

Members Present: Gary Wells, Chair, Beth Blumberg, Ed Behn, Lisa Blazejewski, Jim Tepper, Hank Rauch, Jim Driscoll, Tara Howard.

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

Open Forum

There was no one here to address the Committee.

Approval of Past Minutes

Meeting No. 4, September 21, 2015

A vote on the approval of past minutes was postponed until the next Advisory Finance Committee (AFC) meeting.

Fall Special Town Meeting – Warrant Articles, Committee Discussion

Mr. Behn mentioned the minutes from the AFC's 9/17 meeting where retired Fire Chief, Nick Perron, came in and met with the Committee regarding Article 17 – Rescinding the Strong Chief Statute. He pointed out that Mr. Perron noted specific situations where there was political interference and wanted an addendum to the minutes, since that would support the argument for having a Strong Chief. Ms. Blazejewski mentioned the handout Mr. Perron provided which included a letter that was also sent to the Charter Review Committee. There was a discussion about including documents that are passed out at AFC meetings with the minutes, and a suggestion that Mr. Perron's handout could be used as the addendum. Some members of the Committee felt that if we go back and include Mr. Perron's comments then we should have rebutters in with their comments. Mr. Wells asked if the minutes of the meeting should be amended to point to the video tape from that evening. Ms. Blumberg pointed to the minutes from the night Town Manager, Jim Malloy, met with the Committee and felt it should be treated similarly. She thought that voters could access documents for their reference if they wanted the history. Mr. Tepper's opinion was to summarize Mr. Perron's handout in the minutes – and even point to his handout – but it shouldn't be in the detail. Mr. Wells re-read the minutes from that evening pertaining to Mr. Perron's presentation and felt there were enough specifics given. Mr. Behn mentioned that there was trouble with the videotape from that night's discussion so he couldn't go back and watch it. He wanted Administrative Assistant, Jessica Thomas, to go back and double check the quantity of flammable liquid a company on Flanders Road wanted to store that Mr. Perron provided as an example of political interference. Mr. Wells felt there was adequate reference in the minutes where Mr. Perron thought that they were under political pressure. Mr. Behn pointed out that Mr. Perron provided dates and presented these examples in an organized manner. Mr. Wells noted that the minutes are a summary of the AFC's meeting and are not verbatim. Mr. Rauch added that the AFC didn't validate the legitimacy of the documents and if we put them on file with our minutes then it is almost like we are approving the content. Mr. Rauch felt that the AFC's job was to be educated on a subject, deliberate as a group, and then make a decision on an issue. Mr. Behn wanted Ms. Thomas to ask the Town Clerk what the appropriate practice is for materials given to us in support of the warrant and whether they should be included with the minutes. There was some concern over storage. Mr. Behn noted that we could ask for presentations to be sent to us electronically.

Mr. Wells informed the Committee that Mr. Malloy wasn't able to make tonight's meeting. He read an email from Mr. Malloy that was sent regarding the Country Club roof. Mr. Malloy has asked Building & Grounds Supervisor, Frank Cornine, to get a new quote and he felt he should have a better number before Town Meeting. Mr. Malloy will forward that information to the Committee as soon as he receives it. Mr. Wells informed the Committee that Mr. Barrette, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, asked if he could meet with the AFC about the articles pertaining to the Strong Chief statute, the Spurr House, and the Country Club roof, so he and Mr. Malloy will be in on Monday, October 5th. Mr. Wells reviewed the October calendar with the Committee and noted upcoming departments that are meeting with the AFC, and also when the R&R book needs to be completed.

Mr. Wells also mentioned the article worksheet that he handed out. He reviewed each article and noted which ones were ready to vote now and which ones required more information. The Committee decided to go ahead and vote on the articles not requiring additional information.

Article 3 – Cantrell Drug Company Tax Increment Financing Agreement – Mr. Behn made a motion that we recommend the Town vote to approve this article as printed in the warrant. Voted: 8-0-0.

Article 7 – Fire Department Pumper Truck Purchase – Mr. Behn made a motion that we recommend that the Town vote to appropriate \$485,000 from free cash for the purpose of this article and noted that this purchase does not increase the number of vehicles in the Town's fleet. Voted: 8-0-0.

Article 8 – Fire Department Brush Truck – Mr. Behn made a motion that we recommend that the Town vote to appropriate \$18,000 from free cash for the purpose of this article. Voted: 8-0-0.

Mr. Behn wanted to wait on voting for Article 9 so he could draft the full motion. He'd like to reference organization and object codes.

Article 13 – Chapter 90 Reduction – Mr. Behn made a motion that we recommend that the Town vote to reduce the appropriation from Article 8E of the 2015 Annual Town Meeting from \$1,164,172 to \$780,403. Voted: 8-0-0.

Article 14 – Country Club Equipment Purchase – Mr. Behn made a motion that we recommend that the Town vote to transfer \$40,000 from Country Club Retained Earnings for the purpose of this article. Voted: 8-0-0.

Article 15 – Pre-K to 3 School Building Committee – Mr. Behn made a motion that we recommend that the Town vote to approve this article as printed in the warrant. Voted: 8-0-0.

