

Westborough Advisory Finance Committee  
Minutes of Meeting No. 11 FY2007  
March 8, 2007

**Approved**  
**March 12, 2007**

Members Present: Ian Johnson, Chair, Jo Lown, Polly Howard, Cliff Watts, Judy Lucas, J. J. Malone (arrived 7:05 p.m.), Carolyn Spring (arrived 7:08 p.m.), Ronn Moody (arrived 7:17 p.m.) Absent: John Arnold.

At 7:04 p.m. Mr. Johnson called the meeting to order in the Selectmen's Meeting Room. Mr. Johnson directed committee members to look at the updates included in their folders. He also noted that the latest figure for the assessment for Assabet Valley Regional Technical School District is \$920,910.

### **Open Forum**

There were no requests to address the Committee.

### **Approval of minutes – Meeting No. 9, February 26, 2007**

After discussion to clarify the scope of the space needs analysis presented by the Municipal Building Committee, Mr. Watts moved approval of the minutes of Meeting No. 9, February 26, 2007. The vote to approve the minutes was 7 in favor with 7 members present.

### **Budget Review – Personnel Board**

Kathy Wilfert (Chairman), Robert Titus (Vice-Chairman), Christine Gundling, Lynn Watts, and James Parker, Jr., presented the proposed budget for the Personnel Board of \$53,730. They will have two articles in the town warrant. Expenses for FY2008 total \$49,547 and include:

- Training and Education, \$34,702.40
- Sick leave buy-back, \$3,500.00
- New hire physicals, \$3,650.00
- Membership dues and conferences, \$834.00
- Cash grant, \$6,860.00

Most of the budget is for educational reimbursement. Each employee may be reimbursed for no more than 12 credits / year. The figure is budgeted according to what has been requested at this time, and there is usually about a 10% change over the year. Reimbursement is made according to grade (an A in the course results in 80% reimbursement.) New hire physicals are for initial physicals only. The Cash Grant is to cover supplemental disability payment to Mr. Giblin.

The Board voted a 2.75% cost of living increase for salaried employees, which will add \$56,317 to the total salaries of non-union employees for the town. The Personnel Board does approve new positions added to town departments, however they do not approve funding of such positions. At this time they have only approved part-time positions for the Council on Aging, and Town Clerk has yet to present her specific request. One parking clerk position was eliminated. The Director of Veteran's Services salary was switched with the Assistant Director of Veteran's Services salary. The Hot Summer Nights wage has been put on a different scale. They have increased the "R" wage scale for temporary and seasonal employees.

### **Budget Review – Cultural Council**

Lynn Watts presented the proposed budget for the Cultural Council, which will be level funded at \$2,000. Last year the council was able to fund all qualified grant requests. Grants totaling \$6,595 were given to Westborough Community Chorus, \$1,000; Westborough Player's Club, \$1,500; Westboro Special Ed. Parent Group, Kaleidiscopes Theatre Night, \$750; Hundredth Town Chorus; Purchase of Choral Music, \$400; Assabet Valley Mastersingers, Inc., Pipes and Voices in Praise, \$750; Audio Journal, Inc., Arts Aloud!, \$250; Symphony Pro Musica Society, Inc., \$750; Westborough Public Library, The Art of the Pastel, \$395;

Westborough Public Library, An Evening Italian Stories, \$400; Women of Note, Keeping Harmony Alive in the Barbershop Style, \$400.

State funding was \$4,000 this year but next year is unclear. Projecting the Governor's initial budget would suggest a drop to \$3,700. The Council was started in the 1980s with money from the lottery. It is now funded from the travel and tourism budget. Grant applications are due October 15, and money is paid out after event is held and receipts are sent in. This is one of the only committees that is allowed to raise and hold funds, and \$595 from donations and holdings were used to supplement funds received last year.

### **Liaison Updates**

Mr. Watts reported on the school committee meeting held on March 7. Congratulations to the WHS hockey team, the cast and crew of "Guys and Dolls", and the WHS girls basketball team. There was a presentation by Representatives Polito, Peterson and Loscocco on school funding. The Elementary School Principals presented their budget requests. The Hastings School has the most diverse population and needs to teach both English language and American culture to students. The Armstrong has now completed the process of changing to a K-3 school, and is not requesting an increase in funds for supplies.

Ms. Spring reported on the school committee meeting held on February 28. They are requesting 6.2% increase in salaries, elimination of the school activity fees, reallocating some grant funds, adding 10 new positions. School Committee members questioned how each position will affect class size. Special Education transportation costs are now at \$20,000/student. These numbers are all estimates since it is difficult to predict how many students will register in each grade.

Mr. Moody reported that the DPW is expecting some step and lane increases, and they are also negotiating with the union.

Mr. Johnson reported that Joanne Savignac, Treasurer, is working on debt principal and interest figures for the town.

Dr. Malone reported that both MaryAnn Bilodeau and Henry Danis are ready to present their budget requests to the AFC.

Ms. Lown met with Carolyn Delude of the Library who would like to have the committee come for a site visit. The Library will have one Article in the warrant which will request funds for renovations in the Children's Room and she would like to show the AFC what work needs to be done. Ms. Delude has also received a notice that the air tank in the library needs to be fixed / replaced as it has failed an insurance inspection. She will check on the urgency of the problem, which will determine the response.

Ms. Howard has scheduled presentations for the Town Clerk, Planning Board, Youth and Family Services, Library, Assessors Office, and the Board of Health.

### **Comments and concerns of Committee members**

- Mr. Watts is concerned about the decision to borrow money for the Waste Treatment Plant for 30 years. Mr. Johnson questioned the 2% bond interest structure.
- Dr. Malone mentioned that the governor's budget is available at the Mass DOR web site under the Division of Local Services link. Cherry sheets are linked in the box on the right of the page. At this time there is a \$288,759 gain for Westborough, with a \$172,300 increase in Chapter 70 funding. This is very preliminary.
- Mr. Johnson noted that as of 3/2/07 there is a balance of \$168,723.48 in the snow removal budget. There will be an MMA discussion of town budgeting in Shrewsbury on 3/22 from 6 – 7:30 p.m. The 2006 street lists have arrived and can be picked up.

### **Adjournment**

At 8:30 p.m. Mr. Watts moved to adjourn the meeting. The vote to adjourn was unanimous (8 present and in favor).