

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

At 7:00 p.m. Mr. Wells called the meeting to order in the Fire Station Meeting Room.

Open Forum

There were no requests to address the Committee.

Approval of Past Minutes:

There were no past minutes to approve.

Council on Aging (COA) – Senior Center:

ATM – Budget Items/Transportation Program Report: Alma Demanche, Director of the Senior Center, Charlie Flood, Chair of the COA, and Sue Abladian, COA member, met with the Committee to review their budget. Ms. Demanche apologized that her report was late. She didn't realize it needed to be turned in by February 1st. She explained that she wanted to expand the hours for the buses to accommodate the needs of seniors. She referred to her handout where she goes over her goals and objectives. Mr. Wells mentioned that he was happy to see a plan for moving forward but he was disappointed that the report was late, especially since it was clearly laid out at the October Town Meeting as to what was needed in order for her to have the 4th bus driver. He pointed out that had she turned in her report earlier she would have already had her driver and money. Mr. Wells also referred to her meeting schedule where they were only meeting once a month. He felt that Ms. Demanche missed both the deadline and opportunity at having a 4th driver sooner. Mr. Wells would have liked better detail on the 8,000 trips made last year so the data could be analyzed on a spreadsheet and used as a database as to what the specific needs are for transportation. For example, how many medical trips do we provide transportation for in a month, and do we need the bigger vans or would smaller vans be more economical. Mr. Wells said that we don't want to use a large van to transport one rider. He felt that perhaps we need a couple larger vans and then a couple smaller vehicles, like mini-vans. Mr. Wells agreed that a 4th driver would help with the workload but what does the workload look like going forward. Perhaps two full time drivers were needed along with two part time drivers – or someone who can work the hours of 7am-3pm to cover the earlier trips. Mr. Wells said he would like to see a good comprehensive program so the COA can go to the Capital Expenditures Committee with their requests for new vans or buses. He felt that the COA needed to figure out what their needs are for their fleet, and then determine what their driver needs are. Mr. Wells pointed out that they may even need a full time senior transportation coordinator for planning times, places, people, and things, and also coordinating drivers. If the need is there, Mr. Wells said that the AFC will approve adding it to the budget since they don't want to deny people services, and historically residents have not voted to deny services either. Ms. Demanche wanted to respond to two items that Mr. Wells brought up. The first was that all public transportation needs to be ADA compliant so that's why they don't have a mini-van. Also, Ms. Demanche mentioned that they do have a plan and routes that are mapped out. They cluster people together as much as possible so that they don't randomly run around town. She said that there is a method to where people get picked up and dropped off. Ms. Blumberg asked if Ms. Demanche had a sample schedule of a regular day and also a schedule for a special event day. Ms. Demanche is in the process of speaking with the Office Managers at Southboro Medical and also the Shrewsbury UMass office to try to schedule as many people as they can for doctor's visits so trips are efficient. Mr. Behn said that the AFC is looking for some sort of data driven plan. If we are doing something now, we are also looking down the road, since we don't want to come back the following year with something new. Ms. Demanche said that the over 70 population makes up the majority of their passengers. There was a discussion over the number of people serviced by the buses and if they add up. Ms. Demanche mentioned that she got her numbers from Central Mass Planning. Mr. Wells suggested getting her numbers from the Town Clerk since we can get this information

