

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

At 7:05 p.m. Mr. Wells called the meeting to order in Memorial Hall of the Town Hall.

Open Forum

There was no one here to address the Committee.

Approval of Past Minutes

Due to three members of the AFC being absent, Mr. Wells wanted to wait on approval of the minutes from 1/21/16 and 1/25/16 until the next meeting.

Warrant Article Review

DPW, Water & Sewer – Articles 29, 30, 31, 35, 36, & 37 – DPW Manager, John Walden, and Town Engineer, Carl Balduf

Mr. Walden and Mr. Balduf introduced themselves to the Committee. Mr. Wells noted that the articles they are here to discuss tonight have been re-numbered from the original warrant sent out in January to the most recent version.

Article 29 – DPW Garage Roof Repair - \$600,000: The first article up for discussion was Article 29 for the DPW garage roof repair. Mr. Walden explained that the current roof is near the end of its life expectancy. He referred to an “Existing DPW Garage Roof Study” the DPW had done by UDA Architects where the roof was evaluated. Mr. Balduf said that they looked at different scenarios and costs regarding the roof repair from performing spot repairs, to replacing roof ridges, to replacing roof ridges and including a new membrane coating over the existing roof, but they determined that a total roof replacement provided the best value and should last 30 years. Mr. Wells asked if they will be removing the current roof and reframing it and Mr. Walden confirmed this will be a full replacement of the entire metal roof system. There was mention of storing salt in the building and Ms. Jaffee was concerned with the metal building being exposed to salt. She asked about the life span of the building. Mr. Walden said that the garage was built in 1984 and is showing no signs of deterioration. He mentioned that only the roof needs to be repaired and noted that it is a flat roof. Mr. Wells asked if there was any consideration given to pitching the roof so snow cannot collect on it. Mr. Balduf pointed out that there is a low pitch to the current roof, which the new roof will have as well, and noted that it would be expensive to re-design the roof. Mr. Walden added that they have done repairs to the existing roof, which has prolonged its lifespan way beyond the 20 years expected. Mr. Behn asked if the cost of approximately \$600,000 will be spread equally between the DPW, and water and sewer accounts. Mr. Walden confirmed that \$200,000 will come out of each fund. Mr. Behn noted that they will check with Town Manager, Jim Malloy, as to how this will be paid for since there is enough cash in each fund to pay for it and not borrow. Resident, Syed Hashmi, asked if solar panels could be installed on the new roof. Mr. Walden said that there is only a small portion of the roof that could support solar panels since most of the roof has northern exposure and southern exposure is needed for solar panels.

Article 30 – Nourse Street Cemetery Site Preparation Work - \$60,000: Mr. Walden explained that the Nourse Street cemetery project has been idle for two years and he has had people who have expressed an interest in purchasing plots. He would like to be able to offer plots for sale at both the Pine Grove and Nourse Street cemeteries so people have options. Mr. Walden mentioned that their plan is to prepare the site in small increments. He said that he would like to begin with crushing gravel to provide a uniform cross section to the area. Mr. Walden noted the importance of preparing this site since he doesn’t want to discover boulders in

between vaults down the road and have to use dynamite in areas that could damage burial chambers. He said that some next steps would be to build a stone wall around the property, install roads and a water system, and loam and seed. However, right now they just want to start with the rough work. Mr. Wells asked what residents could anticipate and Mr. Walden said that they plan to allocate a small amount of funds toward the cost over the next four years. Mr. Behn pointed out that funds have been set aside for this purpose in the stabilization fund. There was some question as to which fund the money was placed in. The Committee will check with Mr. Malloy when he meets with the AFC on 2/16. Mr. Wells mentioned Article 10-I where there is a request to move \$60,000 in to the capital stabilization fund for the purpose of building the Nourse Street cemetery and then moving \$60,000 out for this purpose. Ms. Howard asked if there were any future plans for having lockers for cremated remains. Mr. Walden said there will be a designated area for cremated remains and left off proposed plans for the Nourse Street cemetery site for the AFC's review.

