

Members Present: Ian Johnson, Chair, Judy Lucas, Cliff Watts, Jo Lown, Denzil Drewry, John Arnold.
Absent: Ronn Moody, Brigitte Casemyr, Carolyn Spring.

At 7:10 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. 10, February 25, 2008, FY2008.

Mr. Arnold moved approval of the minutes of Meeting No. 10, February 25, 2008, FY2008. The vote to approve the minutes was 6 in favor with 6 members being present.

Budget and Article Review – Country Club Enterprise Fund

Dexter Blois and Paula Covino presented the Country Club Enterprise Fund budget of \$474,700, an increase of \$14,447 over last year's budget. The Country Club operating expenses are paid entirely from income from greens fees and memberships.

The increased expenses are mainly to update the Master Plan (Line 5700P), and for Capital Expenditures (Line 5700X) to improve drainage on Hole 2, improve the cart path and drainage on Hole 4, install a new Ladies Tee on Hole 5, and improve drainage on Hole 9.

Income is expected to offset all expenses, with a projected surplus of \$300. Greens fees collected depend on weather. Greens fees remain the same as last year. Membership fee will increase. League play brings in more in greens fees, and Charity Events also increase use of course. Total membership is limited to 130 members, with 70% Westborough residents and 30% non-residents. Currently there are 170 residents and 90 non-residents on the waiting list. Cost of membership is lower for Westborough residents than for non-residents.

The current Master Plan gave a list of items to address, many of which have been completed. The update to the Master Plan will be to look at making the best use of the land and the course. There is currently no plan to add holes or increase size of the course. USGA will provide a list of consultants from which the Country Club will solicit proposals.

Mr. Drewry noted that the Charity tournament fees have brought in \$8,000 to \$10,000 per year which is donated to town charitable organizations. For the tournament the 9-hole course is played twice, with the tees set in new positions for the second pass.

The Country Club uses the same contractor as the DPW, and gets the same rate negotiated by the DPW. The Country Club pays all costs for these services.

Budget and Article Review – Veteran's Services

George Perry presented the Veteran's Services budget request of \$60,384, an increase of 14.2% (\$7,504) over last year's budget.

Mr. Perry noted that the Department's caseload varied without warning and is hard to project as clients come and go. The cost of medical insurance has increased and Mr. Perry is paying higher co-payments for his clients. He can easily spend \$800 in one month for one client who is hospitalized. The cost of burying clients

who are indigent and die in a nursing home has also increased. Currently the budget line is \$2,000, with the State reimbursing 75% of the cost. This amount only covers one burial. The State may raise their limit to \$5,000, in which case the town would also need to raise the budget for this line. This payment is not much for the services required. Most funerals cost much more, and Mr. Perry relies on the good will of the local mortuaries and funeral homes to help keep his costs down.

Ms. Lown asked if this budget was too low. For the past several years, Mr. Perry has had to appear before the committee in March to ask for additional funds to cover his costs until the end of the year and he will need to do so this year as well. The committee suggested Mr. Perry might consider raising his request even if the funds are not used. Mr. Perry will come before the committee again at the end of March to request additional funds for FY08, and at that time will re-evaluate the FY09 budget.

Mr. Perry's current caseload is 9 veterans, although one just passed away. These are indigent clients who have no other source of funds and no other safety net.

Space at Pine Grove Cemetery currently includes 200 available plots in the Veteran's Grove and 7 plots in another section. These plots are for both veterans and their spouses. The veterans get the plot and the opening/closing site cost free of charge, the spouses get the plot fee of charge but must pay the opening/closing site cost. Mr. Perry is hopeful this space will be adequate for many years.

Budget and Article Review – Trustees of Soldier's Memorials

Thomas Doherty, Jr., presented the Trustees of Soldier's Memorials budget request of \$1,800, the same as last year. These funds go to buy flags, plants for memorials, miscellaneous ropes and lettering at memorials, and for Memorial Day costs. Flags cost \$115 for 2 6x10" flags, \$49 for 2 4x6" flags, \$48 for 5 4x6" POW flags. Last year the committee spent \$175 on plants for memorials and \$850 on Memorial Day.

There are currently some additional names to be added to the Gulf War Memorial. This memorial was paid for mostly by private donations, with only \$2,000 coming from the town budget.

Review of Draft Warrant

Article 6 and 7 are from the Personnel Board

Article 9 covers the regularly recurring requests

Ms. Lucas will ask about the two articles from the Assessor's Office

The Board of Selectmen will hear the Government Study Committee recommendations next Tuesday, and will determine what, if anything, needs to be added to the Warrant as a result of the committee's work.

The Committee went over the calendar of scheduled presentations and made recommendations.

Liaison Updates

- Mr. Arnold is in the process of scheduling meetings with committees to which he is liaison. He has met with the Library Committee, and attended the last Trustees Meeting held after their presentation to the AFC.
- Mr. Drewry spoke with Mr. Perry prior to his presentation. He has also spoken with Mr. Inman, Building Commissioner, concerning the Board of Appeals.
- Ms. Lown has not heard back from the Wastewater Treatment Plant Board. Ms. Lown will follow up with Mr. Walden on the snow budget. Committee members expressed appreciation for the quick response from the Coordinator's Office on the line item expense questioned at the last meeting. Ms. Lown will try to schedule a meeting with the DPW for the week of 3/17.
- Mr. Watts reiterated that there is no surprise in the Building Commissioner's budget, however the department will need supplemental funds for this year to cover a medical leave of one plumbing inspector.

- Mr. Watts and Ms. Lucas will contact Gene Carlo about the Inspector General's report on Assabet.
- Ms. Lucas spoke with Dr. Towle and has received the budget goals and calendar for the School Department budget, and gave the questions from Ms. Spring to Dr. Towle. Dr. Towle is very concerned about the electric bill, maternity leaves, retirements, and not having a settled teacher's contract. Dr. Towle also expressed her appreciation to the AFC for attending the School Committee's budget meetings last year.

Comments and Concerns of Committee Members

- Ms. Lucas noted the poor sound quality of the televised meetings. She has received many complaints saying that what is heard on the broadcast is mostly the sound of shuffling papers.
- Ms. Lown pointed out a Capital Expenditures request by the School Committee for \$180,000 for computer replacement in an Article. She questioned if this expense should be a capital expenditure or part of the operating budget.
- Mr. Arnold would like to try to include a "total cost of ownership" figure for each department which would include all costs associated with providing the service -- including the cost of insurance and debt principal and interest. The committee discussed the feasibility of this analysis. The committee also discussed the possibility that current State Laws may make this analysis impossible. Committee members will research this further.
- Ms. Lown checked her notes of older meetings and discovered that the description of the Role of the Finance Committee has not in fact been finalized. It was discussed at meetings over a year ago but never voted on, and should be discussed again at a future meeting.
- Mr. Johnson noted another request for deficit spending from the DPW. He will check with the DPW about the amounts before presenting it to a vote.

Adjournment

At 9:18 p.m. Mr. Watts moved to adjourn the meeting. The vote to adjourn was unanimous (6 members present and in favor).