

Members Present: Jo Lown, Chair, Bill Linnane, Christine Hirsch, Judy Lucas, Cliff Watts, John E. Arnold, Brigitte Casemyr, Michael Meachen. Absent: Ian Johnson.

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

Open Forum

Anna Tortora spoke in support of the Westborough Youth and Family Services, and against cuts the department is facing in the FY2010 budget. Ms. Tortora commended the counseling provided by Youth and Family Services, and thanked them for their service in her time of need. She feels budget cuts should come from another area of the town's budget, as these services are vital to the community.

Ms. Lown thanked Ms. Tortora for her comments. She thanked the Town employees, committees and boards, and Henry Danis, Town Manager, for preparing and providing three budgets this year. She noted that the level funding budgets submitted by the departments and the Town Manager's recommendations both result in balanced budgets without need for an override.

The Committee will review all the articles and budgets and will also be considering the impacts that the various choices may have on town services. This includes impact on the employees who deliver those services, the citizens who receive those services and taxpayers who pay for those services. The Committee will hear from the departments, boards, and commissions and will deliberate and vote on its recommendations later in the process. The dates for voting will also be posted in advance. Anyone is welcome to attend. Ms. Lown noted that it is the voters who attend Town Meeting who make the final decisions and encouraged everyone to attend the Annual Town Meeting in May.

FY10 Budgets and Articles

Historical Commission

Paula Skog and Don Shapleigh, Co-Chairs of the Historical Commission, gave an overview of the work of the commission and presented the FY10 budget request. The commission works to preserve the history of the town by providing aid to town homeowners to help navigate the town's sign bylaws and demolition delay bylaws, and by maintaining an archeological collection. The Westborough Historical Commission is one of only five commissions in the state that serves as a repository for archeological artifacts.

The Historical Commission has cut their expenses over the last three years, from \$17,400 in FY07 to \$7,125 for FY10. There are currently no major archeological projects in town so Professional Services has been decreased to \$1,400. Other Supplies has been used mostly for having plaques made to define Historical areas, and these have now been completed, so the budget request has been decreased to \$500. Other Professional Services remains at \$4000, as these services are to provide gravestone repair and will continue. There is no significant impact from these cuts, and the commission may be able to cut another \$1000 that has been budgeted to move items currently stored at the Nathan Fisher House to another storage area. The DPW may be able to move the items without incurring additional costs.

Salaries and wages for the Commission Executive Secretary have also been cut in the Coordinator's recommended budget, from 19 hours per week to 12 hours per week. Currently the Commission office is open Monday through Thursday for 4 hours per day, and Friday for 3 hours. If the staff is cut to 12 hours per week the office will only be able to open 4 days, for 3 hours, each week. The Commission would like to be able to staff the office for 15 hours per week in order to be open 5 days each week. The secretary is the first contact

with the Commission for most visitors. Public contact includes explaining the process for getting approval, and handing out guidelines, for signs in the downtown and historic areas; explaining the procedure for getting demolition approval and handing out delay requirements; processing both types of applications and approval forms; providing information about National Historic Districts, history on particular homes in town, resources for homeowners doing research, and providing names of preservationists, restoration salvage companies, painters, etc. to homeowners; as well as the general office duties including posting meetings, drafting agendas and preparing minutes of monthly meetings, responding to email and phone messages, picking up the mail at Town Hall, and expediting payment of bills approved by the commission. Keeping the office open provides time for residents to view the archeological and historical artifacts and to do genealogical research in the office. The funds to maintain level service for this position at 19 hours would be \$23,307, the Coordinator's recommendation of 12 hours would be \$14,720, and the Commission's compromise request of 15 hours would be \$18,400.

Warrant ARTICLE 10. Nathan Fisher House Property Release of Preservation (Board of Selectmen), ARTICLE 11. Nathan Fisher House Property Deed Preservation Restriction (Historical Commission), and ARTICLE 12. Nathan Fisher House Property Demolition Delay By-Law (Historical Commission) in Draft-1 dated February 23, 2009.

These Articles are a second attempt at the 2007 Article which did not pass the State Legislature. The Board of Selectmen and the Commission have been working with Greg Franks, Town Counsel, to re-draft the Articles to address any problems noted by the legislature. Representative Karen Polito has been helping with this process.

Ms. Casemyr asked if any of the information disseminated by the Executive Secretary is available on-line, and if the Commission has explored a possible cooperative arrangement with any other department. Ms. Skog replied that not much of the information is posted on the web site, although one of the volunteer members of the Commission has offered to start this process. A cooperative arrangement would make the forms and pamphlets available when the office is closed, but the specific expertise and knowledge of these issues would not be available at another office.

Youth & Family Services

John Badenhausen, Director, Michelle Grasso, Chair, Youth Commission, Andy Rosenshine, and Kristin French, Youth Commission members, and Oscar Najarian, Senior Volunteer, presented the Youth and Family Services FY10 budget request.