from the census forms. Ms. Demanche pointed out that currently they are doing 8,000 trips a year with one way equaling one trip. Ms. Demanche does have a list of about 302 riders with their information and emergency contacts, which they delete and add accordingly. Mr. Behn asked about attrition and Ms. Abladian said that the numbers stay reasonably the same. She mentioned that some riders leave the area to go live with family, or go to a nursing home or other facility that has a van, or pass away. Mr. Wells pointed out the need for those numbers – just like the School Department keeps track of the number of students. Ms. Demanche said they also provide rides for a non-senior population. Ms. Blumberg said it would help to know how many people are non-seniors. Ms. Kaiser felt it would also help to know how many group trips they do, versus individual, and a breakdown. The WRTA buses were mentioned but Ms. Demanche said it was difficult for seniors to walk to get to these stops. Mr. Rauch didn't feel that the COA could continue to expand their transportation services without figuring out the need and cost. Ms. Demanche said they do have history to look at since the van service was started in 1980-1981. Ms. Abladian added that it was difficult to forecast who may be sick or who may become house bound. Mr. Flood mentioned that it was also difficult to know who may have to give up their license. Mr. Rauch disagreed and thought they could use some demographic, and that they should be able to find information out there for a comparison. He felt there were statistics that would support, within 5-10%, as to when seniors may give up their license to drive. Mr. Allen asked at what age people are able to use the van service. Ms. Demanche said that the requirement is being 60 years of age or older and getting on the list. Ms. Blazejewski asked what the requirement is for being disabled. Ms. Demanche said that right now they have two people in wheelchairs. She mentioned that most of the people they transport are 20-30 years old and physically disabled. Mr. Behn gave an example of free school lunches and federal guidelines for qualifying and asked if Ms. Demanche had anything like that. Mr. Behn felt that there was a need for objectives, trends, and populations, and if they couldn't measure these items then they couldn't manage them either. Mr. Flood felt they should have come to the AFC first for help, and Mr. Wells and Mr. Behn agreed and offered to help. They used the AFC's request for an activity log from the Historical Commission as an example, and how they were able to create a graph from the log provided. It was mentioned that the AFC is looking for some sort of breakdown from the COA by age – for example, how many riders are over 60, over 70, and over 80? How many are in wheelchairs? How many are disabled? And then some sort of statistic saying that perhaps 5% of seniors will lose their license over the next year. If the population of riders goes up, the COA needs to justify why they need a new van or driver. They also need accurate forecasts going forward. Ms. Demanche felt this sort of information was above their skill level. Mr. Wells mentioned that anyone on the AFC would be happy to come down to the Senior Center to help get them started. Mr. Behn said that they don't need to log every single trip, just a fair sampling. This information should be put in to a spreadsheet and then extrapolated out. Ms. Blumberg mentioned using National Honor Society students, Girl Scouts, and Boy Scouts for help with some of this computer work. Mr. Rauch pointed out the expense line and wasn't sure the COA's budget was large enough to support the operation of two vans for items like gas, insurance, drivers, repairs, taxes, etc. Ms. Demanche said that taxes and insurance are paid by the town. Mr. Rauch said that he would still like to see the total numbers for running these two vans and what it is truly costing the town to operate. Mr. Wells said he would like to see the cost for insurance and the cost for gas broken out on a yearly basis. Mr. Rauch also suggested that the COA look at what other towns do for comparison. Ms. Abladian mentioned they are already doing that since the BOS wanted to know if the fee they charge of \$.50 cents/trip was comparable to what other towns charge. Ms. Demanche said that she is in the process of checking with other Senior Centers. Ms. Abladian mentioned that the BOS also wanted the COA to come up with funding, for example finding out about State grants or some sort of funding plan. Ms. Demanche pointed out that her overall budget is small in comparison to other departments. Mr. Wells said it was right now but it could significantly increase. Ms. Abladian said that they are putting forth a list to the WRTA to see if they could provide services for the elderly. Mr. Wells felt the intention wasn't for the WRTA to take over what we do, but rather supplement what we do already. For example, would the WRTA be cooperative or amenable to help provide a bus for a specific trip, such as a trip to the grocery store or to the mall, and a senior volunteer could accompany the group, which would free up our buses for trips around town. Mr. Wells wondered what that would cost and if it was economical. Ms. Abladian said they are trying to do that now. Mr. Wells reiterated that the AFC is looking for trends and statistics from the

COA. Ms. Demanche said that she would send the data for trips completed in prior years electronically. Mr. Wells mentioned sending it to Ms. Kaiser, since she is the COA liaison and primary contact, and she can help.