Article 31 – Sandra Pond Dam Emergency Action Plan - \$23,000: Mr. Walden mentioned that the DPW is working with Conservation Officer, Derek Saari, on developing an emergency action plan as required by the Office of Dam Safety in the event the dams at Sandra Pond are compromised. Mr. Balduf pointed out that this is a compliance issue. Mr. Behn asked specifically where the areas of concern are at Sandra Pond and Mr. Walden noted that it is where the spillways are located for the two dams. Mr. Driscoll asked about the timing of the study and Mr. Walden said that Mr. Saari will handle addressing the findings and complying with the necessary regulations. Mr. Balduf pointed out that they are collaborating with the same consultant that has been working up at Sandra Pond all along.

Article 35 – Town Water System - \$150,000: Mr. Balduf explained that they are requesting a transfer of \$150,000 from the water retained earnings account for two items. The first is for \$50,000 to assist with water withdrawal permits. Mr. Balduf pointed out that the Town's water withdrawal permit is up for renewal after 20 years and he referred to the Water Management Act, where there have been recent changes to requirements regarding permit renewal. He mentioned that, since these changes are fairly new, they aren't sure what to expect and haven't heard back from the State as to what may be required. Mr. Balduf mentioned that there has been a lot of discussion regarding these new regulations, which he said have been controversial and questioned by other towns. He pointed out that the State has been moving slowly in re-issuing permits and there aren't many examples as to what might occur during this process. Since they need to complete the permit renewal, which may require funds for consulting assistance related to the re-issuance, Mr. Walden said they are asking for the funds now so they are ready to react quickly. He noted that there could be penalties for delays in responding.

Mr. Balduf mentioned that the other \$100,000 is for a design study needed in order to update and renovate the Fisher Street Water Purification Facility. He said that this facility has been in use for almost twenty years and is the work horse plant for water production in the town. Mr. Balduf noted that they need to go through the process of evaluating what needs to be replaced and updated so we know what the cost will be in the future. Mr. Walden said that they have done some small repairs but didn't feel it was wise to wait since we don't want to have a plant down. Mr. Wells asked if we should build a new one and keep the Fisher Street facility as a back-up. Mr. Balduf said that the design review process will consider what is best, but that could be a viable option since they do that with wastewater stations. Mr. Wells asked if the Fisher Street facility is the only water purification plant in town. Mr. Walden said there is one located on Oak Street, and they are also building a new one near Indian Meadows to take the place of the plant on Oak Street. Mr. Balduf discussed future plans involving crossing over Route 9. Mr. Behn mentioned that work will need to be done before the planned Route 9 construction. Mr. Balduf said that the application is before the State right now waiting for approval, since once repairs to Route 9 are completed and it is paved, the Town cannot cut in to it for 5-6 years.

Article 36 – Town Water Mains - \$100,000: Mr. Balduf explained that this article is also a split request. The DPW is looking for funds to extend a small piece of water main on Granger Road that is older and needs to be replaced, as well as replacing "Transite" pipe in town that has been problematic and prone to breaks. Mr. Walden pointed out that the DPW has been active in eliminating Transite pipe. Ms. Howard mentioned recent events in

Flint, Michigan regarding their water system and putting together a map. Mr. Walden said that Westborough is in good shape and they know where the majority of our pipes are located. Mr. Balduf referenced that some pipe that was installed in the 1950s and 1960's they don't have a map on, but that is only for a few roads. Mr. Walden said that they know where the gates are located, which tells them where the pipes are, and that DPW Operations Manager, Dennis Cote, has been active in finding the gates and raising them up. Mr. Balduf added that they have this information on GIS. Mr. Behn asked if we have a comprehensive water plan in place. Mr. Walden said that we do and mentioned it was last updated in 2007. Mr. Walden said that the water plan is typically updated every 10 years and they will re-visit the plan within the next couple of years. Mr. Walden noted that he would like to meet with a hydrologist to see where we are currently at regarding wells and efficiency. Mr. Balduf mentioned that this is tied in to the water withdrawal permit they are waiting for from the State. They are hoping that there are no restraints on the wells. Mr. Behn pointed out that the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority (MWRA) is coming in for the State Hospital land. Mr. Walden noted that at some point the Town will be connected to the MWRA – but they will re-visit the wells before going that route.

