

Westborough Advisory Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting No. 27, FY2016
April 4, 2016

Approved:
June 6, 2016

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

At 7:03 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

Meeting No. 21, February 22, 2016

Ms. Blazejewski made a motion to accept the minutes of 2/22/16. Voted: 6-0-0.

Meeting No. 22, February 25, 2016

Ms. Blazejewski made a motion to accept the minutes of 2/25/16. Voted: 5-0-1 (abstention: Blazejewski).

Meeting No. 23, February 29, 2016

Ms. Blazejewski made a motion to accept the minutes of 2/29/16. Voted: 4-0-2 (abstention: Jaffee, Howard).

Meeting No. 24, March 3, 2016

Ms. Blazejewski made a motion to accept the minutes of 3/3/16. Voted: 5-0-1 (abstention: Jaffee).

Meeting No. 25, March 7, 2016

No vote was taken since these minutes are still under review by the Committee.

Meeting No. 26, March 12-15, 2016 – Annual Town Meeting

Ms. Blazejewski made a motion to accept the minutes of 3/12/16 through 3/15/16 for Annual Town Meeting. Voted: 5-0-1 (abstention: Wells).

Town Meeting Review – John Arnold, Town Moderator

Town Moderator, John Arnold, met with the AFC to review the recent Annual Town Meeting. He thanked the Committee for their time, energy, and effort in preparing for Town Meeting and noted that the AFC's Reports & Recommendations (R&R) Book is extremely helpful. Mr. Arnold pointed out the lengthier than usual Town Meeting but was pleased to be able to finish up on Tuesday night. He wanted to review notes from Town Meeting and mentioned that he does the same with the Schools, Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Library, and other major departments. Mr. Arnold wanted to give the AFC an opportunity to provide their comments and observations from Town Meeting to see if there's anything we can do better. The Committee noted that Mr. Arnold did a good job walking around the stage and acknowledging those that wanted to speak. Mr. Wells felt the process went well, however, he didn't feel the Charter Review and State Hospital Re-Use articles should have been a part of Annual Town Meeting. He thought that discussion should have focused on items that were more financial in nature and then a Special Town Meeting in April to address Charter issues specifically so the Annual Town Meeting would have only taken one day with perhaps better attendance. Ms. Blumberg disagreed and felt that stretching Town Meeting to three times a year may take away the impact. Mr. Wells didn't want to have three annual Town Meetings every year but felt that this year was unique because of the Charter and State Hospital articles that were heavily edited on Town Meeting floor. He thought that these articles could have been pulled out and put in a Special Town Meeting warrant since we won't have Charter articles every year. Mr. Wells felt that if this happens again – such as with bylaws – we may want to take those articles out of the Annual Town Meeting

warrant. Mr. Rauch said that he noticed two issues that caused Town Meeting to slow down. One was for amendments since there was no efficient mechanism to capture changes made on the floor. Mr. Rauch felt it was clear that voters came to Town Meeting with the intent of making amendments, which he felt should have been written out beforehand and presented on a slide. He thought that if amendments were made on the fly that we should have someone available to type them out and get them up on the overhead screen for voters to review. Mr. Rauch noted that this may help control the focus of the discussion since when there were amendments to the amendments then discussion got off track as to what we were talking about. The second item Mr. Rauch wanted to discuss was controlling the input some residents had at Town Meeting since he thought some content did not relate to the issue. Mr. Arnold mentioned that he has heard this complaint from other groups and that he has started looking in to how much latitude the Town Moderator has at Town Meeting. Mr. Arnold pointed out that he sent an email to the Massachusetts Moderators Association to see how other towns handle this issue since he doesn't want to have 4 or 5 residents controlling Town Meeting debate. There was a discussion over how many times an individual can speak. Mr. Arnold mentioned that any resident can speak once on an issue, but when there are amendments, they can speak again. Ms. Howard felt that some residents wanted to talk about items that weren't germane to the issue. She also mentioned having white boards where words could be added to amendments and put up on the overhead screen. Ms. Howard added that there are volunteer openings on boards and committees and she felt that every meeting should begin with reminding residents of these opportunities. She also noted that "Open Forum" is available at these various board and committee meetings prior to Town Meeting, so if something is an issue, residents should be encouraged to attend since they may have a bigger impact earlier in the process. Mr. Arnold agreed with Ms. Howard's suggestions and said that he may try to post information on the Town's website in advance so residents know what to expect. Mr. Arnold pointed out that the Board of Selectmen determines what is added to the warrant and he runs the Town Meeting according to that. He mentioned that the Annual Town Meeting has traditionally dealt with financial issues but that some towns only have one Town Meeting. Mr. Arnold discussed partitioning off certain subjects and gave the example of how there was a Special Town Meeting about the new Fire Station a few years back. Mr. Arnold added that he felt attendance was good. Mr. Rauch noted that we tried to reorganize the reporting structure for some Town departments and boards in a room with 300 people - which we knew would be difficult. Mr. Arnold wanted to thank voters and was appreciative that they understood how the articles were structured. He also thanked the Charter Review Committee for breaking down their articles in to subsections within the main articles for easier voting. Mr. Arnold pointed out that he measures the efficiency and effectiveness of Town Meeting and not necessarily the speed; and he felt it went well.