Article 27 – Spurr House (Citizens Petition): Mr. Bob Pano of 9 Parkman Street approached the Committee regarding this article. He mentioned that he has been a resident of Westborough for 47 years. It has come to his attention that the Spurr House may be demolished and a parking lot built in its place. He is speaking not just as a resident of Parkman Street but as a citizen of Westborough, and referred to the historical aspect. Mr. Pano mentioned that Parkman Street is considered a streetscape since all of the homes were built in the same period. It would sadden him to see the Spurr House destroyed, so they are looking for a more positive outcome where the house could be used for something else, while also restoring it to its former glory. He felt it was necessary to maintain the integrity of the history in this town and the feel of a neighborhood. Mr. Pano wanted to let the AFC know of his concerns and asked if there was anything the Committee would like to share with him. Mr. Wells said the Committee has reviewed Article 27 in the way it is written and proposed. He spoke about the heat and the request to appoint a Committee to investigate alternative uses for that property. Regarding the aspect of heating, Mr. Wells said he did speak with the Fire Chief and the Buildings & Grounds Supervisor to confirm the building was properly winterized. Mr. Wells mentioned that he was told the fire alarm is not tied to the heating system and they operate separately from each other. Mr. Wells also pointed out that every building owned by the Town comes under the jurisdiction of the Town Manager. Any future use, such as the re-purpose of a building, the demolition of a building, or refurbishing a building would have to be approved by Town Meeting, so there would be a number of public hearings and a number of town committees that would be involved. Paula Skog, one of the citizens involved with this article, said that there is still money left in the budget to heat the house so that may be a moot point. Ms. Skog still felt that a Committee should still be appointed to study alternative uses for this property. Mr. Wells pointed out that there's no disposition yet and nothing substantial has been initiated. Mr. Rauch felt that forming a committee would be redundant since there's already a structure in place. Ms. Tanya Pano, who lives next door to the Spurr House, noticed when furniture, flags, and other American Legion items were being removed. She spoke with John Mattson who was overseeing the move and he said that their lease with the Town was not renewed. It was discussed that it may have been a mutual agreement not to have the lease renewed. Ms. Pano also mentioned that she heard they were tearing down Spurr House so a parking lot could be installed. Mr. Wells again pointed out the lengthy processes in place for the demolition of a Town property and that the future use of this location has not been determined yet. Ms. Blazejewski also cited the redundancy in having another Committee appointed since the demolition of the house would involve a lengthy process. Mr. Behn asked the neighbors if they have gone to the Board of Selectmen and asked them to appoint a committee. They said they have not yet gone to the BOS. Mr. Behn explained that we have people that are elected to do certain things in town so he's trying to understand their process of putting an article in the warrant. Ms. Skog said that the Spurr House was gifted to the town in the 1930's by Fannie Forbes and she didn't want to see it sit there empty. Mr. Rauch pointed out that this property was a surplus building to the Town and they didn't need it so it was okay for it to be empty. Ms. Blumberg suggested to the neighbors that they get on the BOS agenda since they can appoint the Planning Board to take a look at this property. Mr. & Mrs. Rabidou of 10 Parkman Street were concerned with the house sitting empty without heat and deteriorating. It was noted that it took 10 years for the Town to vote for the renovations to the Town Hall. Mr. Wells pointed out that the job of the AFC was to speak about the article only and members of the AFC have been trying to indicate that there are other committees that can be utilized without establishing a new one. He mentioned the 22 vacancies on current boards and commissions already. Mr. Wells commended the neighbors on alerting the voters, since he felt no one would disagree on the historic aspects of the Spurr House and the aesthetics it brings to the neighborhood. However, Mr. Wells thought that by going to the BOS and having them put this issue on the Planning Board's agenda would keep the pressure on and generate public hearings. Ms. Skog mentioned that the Committee they'd like to see appointed would only be a 6 month project and they would present their report at the October Town Meeting. Mr. Wells said that they'd still have to go through the same process and sequence of events and they wouldn't gain anything by having this Committee. Mr. Behn thought that Town Boards, such as Planning, may get up at Town Meeting to explain the process, along with other Town officials. Mr. Behn understood the concerns of the

neighbors and that they want to make sure what happens next is transparent. Mr. Allen suggested that the neighbors meet with the Municipal Building Committee this Wednesday (3/4) at their Open Forum. Mr. Wells also mentioned going to the next Board of Selectmen meeting too. There was a brief discussion about the definition of surplus property and the difference between re-purposing a property, versus defining it as surplus property and then selling it. One of the neighbors, Mike Fitzpatrick of 43 Church Street asked about the Nathan Fisher House and the history of that property was reviewed. Mr. Wells noted that the next BOS meeting is scheduled for March 10th and they could try to get on the BOS agenda or come to their open forum.