Article 37 – Town Sewer Mains - \$200,000: Mr. Balduf explained that they need to run sewer mains up Indian Meadow Road. He discussed easement rights and orphaned properties on Route 9 that need to be connected to Town sewer. Mr. Balduf pointed out R.G. Shakour that has septic, along with the property across from them on Route 9. He mentioned that the process has been difficult since they have had to deal with private property owners. Ms. Howard asked why are we are providing a public utility to a private business. Mr. Walden pointed out that the private business will pay a connection fee. Ms. Howard was concerned with a private business profiting since it is a vast improvement to their real estate value. Mr. Balduf mentioned that they will pay an entrance fee to connect to the Town's system and that this is always an issue when they extend sewer to a business. Ms. Jaffee noted the \$200,000 gift to accomplish this project and asked if it will cost beyond that amount. Mr. Balduf said that the \$200,000 gift should pay for the project. Mr. Balduf referenced a project on Bridle Lane where the property owners paid for the sewer connection. Mr. Wells asked how much of the Town is covered by sewer and Mr. Balduf estimated about 90%. Mr. Behn asked how that compares with similar towns and Mr. Walden said that Westborough is way ahead of the curve. Mr. Balduf pointed to the 90/10 program provided by the State and said that a lot of sewer connections were extended through that program. Don Burns from BPAC noted that Northborough is at 20% sewer and Marlborough is at 80% and he felt the State was very impressed with Westborough's plans.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) – Articles 32, 33, 34 – Bruce Tretter and Don Burn
Bruce Tretter and Don Burn from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) met with the AFC to discuss three articles they have in the warrant and provided an overhead presentation.

Article 32 – E. Main Street to Lyman Street Trail Construction and Easement Survey - \$43,120: Mr. Tretter explained that they have changed the language slightly for this article, which is seeking funds for construction and installation of appropriate safety signage and motor vehicle barriers for the East Main Street to Lyman Street section of the non-motorized multi-use trail, along with easements. He mentioned that the amount BPAC was originally requesting was \$27,000, but now the cost is at \$33,120. In addition to the amount of \$33,120, Mr. Tretter said that they needed to add consulting costs and surveying fees of \$10,000, so the total amount for this article is \$43,120. Ms. Howard asked about the surface of the trail. It was noted that they are using reclaimed asphalt at no cost. Mr. Tretter explained that they have a machine that will crush up the asphalt, which should solidify over time. He is going to try to coordinate this work with the DPW when they begin a project on East Main Street. Mr. Tretter reviewed the locations affected and steps in the process. He said they are still trying to figure out what they will install in order to safely cross Lyman Street. Mr. Tretter pointed out options such as signage, along with using motor vehicle control options and showed examples of fencing, bollards, trees, and changing the road surface to designate the trail. Mr. Tretter also reviewed consulting and surveying costs. Mr. Driscoll asked if the trail will be closed off in the evenings and whether the Police will need to monitor. Mr. Tretter didn't feel Police monitoring would be necessary. He mentioned that initially there were concerns from a neighbor close to the trail, but he referred to studies that actually indicate crime goes down. Mr. Burn also referred

to studies supporting trails and a decrease in crime. He mentioned that these studies found that home values increased as well, and that having bike and pedestrian trails were an overall benefit to the community.

