

Westborough Advisory Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting No. 1 FY2008
July 9, 2007

Approved
September 17, 2007

Members Present: Ian Johnson, Chair, Judy Lucas, Cliff Watts, Ronn Moody, Jo Lown, John Arnold, Carolyn Spring, Denzil Drewry. Absent: none.

At 7:00 p.m. Mr. Johnson called the meeting to order in the Selectmen's Meeting Room.

Open Forum

There were no requests to address the Committee.

Approval of minutes –Meeting No. 28 FY2007

Mr. Watts moved approval of the minutes of Meeting No. 28, June 25, 2007. The vote to approve the minutes was 8 in favor with 8 members present.

Review and Voting of Various Budget Transfer Requests

There were no requests for transfers before the Committee. FY2007 has been closed.

Liaison Assignment

The Committee discussed continuations of prior year's liaison assignments and requests for changes and new assignments. The AFC Liaison Assignment List for FY2008 was completed and is attached hereto.

Reflections of FY2007, Discussion FY 2008 Goals

Mr. Johnson read from Mr. Harrington's memorandum of May 27, 2007 and summarized the three main points raised as: (1) the practice of listing the votes (in favor, against, abstentions) in Town Meeting booklet; (2) balancing the discussion at Town Meeting such that if the minority is asked to explain reasons, the majority should get equal time; and (3) requiring the minority to step away from the table when voicing opposition.

Mr. Drewry opened discussion by thanking Mr. Harrington for bringing these concerns and thoughts to the Committee's attention. The discussion and consensus among the Committee members was in favor of continuing to list the votes in Town Meeting. The reasons for doing so included the Committee's role to inform and advise, doing so encourages people to speak and ask questions, and citizens' stated interest in having this information before they vote. Mr. Drewry supports equal time for both sides and proposed that the majority speak first. Ms. Lown agreed that both sides of the issue should be fairly presented. She questioned whether the majority should speak first when a question is addressed to the minority. Mr. Arnold proposed the Chairperson speak first and explain how the question will be handled. It was noted that in prior years the Chairperson answered all questions posed to the AFC. Mr. Johnson pointed out that the liaison or a member on the minority side may be more informative. Ms. Spring stated that in past years the Committee decided in advance who would speak on each Article before Town Meeting. The Committee did not see the need for the minority spokesperson to step away from the table. In cases where a person is speaking solely as a citizen, he or she can preface his or her remarks as such.

The final consensus was that the AFC would continue listing the votes as it has been doing; it will ensure that both sides are given an opportunity to speak when the question is raised; the Chairperson will direct the question to the designated person, which will be discussed and decided prior to Town Meeting; and that the speaker for the minority need not move away from the table.

Mr. Johnson opened discussion on providing more comprehensive information to the voters in its comments in the booklet. Mr. Arnold plans to work on a primer on union contracts and personnel terms. He will look to the

Personnel Board as a resource. Mr. Johnson recommended the Committee run the draft by the Personnel Board for suggestions and accuracy. Mr. Johnson reminded the public that current union contracts are available for viewing in the Selectmen's office. Mr. Johnson suggested that the information of the final contract agreements include, in addition to the money, any other changes, such as step, insurance percentage paid, etc. Ms. Lucas expressed support for stating the percentages for insurance coverage by department in the booklet.

Liaison Updates & Comments and concerns of Committee members

Ms. Lucas will be in touch with the school department and arrange to meet with the new business manager. Mr. Johnson will follow up on matter raised by Mr. Watts regarding appropriation of funds approved at Town Meeting in Article 23 (removal of hazardous materials at the Vee Arc property); when the project is complete and finalized, the unspent funds should be addressed.

Mr. Johnson discussed the election of a new clerk, a position held by Ms. Howard for many years. The By-Laws allow the AFC to choose a clerk, who may, but need not, be a member of the committee. Mr. Johnson has confirmed that Ms. Dunkle (not present) is willing to assume the duties of this role. Mr. Johnson moved and the AFC unanimously voted to appoint Pamela Dunkle as clerk, with 8 being present.

Adjournment

At 7:40 p.m. Mr. Watts moved to adjourn the meeting. The vote to adjourn was unanimous (8 present and in favor).