Schools & Reserve funds: School Committee Chairman, Steve Doret, along with School Committee Vice-Chair, Ilyse Levine-Kanji, met with the Committee and referred to Mr. Doret's memo dated 2/26/15. Mr. Wells mentioned that he was glad to see their report and learn that the School Committee is focused on developing a process to review their revolving funds and hopefully develop a guideline for percentages and goals. Mr. Doret provided the School Committee's summary points, since they took to heart the comments from the AFC, specifically dealing with the contributory accounts that were developed under state law for its specific purpose. Mr. Doret mentioned that they still need to research the restrictions for what the reserve funds can be used for and what they cannot be used for. For example, Mr. Doret pointed out that the State restricts what they can pay for under the athletic fee fund. He mentioned that the first part of their study will be to figure out the restrictions on the revolving funds, and the second part will be to create a process to determine what happens to those funds within the budget. Once they establish this process and policy, then they shouldn't have excess in these funds going forward. Mr. Doret also acknowledged the timeliness in getting this done and pointed out that a working sub-committee of himself and Ms. Levine-Kanji was created at the recommendation of School Superintendent, Amber Bock, and they will report back to the School Committee. Mr. Doret and Ms. Levine-Kanji thanked the AFC for their comments, concern, suggestions, and help. Mr. Behn recognized that over the past few years the School Department has come forth with better transparency. Mr. Behn also wanted to mention that this year the Town has gotten hit with some unforeseen expenses such as the Worcester Regional Retirement (WRR) assessment, the increase to medical insurance (though that is still being negotiated), and housing values are going up but industry and business are not. Mr. Behn pointed out the 3.66% tax bill increase, which comes to about \$294 per household, and mentioned that the AFC is looking for ways to trim back.

ATM preparation and related items:

ATM – Warrant Articles: Mr. Wells mentioned that he sent out a new Revenue & Expenditures report, along with a Free Cash & Transfers report, and a Free Cash & Transfers report - Proposing the Utilization of Additional Free Cash. Mr. Wells dated these reports as of 2/26/15 and noted changes to figures in red. He also spoke about the footnote for OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits), and also the Board of Selectmen's Comprehensive Fiscal Management Policies that were adopted 11/29/11, which he read and will forward to the Committee. Mr. Wells sent out a new printable budget and asked the Committee to please proof it and get back to him with any mistakes or changes. Mr. Behn's recommendation was for each liaison to proof their departments. Mr. Wells also created a new article worksheet and highlighted those that were flagged last night as being up for discussion. He will email the worksheet out to everyone. Mr. Wells mentioned that next Monday night (3/2), Jack Goodhall and Mike Stanton are coming in to discuss the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Town Moderator, John Arnold, is also coming in. Mr. Wells wanted to try to vote those warrant articles without questions and then start deliberations for those items concerning utilization of free cash, such as the AFC Reserve Fund, snow and ice, some of the insurance expense. Mr. Behn stressed the need to take care of the snow and ice deficit this year, and also pointed out that what we do with warrant items could affect what we do with budget line items. Mr. Allen and Ms. Blzejewski cannot make Wednesday's meeting so Mr. Allen asked if voting could take place on Monday, 3/2, for uncontested warrant articles and uncontested budget items. Mr. Wells is still targeting Thursday, March 5th, for finishing the R&R book so Mark Stockman can post it on the Town's website. It was noted that the final numbers for Article 4 should be received on Monday, 3/2. Mr. Rauch will also get the snow and ice number for Monday as well.

Chairman, Committee Liaison, and Department Liaison Reports

None

Comments and Concerns – Committee Members

None

Public Reminders for Viewers

None

Adjournment

Mr. Behn made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:31 p.m. The vote to adjourn was 7-0-0 in favor, with 7 being present.

Document List

Senior Transportation Service Strategic Plan for FY'16-19 – Alma Demanche and the Council on Aging

Memo from AFC to Council on Aging dated 11/13/14 – Gary Wells

Revolving Fund Discussion – Memo from Steve Doret dated 2/26/15

Financial Revenue & Expenditure Estimates for FY2016 dated 2/26/15 – Gary Wells

Free Cash & Retained Earning Transfers Report dated 2/26/15 – Gary Wells

Free Cash & Retained Earning Transfers Report - Proposed using additional Free Cash - dated 2/26/15 – G. Wells

Town of Westborough Comprehensive Fiscal Management Policies Adopted 11/29/11 – Board of Selectmen

AFC FY2016 Printable Budget – Gary Wells

AFC – ATM 2015 – FY2016 Warrant Article Worksheet – Gary Wells

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Thomas

AFC Administrative Assistant