

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

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

#### **Approval of Past Minutes**

There were no minutes to approve.

#### **ATM Preparation & Related Items**

**Article 4 – Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Transfers:** Mr. Behn made a motion that we recommend that the Town vote to transfer from the Legal Salaries/Wages Account the sum of \$26,982 to the Legal Expense Account, transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$22,700 to the Fire Department Expense Account, transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$4,000 to the Buildings and Ground Expense Account, transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$85,000 to the Snow and Ice Removal Salary and Wages Account, and transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$350,000 to the Snow and Ice Removal Expense Account. Voted: 7-1-0. It was noted that the amount was off by \$4,300. The numbers were reviewed and the error was found. Mr. Behn re-read the motion with the correct amounts. Voted: 7-1-0.

The Report & Recommendations book was reviewed page by page for errors and edits. The Committee agreed that the Town Manager's statement will come after the warrant articles, followed by the AFC's recommendation and vote, and then the Board of Selectmen's vote will come after that. There were some vote counts that needed to be added and some that needed correcting. In Article 7, the Committee felt the footnote should be re-worded to the following; "the increase in expenses reflects a \$20K increase for staff development". Under the Building Department, it was noted that the increase was to their wages line item - not expenses. Also it was suggested that the word "subcontract" be removed in the footnote and take "s" off inspectors since only one is being hired. Regarding the Assabet budget, the footnote should reflect that the decrease is due to there being one less student, since the assessment is due to enrollment. Under the Library's budget, it was suggested that the footnote for Salaries & Wages provide an explanation that the "increase reflects an additional position". Under the footnote for the Historical Commission, Mr. Allen thought it should point out that "this figure maintains 9 hours per week for the Administrative Assistant". The Committee felt the Library State Aid and Trust Funds line item should be removed since it is earmarked for the Library and may be confusing to voters. Under Article 8C, it was noted that the Board of Selectmen voted to raise and appropriate the \$250,000 for the AFC Reserve Fund. There was a discussion over whether the Board of Selectmen's decision should be added to the footnote. The Committee agreed that they will note that the Board of Selectmen decided to raise and appropriate the whole article and the vote was 4-0-0. Under Article 12, the Committee felt the word "to" should be after "we recommend that the town vote TO support". There was also a suggestion to add "The BOS voted to support each of these items 4-0-0" and remove the individual lines after each item.

Regarding the "Message to Voters", the original draft by Mr. Wells, along with Mr. Rauch's edits, was discussed. Mr. Allen felt the content of Mr. Wells' message was accurate. Mr. Rauch wanted to be careful about the reference to snow and ice removal and saying it affected the FY16 budget. Mr. Behn wanted to add a paragraph about the Historical Commission. He also suggested adding "Free Cash" as a bolded subtitle since that's what we are suggesting for snow and ice removal, and in the following two paragraphs regarding the use of Free Cash for the AFC Reserve Fund and the justification. Mr. Behn also felt that "Schools" should be a bolded subtitle as well, and reference the revolving funds in that paragraph, and then adding the Historical Commission as a bolded subtitle. Mr. Allen and Ms. Howard disagreed since the Historical Commission represented a small piece of the \$100 million dollar budget and could be brought up on Town Meeting floor. Mr. Behn wondered if we would be back for a third year discussing the Historical Commission's budget and wanted to send a message to the Board of

Selectmen that they need to resolve the scope of work for the Historical Commission's Administrative Assistant. Mr. Wells referenced the Youth & Family Services newsletter that Mr. Allen gave him last night where there was an article that indicated Town Manager, Jim Malloy, is suggesting the formation of a committee to determine if Youth & Family Services should continue. Mr. Wells felt a similar committee should be appointed for the Historical Commission. Mr. Behn wanted a written document sent to the Board of Selectmen and Town Manager since the AFC has spent hours discussing this issue. The Committee agreed to table this item for now and re-address after Town Meeting since the R&R book needed to be finished tonight. Mr. Wells read the "Message to Voters" with tonight's suggestions for revisions. He noted reasons for the increases to taxes – unusual winter, WRR assessment, health insurance increase, and normal increases due to STEP and COLA for wages and salaries. The Committee suggested deleting the second paragraph all together, adding the bolded subtitles as Mr. Behn indicated, and deleting the last sentences in the third to last and second to last paragraphs regarding reducing the estimated tax bill.

The Report & Recommendation book was voted. Mr. Behn made a motion to approve the Advisory Finance Committee booklet as amended and edited at tonight's meeting, with the provision that typographic and formatting changes – including verifying the consistent and correct use of amounts – which do not impact the substance can be made by the Chairman, the Vice-Chair, and his or her designee. Voted: 8-0-0.

The quotes and costs for printing the R&R books were reviewed. Mr. Wells noted that normally 300 R&R books are ordered, but with the Gibbons article, Mr. Wells wasn't sure how many to order. The Committee suggested and agreed on a quantity of 500. Mr. Behn made a motion to approve the printing of 500 Report & Recommendations books at an estimated cost of \$627.00. Voted: 8-0-0. The quotes and costs for the Town Meeting handbooks were also reviewed. Since more research needed to be done regarding the grade of paper and number of pages, Mr. Rauch made a motion to authorize Mr. Wells and Ms. Blumberg to spend no more than \$625.00 on the printing costs for the Town Meeting handbooks and Mr. Behn seconded. Voted: 8-0-0.

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

Mr. Wells informed the Committee that the AFC meetings for Monday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, and Thursday, March 12<sup>th</sup>, will remain posted for now. These meetings may be canceled if they are not necessary. Mr. Wells also let the Committee know that the AFC will meet at 12:30 p.m. at the high school on March 14<sup>th</sup> prior to the Annual Town Meeting.

#### **Public Reminders for viewers:**

Mr. Wells reminded viewers about the upcoming Annual Town Meeting on Saturday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, at 1 p.m. at the high school.

#### **Adjournment**

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:00p.m. The vote to adjourn was 8-0-0 in favor, with 8 being present.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jessica Thomas  
AFC Administrative Assistant