has been pushed back slightly from the end of September to mid-October. Mr. Allen said that a ribbon cutting would be held at a later date, possibly after the demolition of the old Fire Station.

Mr. Tepper reported on the Gibbons School Building Committee. He mentioned that schematic designs are being reviewed. He said that technology is at the forefront of the renovations, and believes construction will start in 2016 with a completion date in 2018. The cost of renovations is projected at \$18 million. The Massachusetts School Building Authority wants estimates for future student enrollment so they can figure out what they'll reimburse the Town. Mr. Tepper thought that enrollment numbers may have been estimated too high.

Adjournment

Mr. Rauch made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 p.m. The vote to adjourn was 6-0-0 in favor, with 6 being present.

Document List

Fall 2014 STM Articles and TM Warrant
2014 STM Warranty Article Worksheet
Financial Revenue & Expenditures Estimates for 2015
Local Receipts Updates from Town Accountant

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Thomas
AFC Administrative Assistant