Committee Resignations, End of Term, & Vacancies

Mr. Wells noted vacancies on the Finance Committee. He mentioned an unexpected resignation before Town Meeting. In addition, Ms. Blazejewski is leaving when her term is up in June due to other commitments, as well as Jim Tepper and Tara Howard. Mr. Wells pointed out that the AFC is a Committee of nine members so they would need five members in order to have a quorum. He asked Mr. Arnold if the Committee only contains five members if the quorum requirement changes. Mr. Arnold said that he will find out. He also mentioned meeting with each member of the AFC individually, and that he'll also start actively recruiting new people. Mr. Arnold pointed out that one of his more difficult tasks is finding qualified people for the Finance Committee and asked current members if they'll stay until he has their replacement. He mentioned that he has already started talking to people, however, he didn't realize he'd have this many vacancies. Mr. Wells noted that there are only two AFC meetings remaining in FY16, but that the July meeting is important since it involves end of year transfers. Ms. Blazejewski and Ms. Howard both said that they could stay through July if necessary. There was a question as to whether a member needs to be present physically at a meeting or if they can attend via phone or through video conferencing. Mr. Arnold said that he will check on both the quorum requirement and the question regarding physical presence at a meeting. Mr. Arnold wanted to remind viewers that it is not important to know a lot about municipal finance but rather have a desire to do well. He also mentioned the two year term for the Chairman of the AFC and that Mr. Wells is likely looking for someone to take over for him. Mr. Wells noted that the two year term for the Chairman isn't a rule but rather a guideline. He felt it took him almost two years to figure out the job's role and responsibilities, and having someone stay on and run the Finance Committee from a managerial

standpoint might make more sense. Ms. Jaffee pointed out that the majority of the Finance Committee will soon be new so it wouldn't be fair to ask a new person to be the Chairman, and with a complex Committee we may need someone to be the Chairman longer. Mr. Arnold said that he will reach out to AFC members individually to discuss what could be done better. Ms. Blumberg asked if there's training to become the Chairman. Mr. Wells noted that he is working on a manual, and also mentioned the job of Vice-Chairman as a transition to the Chairman position. Mr. Arnold offered to help run meetings as a non-voter if needed.

Budget & Warrant Articles – Review

Mr. Wells mentioned that he tried to schedule major departments to meet with the AFC well in advance prior to Town Meeting. He asked AFC members what went well and what could be changed. Ms. Blumberg felt that this year's preparations went smoother. Mr. Wells said that he eliminated Thursday nights in February and went an hour longer on Monday evenings instead. Ms. Howard thanked Mr. Wells for all of his hard work. Ms. Jaffee mentioned – that as someone new – she felt the meetings were very well organized and went smoothly. Mr. Rauch appreciated the departments scheduled in advance so everyone knew who was coming in. Ms. Blumberg noted the collaborative spirit of inviting Town departments in on a Tuesday night since they were already working late that evening.