Article 16 – Adoption of MGL Ch. 60A, Section 1 as Amended by Chapter 62 of the Acts of 2014 – Mr. Behn made a motion that we recommend that the Town vote to approve this article as printed in the warrant. Voted: 8-0-0.

Article 19 – Request for an Additional License for the Sale of All Alcohol Beverages to be Drunk on Premises – Mr. Behn made a motion that we recommend that the Town vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to seek special legislation for the purposes stated in the article as printed in the warrant. Voted: 8-0-0.

Article 20 – Authorization to enter into a PILOT agreement – Mr. Behn made a motion that we recommend that the Town vote that the Board of Selectmen be authorized to enter into a 20 year Payment in Lieu of Taxes Agreement for the purposes stated in the article as printed in the warrant. Voted: 8-0-0.

There was a brief discussion about Chapter 90 funds and how that works.

Fall Special Town Meeting – Warrant Articles

Article 12 – Library Architectural and Engineering Services – Library Director, Maureen Ambrosino, Library Trustee Vice-Chair, Pat Fontes, and Municipal Building Committee (MBC) members – John Arnold, Vice-Chair, and Dexter Blois:

Ms. Ambrosino provided an update to the Committee as to where the Library is at in the renovation process. She said that over the summer they put out a bid and went through the process of hiring an OPM (Owners Project Manager) since it is required as part of the process for the State grant. The OPM that was hired, Heery International, looked at the budget and felt more money was needed for the type of work that needs to be done and the studies that will be required. Ms. Ambrosino provided a handout to AFC Committee members outlining

the grant process and a timeline of events for the project. Ms. Ambrosino turned discussion over to Mr. Blois so he could speak about the windows. He explained that the window replacement and bathroom renovation projects were originally voted and monies were appropriated. Mr. Blois and Mr. Arnold came on as representatives of the MBC to assist with these projects since the Library trustees requested help. The MBC realized that just a window replacement would not be the best course of action and decided that a full window replacement, including replacement of the sills and sash, would help with energy efficiency and look better aesthetically. After speaking with the Trustees, they decided to hold off on the windows for now and have them fall under the Library grant, since 50% of the cost should be picked up rather than having the Town pay 100%. Mr. Rauch asked about the bathrooms, but it was noted that the bathrooms are being completed now and the Library is only asking for a partial amount of money. The amount left in the article can be used for the bathrooms. Mr. Behn mentioned that last year's Annual Town Meeting in March 2014 appropriated about \$160,000 for the bathroom and window renovation project, plus what was appropriated at the Annual Town Meeting in March 2013 of approximately \$63,000, was rolled in to Article 7 at the Special Town Meeting held in October of 2014. It was noted that some of the \$223,000 was spent down for the bathrooms, leaving a balance in that article which could be used for the engineering studies. Mr. Blois pointed out another interesting note where the Library only had about \$200,000 for the window replacement project yet the architect was ready to put out the bid for \$425,000. Ms. Howard asked if the windows will be more expensive in a year and a half when they are replaced. Mr. Blois said that is likely but it's worth waiting for since 50% of the cost may be covered by the State. Mr. Wells asked if anyone has gone directly to a manufacturer and asked for an estimate on replacing the windows since it would be helpful to know the cost from the manufacturer. Mr. Blois said that the Town has to have their plans stamped and certified documents. Mr. Rauch wanted to review the math and noted that there was \$223,000 in Article 7, and the Library would like to use \$52,500 for architectural and engineering studies, he wanted to know what the bathrooms cost. Ms. Ambrosino mentioned that the bathrooms had about \$63,000 allocated for renovation costs and that amount would remain in the article. Mr. Rauch requested a reconciliation of the \$223,000. Mr. Blois said that money voted for the bathrooms would stay in the article and could be used for other costs associated with the renovations in case the grant doesn't come through, or it would be turned back in to free cash. Mr. Rauch felt that the Library should tie out all of the details so voters could see an audit trail. Mr. Tepper asked about the total amount of \$131,000 needed for the architectural studies and noted additional monies are being kicked in from a grant and by the Library Trustees. Mr. Blois pointed out that amount is for the whole project and that the Library needs a long range building plan per the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC). Mr. Rauch felt that should be visible at Town Meeting as to what's going to happen to the Library, and asked if the footprint of the building is going to change. Mr. Blois thought that was premature since they still need to complete the grant process. Ms. Fontes summarized the steps that they have gone through to lead to this point, and also mentioned that the Library received a grant to write the grant. She noted that the bathrooms needed to be done now, but the windows can't be justified since there's a big difference in the cost and the grant would cover 50%. Mr. Rauch pointed out that the Library has a consultant's plan and is now looking for money for an architectural study for major renovations. He felt the Library should be specific as to what the money is being used for so when they come back for additional funds then voters know what they're looking for. Mr. Tepper agreed with Mr. Rauch and thought that the Library needed to reconcile the old article. Mr. Rauch pointed out that the Library should start preparing people that more money will need to be spent, and if people don't want to spend millions renovating the Library then they shouldn't vote for the architectural studies. Mr. Behn added that the Library should go through steps for the renovation and grant process to make it clear and simple in order to minimize questions. Mr. Tepper pointed out that this is simply the first step and more money may be needed for more studies. Mr. Blois noted that the first step is for schematic designs and the second step would be bid specs where more specific details are needed. Mr. Driscoll suggested that the Library should show deductions from the article for what has been spent, and also what is still remaining, at Town Meeting. Ms. Blumberg asked how long this renovation project should last. Ms. Ambrosino said that part of the grant process is to look down the road 20 years and make projections about the population and that, other than maintenance, the renovations should last 20 years. Mr. Tepper asked what – if any – part of the grant would cover parking and specifically mentioned the Spurr House. Ms. Ambrosino asked the MBLC and they said they can include the cost of the demolition of a structure, if one existed, where the Town wanted to put in a parking lot, along with removal of debris and the design of the parking lot. She noted that it

