

Westborough Advisory Finance Committee

Minutes of Meeting No.17, FY 2017

Monday, February 16, 2017

Members Present: Hank Rauch, Chair, Beth Blumberg, Vice Chair, Paul Huegel, Sean Keogh, Jim Driscoll, Phyllis Jaffee, Andrew Bradley, Gary Wells

Absent: Tom Blakely

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

Open Forum

There was no one present to address the Committee.

Approval of Past Minutes

There were no minutes prepared to be approved.

Article 14: Water – Capital Equipment & Projects

Derek Saari, the Conservation Officer and John Walden, Director of the DPW were on hand to make the presentation for Articles 14, 15 & 21.

Derek provided a presentation on the proposed areas to be surveyed and marked with boundary signs along with the necessary cleanup work on the watershed areas to maintain good drainage and flow within the watershed. Derek indicated that one of the primary reasons behind all the work required is to be in compliance with the DEP regulations.

There was back and forth general discussion with the committee.

Mr. Wells pointed out that the article wording did not reference any maintenance work to be done at all the various sites and something should be added where it was going to require 2 or 3 different sub-contractors to help perform this work.

Article 15: Drainage Maintenance

Derek provided a presentation on the proposed areas to be surveyed, marked with boundary signs and the necessary work on the outfall watershed areas to maintain good drainage. The big challenge in these areas is the access to the drainage collection areas and that it was going to require that some new service roads be cut.

There was back and forth general discussion with the committee.

Ms. Blumberg questioned Derek on communicating with abutters regarding a service road being cut along their boundary line with the watershed. Derek indicated that abutters were always contacted before any such type work begins.

Article 21: High School Drainage Swale

Derek provided a presentation on the proposed areas to be studied and evaluated, mainly the open drainage swale on the High School property and the watershed that feeds it. This drainage swale requires cleaning about every 3 to 5 years which is costly, could this be improved by permanently covering it.

There was back and forth general discussion with the committee.

Snow & Ice Deficit Spending

Mr. Wells called for an action by the committee before excusing the DPW for the evening.

The DPW has requested to be allowed to deficit spend the Snow & Ice Removal budget by \$100,000 in Expenses and \$50,000 in Wages. Mr. Wells pointed out that the DPW needs to have approval by the Town Manager and the Advisory Finance Committee to deficit spend these accounts and that this was not allocating any money and was only an authorization if required.

There was back and forth general discussion between the committee and Mr. Walden.

Mr. Wells moved the request and the committee approved the action to deficit spend. 8-0-0.

Article 9: Senior Center Software

Kristi William, Asst Town Mgr, and Alma Demanche, COA Director, appeared before the committee to discuss the new proposed Senior Center Software program. There was back and forth discussion regarding use and integration, surrounding towns that are using the same software program to track activity at the senior centers to better identify programs that are utilized or not utilized to their fullest. Concern was expressed by committee members for seniors who were not computer literate and might be intimidated by the new software program and whether or not alternative means would be available for helping them sign up. Alma expressed that while there may be some initial learning curves that all the seniors can rely on the staff to help with any signup issues.

Personal Changes

Kristi Williams reviewed some of the personnel changes for this year, increase and decrease in hours of various positions, increased positions for the Fire Department primarily with regards to the new dispatch reorganization that was approved at the last Fall Town meeting and a realignment of a captain's position to deputy chief's position. All in all there were no significant changes in the amount of personnel for the town.

New School Article

Steven Doret, School Committee Member, Chair of the PreK Committee and Chair of the Gibbons Committee appeared before the committee to present a new article for the feasibility study regarding the Fales school. Mr. Doret informed the committee that the town had been accepted into the MSBA program for this year based on our SOI and needs presented to the MSBA early this year and how fortunate we were to have been accepted so soon considering the needs of other communities in the state. This was attributed to the preparedness that Westborough had exhibited in the willingness to move this project forward.

The article is seeking funding of \$500,000 to prepare the feasibility study which has to be submitted to the MSBA in 180 days with the starting date of March 1, 2017. Mr. Doret pointed out that a similar feasibility study was required for the Gibbon's project and that the cost for that had been in the range of \$375,000 so he felt confident that the \$500,000 would be sufficient.

Articles 19, 20 & 22

Mr. Doret continued with discussions concerning Article 19 the Hastings Geothermal project and Article 20 the Armstrong Modular project, the need for these projects and how they are all tied together into the larger project being directed by the PreK committee to address the school's over crowding and future needs and the solutions. While the Fales school portion is seeking funding from the MSBA the other projects are being funded by Westborough directly to expedite their timing and completion. In both of these cases the Geothermal system at Hastings is failing and needs to be repaired, likewise the modulars at Armstrong are also failing and need to be replaced to provide the necessary classroom space for the PreK to 3 grade population.

There was back and forth discussion between committee members and Mr. Doret on various aspects of all of the projects going forward.

With regards to Article 22, Mr. Doret explained that this was a procedural article that would give the School Committee in conjunction with the Board of Selectmen to enter into lease agreements. While there were no pending lease agreements, the School Committee foresees the need to lease space specifically designated for the 18-22 year old population in the school system. Under certain SPED situations the school department is responsible for providing education and development for SPED students until the age of 22. This program is currently occupying space at the High School, it is expected to grow and there is not sufficient space available to accommodate this, plus there are advantages to moving this program out of the school for both the 18-22 year old SPED students and regaining the classroom space for the general population of the High School.

There was general back and forth discussion between committee members and Mr. Doret.

Committee & Liaison Reports

Ms. Blumberg gave a brief recap of the last School Committee meeting. There were no other committee or liaison reports.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Wells motioned to adjourn @ 9:15 p.m. Voted: 8-0-0

Document List:

Conservation Commission, Presentation, Articles 14, 15 and 21

Respectfully submitted:

Gary P. Wells – AFC Committee Member

Approved 03-13-17