Reports & Recommendations Book for ATM – Review

Mr. Wells pointed out that we went through 400+ copies of the R&R book. He offered to let School Superintendent, Amber Bock, use the left over R&R books for the high school's government classes. Mr. Wells asked about use of the "Dropbox" and the Committee felt that overall it went well since they liked having all of the documents in one place. Mr. Rauch noted that he lost track of revisions and which one was the most current. There was a discussion about having a date code in the title. Ms. Blumberg suggested having folders where documents would be located for specific meetings – such as these are the documents that will be discussed at the March 11th meeting. Ms. Howard agreed and mentioned that when she receives emails about School Committee meetings they have everything in one spot as far as what will be discussed and she can either print the documents or bring them up on her lap top. Mr. Wells acknowledged better organization. He asked about the attendance sheet and how everyone felt that worked. The Committee liked it and the ability to update it at any time. Mr. Wells noted that the next AFC meetings will be 5/2 and 6/6, and pointed out the meeting on Wednesday, July 13th for end of year transfers and the need for a quorum that night.

Committee Liaison and Department Liaison Reports

Charter Review Committee – Ms. Blazejewski pointed out that the Charter Review Committee completed the tasks they were assigned. The next step is for the Board of Selectmen (BOS) to dissolve this Committee, which she felt may have already occurred at the last BOS meeting.

Municipal Building Committee – Mr. Rauch commented on the DPW's snow budget and noted that they had a surplus of \$115,000. However, after today's snow, that figure will likely be reduced. He mentioned that the new Fire Station is in final close-out. Mr. Rauch noted that there is an excavation dispute that still needs to be resolved. He informed the Committee that the Punch List for the Town Hall is almost done and mentioned some roof issues that need to be fixed. Mr. Rauch thought that the excess bonds on both of these projects should be closed out in October or by next March. He also noted that both of these jobs came in under budget but the exact amounts are still unknown. Mr. Rauch pointed out that the Forbes Building project will go out to bid with construction starting in January 2017. Departments will be moved out of the Forbes Building in Q1 of 2017 and renovations should take about 12 to 18 months to complete. Mr. Rauch mentioned that Town Manager, Jim Malloy, is working on where to relocate Town departments and School administrative offices.

Pre-K to 3 School Building Committee – Mr. Wells noted that he was not at the last Pre-K to 3 School Building Committee meeting. He reviewed the minutes that were taken and sent to him. Mr. Wells said that a "Request for Proposal" (RFP) was issued for architectural services to place a dollar figure on approximately 14 possible options or scenarios that have been sketched out but not defined. They only received one bid back from HMFH

Architects who said they would do the work. Mr. Wells mentioned that it is a state law that any project with a cost in excess of \$1.5 million is required to have an Owner's Project Manager (OPM) hired and appointed. He said that the next step is to submit actual papers to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA), which will happen April 8th in order to get in the queue. Mr. Wells mentioned that they have already voted to submit these papers and they are ready to go. Some of the other suggestions that are part of the 14 include various options at Armstrong, Fales, and Hastings Elementary Schools to help alleviate stress on the Pre-K to 3rd grade classrooms. Mr. Wells pointed out that smaller jobs (costing less than \$1.5 million) wouldn't require an OPM. Mr. Wells said they are looking at the end of June to receive back the costs on the 14 options. Mr. Rauch asked if the Pre-K to 3 School Building Committee will come back at Special Town Meeting in October requesting more money. Mr. Wells felt that it may take the Committee more time to go through all of the options since there are still a lot of unanswered questions.

Comments and Concerns – Committee Members

None

Public Reminders for Viewers

None

Adjournment

Ms. Blazejewski made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 p.m. The vote to adjourn was 6-0-0 in favor, with 6 being present.

Document List

None

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Thomas,
AFC Administrative Assistant