would be included in the 50% but it doesn't cover paving or striping of the parking lot. Ms. Ambrosino referred to her handout and the tentative calendar. Mr. Behn mentioned that Ms. Ambrosino said that they need to show support from the Town and asked how that is done. Ms. Ambrosino said that would be through local funding and that they need to have Town Meeting approval to apply for the grant. Mr. Wells pointed out the Spurr House and that the Spurr House Committee's recommendation is to put the house up for sale for 18 months, and if it is not sold, then the Town can dispose of it. However, if Article 2 passes and the timing is off, then the Town wouldn't get back money spent for work already done. There was a discussion about demolishing the Spurr House and the cost of \$50,000. Mr. Arnold said that cost would only cover tearing down the building and filling in the sinkhole, and that the only unknown is asbestos. Mr. Blois mentioned that they could leave the house as is and use the yard for construction trailers for the Library and/or the Forbes building, since Mr. Arnold noted that renovations for the Forbes building could start as early as spring of 2017 and could be going on simultaneously with the Library renovations. Ms. Blumberg asked how close the parking lot needs to be to the Library in order to have the grant cover 50% of the costs. Ms. Ambrosino said that parking does need to be adjacent to the Library. Mr. Rauch noted that the problem with parking in the downtown area isn't just for the Library and mentioned the Forbes Building. He felt the problem with parking exists regardless of whether we renovate the Library or not. Mr. Rauch asked if we include the parking lot in the grant does parking in that lot become designated for the Library only, since he felt that would be hard to enforce. Ms. Ambrosino mentioned that they can't build a parking lot for the Town so it would be designated for the Library's use. Mr. Behn pointed out timelines and said that if the Spurr House is placed on the market in January 2016 that 18 months later would be June 2017. He noted that the Library needs to submit their application for the grant by January 2017. Mr. Behn asked if there could be a contingency placed in the grant that we would have to demo the parking lot in 6 months. It was noted that the contingency could be put in the grant anyway and we could see what happens. Ms. Fontes mentioned that we may be put on a waiting list for the grant too. Ms. Ambrosino said that the architectural and engineering studies would really help them with creating a better plan. She mentioned that the surveys they have done have shown that parking is a problem, the bathrooms are gross, but the staff is really nice. Ms. Ambrosino also wanted to point out that on October 18th they are having their second annual "Sundaes on Sunday" event from 1-4 pm, and they have teens making recipes from around the world where visitors can speak with the kids and sample the food.

Chairman, Committee Liaison, and Department Liaison Reports

None

Comments and Concerns – Committee Members

Mr. Behn mentioned the page he'd like to include in the R&R book comparing budgeted amounts to actual figures for FY15 and noted an email Mr. Rauch sent out. Mr. Rauch suggested sharing that page with the School Board, School Superintendent, Selectmen, and Town Manager as a courtesy, in order to get their comments prior to wide sharing. He felt that the AFC needed to be careful with their comments regarding the Message to Voters and end of year report, and edit it for accuracy since it's not an editorial. Mr. Behn pointed out that the R&R book is the AFC's book. The Committee agreed that numbers should be verified with the Town for accuracy before noting in the R&R book. Mr. Wells mentioned that some of the reports presented in the R&R book contain our best estimates and are provided to voters for informational purposes only. Mr. Behn agreed and said the information is provided as a courtesy. Ms. Blazejewski didn't think we specifically needed anyone's permission since it is the AFC's book and we don't ask anyone to editorialize it. Mr. Rauch was concerned with showing actual numbers. Mr. Wells noted that the natural progression for the R&R book has been to keep adding relevant information. Mr. Driscoll requested that actual numbers are verified with the Town first. Mr. Rauch pointed out that he never meant to say we needed anyone's permission, rather he meant it as more of a notification to departments that this is what's going to be published. Mr. Tepper was in agreement with Mr. Rauch to provide a notification and email out to departments as to what will be in the R&R book.

Public Reminders for Viewers

None

Westborough Advisory Finance Committee minutes
September 28, 2015

Adjournment

Mr. Behn made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:04 p.m. The vote to adjourn was 8-0-0 in favor, with 8 being present.

Document List

AFC Calendar for October 2015 – Gary Wells
2015 STM Warranty Article Worksheet
Library Construction Grant Round 2016-17 – Library

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Thomas, AFC Administrative Assistant