

Members Present: Ian Johnson, Chair, Carolyn Spring, Cliff Watts, Ronn Moody, Jo Lown, John Arnold, Brigitte Casemyr, Judy Lucas (arrived 7:20 p.m.). Absent: Denzil Drewry.

At 7:08 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. 12, March 3, 2008, FY2008.

Two changes to the draft minutes were read. Mr. Arnold moved approval of the minutes, with the noted changes, of Meeting No. 12, March 3, 2008. The vote to approve the minutes was 6 in favor and 1 abstention, with 7 members being present.

Budget and Article Review – Board of Health

Paul McNulty, Director of Public Health, presented the Board of Health budget request of \$263,844, an increase of \$7,963 over last year's budget. The salary increases includes only those approved by the Personnel Board or negotiated in union contracts. The expenses are level-funded at \$14,600.

Estimated revenues are \$62,500. The revenues include general permits and insurance reimbursements for providing flu clinics.

Line 5219 Professional Services, \$5,500, is mostly used for mosquito monitoring and control. The funds are usually spent in July when the service is most necessary. The main mosquito control efforts are provided by the Central Massachusetts Mosquito Control Project.

Line 5245, Other Professional Services, \$5,500, is used to pay visiting nurses to staff the flu clinics and to provide follow-up on tuberculosis cases.

Budget and Article Review – Sanitary Landfill

Paul McNulty, Director of Public Health, presented the Sanitary Landfill budget request of \$744,180, a decrease of \$3,820 over last year's budget. The rates for trash disposal by Wheelabrator were renegotiated last year, and with the expected 2% increase for inflation, will be \$69.08/ton as of 7/1/08. This is below the market rate (charged to private haulers) of \$90.00/ton. E.L. Harvey's charge for trash removal (operating the transfer station and hauling the trash to Wheelabrator) has increased for the first time in five years to \$36.00/ton. The contract with Wheelabrator is for 20 years. The contract with E.L. Harvey is for one year.

While this expense appears to be the same as last year, there is no longer any revenue from E.L. Harvey paid to the town for use of excess capacity in the town's contract. Under the prior 20 year contract with Wheelabrator, the town had been required to send 12,000 tons/year to the facility. As recycling decreased the amount of trash the town produced, E.L. Harvey agreed to send trash to Wheelabrator using the town's permit to make up the difference and paid the town for this. The current contract does not have a minimum tonnage requirement, and so E.L. Harvey no longer is allowed to use the town's permit. This represents a loss of revenue to the town of approximately \$200,000.

Recycling does save the town money. The town pays E.L. Harvey to provide a yard waste shredding/composting operation for town residents. The town pays for recycling of TV sets and computer monitors. These items cannot be put in to the regular trash. There may be an increase in this cost when TV

becomes fully digital and analog sets get replaced. The town also pays for recycling in the schools and town office buildings. This expense line is level-funded at \$113,700.

Revenues from dump stickers are budgeted at \$120,000. The Board of Health is proposing a fee increase to \$80.00 for the first sticker and \$40.00 for the second sticker. Each sticker will still be good for two years. Senior citizens (age 60 and above) will continue to get a discounted rate at half price. This increased fee is still lower than what is charged in most other Massachusetts towns. Dump stickers go on sale May 3rd. Recycling-only stickers are free, and include yard waste for private citizens. No commercial use is allowed at the town facility. Board of Health officials regularly monitor levels of all recycling. If the number of TVs and computer monitors increases greatly, they may try to recover some of the cost by instituting a fee for this particular service. The Board of Health does not want to discourage recycling, however. All stickers can be ordered by mail.

ARTICLE 9. Regularly Recurring Articles (Town Coordinator)

G. (Board of Health)

This article requests \$16,000 for the purpose of holding a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day. These funds will allow the collection of household hazardous waste from 7:30 a.m. until noon, on a day to be scheduled in the fall. Last year the day drew about the same number of people, but each person brought less waste so the cost was lower.

Mercury thermometers, NiCad batteries, lead cell batteries, button cell batteries, and florescent light bulbs can be brought to the Board of Health office for recycling at any time. Florescent bulbs can also be brought to the attendant at E.L. Harvey or to Village Lumber for recycling.

Role of Finance Committee Discussion

Mr. Johnson told committee members of his discussion with Joe Harrington about the poor sound quality at meetings. Mr. Harrington, who watches the meetings regularly, has noted several factors making the broadcasts hard to understand, including the amount of paper shuffling, as well as having more than one committee member speaking at the same time, and whispered side conversations between committee members. New equipment is waiting to be installed in the Selectmen's Office which should improve both the picture and sound quality of the broadcasts.

Ms. Lown passed out copies of the minutes of AFC meetings held on 3/6/06 and 3/16/06, which included discussion of the role of the Advisory Finance Committee, and a copy of the role of the AFC as defined in the Town Charter. After some discussion, the AFC determined that the comments made in 2006 should be consolidated into one overall statement. After Town Meeting, the committee will continue this discussion, including research into other models for Advisory Finance Committees, to prepare for next year. Committee members noted that the AFC is obligated to make decisions on recommendations, and that the forum for citizens to voice their opinions is at Annual Town Meeting. The committee will also survey town members to find out how communication between the committee and town members could be improved.

Liaison Updates

- Mr. Arnold met with the Treasurer and the Town Clerk. Next year there will be three elections. Ms. Yendriga may not need to present her budget as it is very similar to last year. She has not added personnel. She may need to buy new vote tabulation machines (one for each precinct) for the 2010 election, but not in this year's budget. The Treasurer will make a presentation to the committee. She pointed out that any increases to the Wastewater Treatment Plant borrowing must also be approved by Shrewsbury Town Meeting. She is also checking with the Water Pollution Abatement Trust (WPAT) about the interest rate available for an increased borrowing. Mr. Arnold is scheduled to meet with Joe Lawrence of the MIS/GIS Department soon.

- Ms. Lown noted that Earthtek is expecting the WPAT to include the requested \$9.5 million in the current rate of 2%.
- Mr. Moody reported that the budget presentation by the DPW is tentatively scheduled for Monday March 10 at 8 p.m.
- Ms. Lucas reported on the initial School Committee budget meeting held Wednesday 3/5, and will get copies of handouts to AFC committee members before 3/10 meeting. Ms. Lucas noted that the budget being presented is the Superintendent's request, not the School Committee budget. The requested increase is 6.57%. This seems to include decreased enrollment and increased personnel. Two union contracts have not been settled. The request is \$500,000 more than level service, with most of the increase in fixed costs including grounds maintenance, utilities, and transportation. Ms. Lucas has again been thanked for the AFC attendance at the School Committee budget meetings.
- Ms. Spring pointed to the updated Police Department budget. This includes the recent union contract settlement. The Police Department is also requesting to replace two vehicles.
- Mr. Johnson has met with Maryanne Bilodeau, who will present the town budgets including Town Insurance, Selectmen, Animal Control, Buildings and Grounds, Central Purchasing, Communications, Street Lights, and Weights and Measures. Ms. Bilodeau will have a breakdown of insurance costs. Mr. Johnson will speak with the Town Accountant about her budget, and ask if she would like to make a presentation to the committee.

Comments and Concerns of Committee Members

Mr. Johnson alerted committee members to the report from the Youth & Family Services, the updated Snow budget, and the new calendar of meetings in the folders.

Adjournment

At 8:35 p.m. Mr. Watts moved to adjourn the meeting. The vote to adjourn was unanimous (8 members present and in favor).