Article 33 – Purchase of Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon Crosswalk Safety Signs - \$23,000: For Article 33, Mr. Tretter explained that BPAC is seeking funds to purchase four sets of flashing crosswalk signs, along with one flashing yield sign for the East Main Street entrance to the Rotary. Mr. Tretter mentioned that one set of the solar powered flashing signs costs approximately \$5,664. Mr. Wells pointed out that once the signs are installed then the care falls under the DPW. Mr. Tretter and Mr. Burn said that they researched many companies and the one they deal with is excellent. The signs they have purchased are of good quality, provide an extensive warranty, are the brightest they've seen, and also the least expensive. Mr. Tretter showed the AFC where the flashers will be installed in Town – West Main Street from the Forbes Building to the Town Hall, West Main Street near the Veterans Freedom Park, Eli Whitney-Breen Street (near the Fales School), and on Lyman Street so pedestrians can safely cross from the Chauncy Beach parking lot to the beach itself. Mr. Tretter said that in addition to the flashing crosswalk signs, they would like to purchase a flashing yield sign for installation at the East Main Street entrance to the Rotary. He said the quotes they've received for the yield sign have come in somewhere between \$1,400 and \$2,400 depending on the design, and the yield sign will also be solar powered. Mr. Tretter mentioned that this request comes from a Mass DOT Road Safety Audit that was done on the Rotary where they determined that this was a dangerous intersection. Mr. Behn asked Mr. Tretter if he had any statistics from the Police Department and Mr. Tretter said he noted that information in his report. Mr. Tretter mentioned that he would get summary numbers.

Article 34 – Trail Easements - \$0: Mr. Tretter explained that this article would authorize the Board of Selectmen to obtain easements on behalf of the Town for the purpose of the multi-use trail. At this point no funds are being requested. Mr. Tretter went through his slide show presentation and noted that the Town is working towards obtaining these easements as gifts.

Budget and Warrant Article Review

Mr. Wells mentioned to AFC members that he updated documents and placed them in the Dropbox. He sat down with Town Accountant, Leah Talbot, and went through revenue and expenses, along with retained earnings. Mr. Wells felt these were fairly accurate numbers, but that we won't have actual numbers until the Special Town Meeting in the fall. Mr. Wells pointed out that he changed one item in the format for revenue and expenditures and expanded an area so it is easier to read. He said that he'd like the AFC's Report & Recommendation (R&R) Book to match the budget so he may put items in a different order. Mr. Wells said that he wanted to make the R&R Book clearer for residents who aren't always looking at these numbers. Mr. Behn mentioned that the goal of the AFC a few years back was to simplify these reports and understands that Mr. Wells would like to match the budget; however, he stated there may be a middle ground in accomplishing this initiative so residents aren't confused by a new format. Mr. Wells mentioned that this was a test run and that he wanted to show residents that Insurance is coming in at around \$11 million and Debt is at about \$9 million and that payroll and benefit related items account for about 75% of the budget, and, more specifically, that these budgets are out of the AFC's control. Mr. Behn suggested highlighting these items at the bottom of the budget so they stand out. Mr. Wells pointed out that the tax levy went up 4 ½% over what it was last year which translates to nearly a 7.5% increase in the average household tax bill. In order to cut that figure in half, Mr. Wells said that we'd need to eliminate about \$2 million out of the budget or that home values would have to increase by \$250,000. Ms. Howard mentioned the Debt line item and noted that the Town was able to save about a million dollars by renegotiating debt when our bond rating went up. Mr. Wells said that he met with Town Treasurer, Joanne Savignac, and she said they've done everything they can at this point regarding renegotiating debt. Mr. Behn mentioned that the primary purpose of providing financial reports in the R&R Book is to show budget numbers and suggested providing a comparative report from years past. He said that he liked Mr. Wells' idea of highlighting budgets with larger amounts. Mr. Wells noted that the format was a work in progress and asked Committee members to give the layout some thought. Mr. Wells also mentioned that the AFC will start voting budgets over the next few meetings.

Mr. Behn referred to his memo regarding the FY17 budget and “Proposed Changes in School Department Funding Sources” that was emailed to AFC members. He pointed out possible ways to fund the School Department’s budget and mentioned that the first page was a summary and that the next two pages of his memo provided more details. Ms. Howard asked what the goal was for his analysis. Mr. Behn said that he was looking to reduce the amount of money that the School Department would need to ask for out of the Town’s budget. He pointed out that the proposed school budget for FY17 is in excess of \$46 million and, if that amount was less, then we could reduce what we are asking tax payers to fund. Mr. Wells noted that a reduction of \$400,000 would take about \$52 off the average homeowner’s tax bill. Mr. Driscoll asked what the process is to discuss this topic with the schools or is it just the AFC’s recommendation. Mr. Wells pointed out that AFC members need to determine if this plan has merit. If so, then the AFC could present it to the schools and the schools can decide whether they will reduce their budget or not – or the AFC could determine on Town Meeting floor. Ms. Howard referred to an email sent out by the School Committee and the School Superintendent just before tonight’s AFC meeting. She asked that this email be included in tonight’s minutes. Ms. Howard doesn’t understand why this topic continues to be brought up and noted that the School Committee didn’t get a copy of Mr. Behn’s presentation. Mr. Behn pointed out that this topic was brought up at the AFC meeting on January 19, 2016 when representatives from the School Committee and School Department were present. He said that he made up his presentation for tonight’s meeting so AFC members could discuss like the AFC typically does on a budget item. Ms. Howard noted that the schools wanted to meet prior to tonight, but for a variety of reasons, the AFC liaison and Chairman were not available. Mr. Behn mentioned that he hasn’t had a chance to read the email from School Committee Chair, Nicole Sullivan. Ms. Jaffee pointed out that the email from Ms. Sullivan was sent out 45 minutes prior to tonight’s AFC meeting, which wasn’t helpful for tonight’s discussion. Mr. Wells noted that the schools had been notified that this topic would be discussed tonight and invited them in. He mentioned that the school budget is really at about \$50 million, but is reduced through various offsets, so it is now at about \$46 million. Mr. Wells pointed out that, like with every other budget the AFC reviews we need to consider all funding sources. When looking at a \$577 increase on the average tax bill, Mr. Wells felt that the AFC needs to do everything they can to reduce that amount. School Committee Vice-Chair, Steve Doret, arrived and pointed out that the schools have tried their best to arrange a meeting with members of the AFC so this topic could be discussed. Mr. Wells mentioned that the AFC looks at every department in town not just the schools. Mr. Behn asked Mr. Doret when email requests to meet were sent or information forwarded. Mr. Doret did not respond to Mr. Behn’s question. Mr. Doret asked why Mr. Behn won’t meet with the School Committee. Mr. Behn stated a meeting of this type was better done in an open forum format. Mr. Behn noted that he has attended School Committee meetings in the past. He also mentioned that he has yet to get any information regarding numbers he proposed. Mr. Doret pointed out that they have tried to meet with him so there could be a full discussion on this subject. Mr. Behn stated that if there was information to be sent then they should send it. Mr. Doret mentioned that they have tried several times to transmit information. There was a discussion about meeting times. Mr. Wells noted that he wanted to have a conversation amongst AFC members first to confirm all members agreed before having another meeting with the schools. Mr. Doret said that he was at home listening to tonight’s AFC meeting and thought it was disingenuous the way the schools were represented. Mr. Behn mentioned that he would have liked a memo as to why funds couldn’t be used and the reasons why. Mr. Doret pointed out that the funds Mr. Behn is referring to have already been allocated and embedded in the school budget. Mr. Doret noted the email sent by Ms. Sullivan and Mr. Behn said that he hasn’t seen it yet. Mr. Behn stated that the AFC should be given time to read and discuss the email sent by Ms. Sullivan. Mr. Behn again mentioned that he has been to many School Committee meetings to hear the narrative regarding the numbers, but it is now budget season and with 40 articles in the warrant, he is very busy. In the past Mr. Behn noted that he hasn’t been able to attend School Committee meetings once the budget has been submitted. He pointed out that he is only trying to find ways to fund the budget. Mr. Behn said that he can watch the School Committee meetings but that he prefers a document. Mr. Doret offered to make a presentation if invited back to the AFC. Mr. Wells said that the schools were invited tonight to discuss their numbers and that the AFC hasn’t been ignoring or avoiding the schools regarding this discussion. Mr. Wells reiterated that he wanted to get the general consensus from AFC members as to what direction they’d like to go in before proceeding. Ms. Howard noted that a meeting was set up with the schools and that Mr. Wells backed out after first saying he was available. Ms. Howard felt that the handling of the school budget and discussion was handled inappropriately and

compromised her integrity as AFC liaison. Ms. Howard referred to Mr. Behn's presentation tonight and thought that it was dropped on AFC members and the schools without much notice. Mr. Behn mentioned that, as an AFC member, he had the right to present numbers, and had done so when the School Department and School Committee were in attendance at the AFC meeting on January 19th. Mr. Behn noted that Mr. Rauch wisely recommended that the schools take back the information presented on January 19th for discussion, and look at the numbers, and take it from there. Mr. Doret pointed out the surplus money in the transportation fund that Mr. Behn keeps referring to and said that money is already accounted for and applied to this year's budget. Mr. Doret said that there were no surplus funds. He mentioned that if the AFC wants the schools to take \$400,000 out of their budget then they would need to cut services. Mr. Doret noted that if the AFC reduces the school's budget then they will be prepared to defend their position on Town Meeting floor and voters can decide. Mr. Behn again mentioned that nowhere in the information he received has he been shown where the excess funds in this year's budget were applied to next year's budget. Mr. Doret pointed out that the schools only have a two week window to apply excess funds to pre-pay tuitions for next year. Mr. Doret noted the difference in what Mr. Behn's suggesting and what they are doing. Mr. Doret mentioned that Mr. Behn is suggesting that the schools take \$400,000 and reduce their budget in order to lower tax bills, but the schools have already taken that money and reduced what they are asking the Town to support. Mr. Driscoll asked where in the school's presentation does it show where the \$400,000 was applied. Mr. Doret said the school's presentation shows these funds were applied to technology, Special Education, and text books. Mr. Doret also discussed moving some employees so they are funded from grants, which is why their budget only went up by 2.71%. Mr. Behn wanted to go on record that he didn't think there was concern about what he presented since it hasn't been an issue. Mr. Doret responded that it is an issue if they have to reduce their budget by \$400,000 since it is already accounted for. Ms. Jaffee said that she was confused about where the \$400,000 went. Mr. Behn explained that he made an assumption about the transportation item and there being excess capacity. He thought there may be extra money that could be used as a pre-pay toward Special Education tuition as an offset, however, Mr. Doret is saying that this money has already been allocated and not necessarily toward out of area tuition. Mr. Behn mentioned that he would review the email that was sent tonight by Ms. Sullivan and take it from there. Mr. Doret pointed out that they knew that money would be available, since transportation contracts were negotiated that saved money this year, along with a slight decrease to last year's costs, so these savings were used to pay for technology and text books that would have otherwise needed to be added to their budget.

Committee Liaison and Department Liaison Reports

None

Comments and Concerns – Committee Members

None

Public Reminders for Viewers

None

Adjournment

Ms. Jaffee made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:59 p.m. The vote to adjourn was 5-0-0 in favor, with 5 being present.

Document List

Existing DPW Garage Roof Study by UDA Architects – John Walden

Master General Plan for the proposed Nourse Street Cemetery – John Walden

Memo – FY17 Budget – Proposed Changes in School Department Funding Sources – Ed Behn

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Thomas,
AFC Administrative Assistant