Westborough Youth and Family Services Department (WYFS) provides crisis counseling services to at-risk youth and their families who have no other resources. Last year they helped 139 people in 81 families. They also provide prevention services in the form of the Hot Summer Nights program, Babysitter Training, Depression Screening Day, Westborough Schools Community Health Day, YMCA Health Kids Day, Preschoolers Family Fun Day, and information and referrals to other community programs. Last year over 1,000 people contacted their offices. Current staffing includes a Full Time Director, 2 Part time Counselors, 1 PT Administrative Assistant, and 1 seasonal Youth Activities Coordinator for Hot Summer Nights. The program gets referrals from the school district, the police department, and the courts.

This program serves the neediest kids and families in town. They do not bill insurance for their services, as it would require much staff time and many of the people they see do not have benefits that would pay for their services. They do not feel it is possible to increase the fees for the counseling services. They have raised fees for the Hot Summer Nights program and the Babysitter course.

A level-funded budget for this department would cost \$160,842, and would result in a decrease of 2.5 client hours and 1.5 administrative hours per week. The Coordinator's recommendation is for \$108,267, a decrease of \$52,575, which would result in the loss of one counselor, the administrative assistant, and the Youth

Activities Coordinator. These staff cuts would eliminate the Hot Summer Nights program, the Holiday Store, the Youth Diversion Program, and the Babysitter Training, decrease available counseling services by 30 - 45%, and limit the ability of the department to provide quick crisis response.

Last year, the department provided 1,400 clinical hours, an increase of 300 clinical hours over the prior year. They currently do not have a waiting list but at times over the last year clients have had to wait several weeks for an appointment. As economic shortages continue to impact families, the need for these services is increasing. State services in this area have also been cut. The Police Department has seen an increase in domestic violence calls resulting in more referrals to Youth and Family Services. Youth and Family Services is the treatment of last resort.

Much information about available services is on-line, but referrals are done personally to fit the referral to the client's needs. The Administrative Assistant is the first point of contact for the public.

The Hot Summer Nights program and the Babysitter Training have charged fees which are put into a revolving fund to pay for supplies. There is currently a surplus in this account which the department would like to use to pay any department expenses, if those funds could then be shifted to the salary and wages budget. The department's core service is the counseling it provides, and this requires staff.

Mr. Linnane, AFC liaison to the department, presented a letter of support from Betheda Shuman, Westborough resident and WYFS Counselor. Ms. Shuman pointed out that the WYFS supports the community in many ways that are not always seen by others. For example, a troubled student in school has the potential to seriously impact not only the classroom, but also the entire school, his neighborhood and his family. The WYFS also heads the local Human Services Alliance, and provides information to the community about counseling, school issues, housing, financial assistance, food, transportation, youth activities, and state benefits. Ms. Shuman stated that in her opinion the services provided by WYFS are very valuable to the town and something the community should be proud of. She noted that the WYFS does many things all year long, in addition to the summer program, and she can't see any that aren't needed.

Mr. Arnold asked for a timeline of how the department has evolved over the years. Mr. Arnold also asked the WYFS to provide a possible compromise between the Coordinator's recommendation and level-funding. Ms. Lown invited the WYFS to come back to another AFC meeting to discuss their budget further.

Cultural Council

Lynn Watts and Jennifer Silverberg presented the Cultural Council budget request of \$2,000. In 2009, these funds combined with \$4,300 from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, were used to award 15 grants to partially fund events to be held in Westborough which are open to the public and handicapped accessible. Grant recipients (and event) included Symphony Pro Musica Society (*Spring Time! concert*), Maryann Pietropaulo (*Vivaldi Cello Concerto Festival Concert*), Westborough Public Library (*Roger Bruno's "A Celebration of Song – The American Songbook and Beyond"*), Westborough Community Chorus (*annual spring concert*), Assabet Valley Mastersingers, Inc. (*Poetry in Song concert*), Westborough Community Land Trust (*Snakes of Massachusetts and Beyond*), Rebecca Minucci (*HeART Reading Program*), Hundredth Town Chorus (*purchase music*), Gregory Maichack (*How to Pastel Paint as Impressionists: Monet's Magic Garden*), Marcia Smith (*Revolutionary War history program for 5th grade students at Mill Pond*), Audio Journal (*"Our Towns"*), Worcester County Horticultural Society (*City Spaces/Country Places Garden Tour*), Apple Tree Arts (*children's production of Rock on with Schoolhouse Rock*), Studio Ballet of Hudson (*Peer Gynt performance with Symphony Pro Musica*), Richard Clark (*as Ernest Hemingway in "Life, Language & the Pursuit of Happiness"*), and Arts in Common.

The Cultural Council has also been raising funds to provide seed money for an Arts fair to be held October 3, 2009. This event will bring the community together for one day, and will feature performances by local

groups, workshops, cooking demonstrations, and art exhibits. So far 25 groups have expressed interest in this event, and the Council has gotten several corporate sponsors. State funding for FY09 was not finalized until February 2009 and all funds have been committed. Next year's state funding is very uncertain.

Library

The Committee received a request and agreed to reschedule review of the Library budget at a later date.

Recreation Department

Frank DeSiata, Director, presented the Recreation Department budget request. A level-funded budget for the Department would be \$218,321, and the Coordinator's recommendation is \$183,808. Currently, all supplies for the department are paid out of the Revolving Account with funds generated from program fees. The FY10 budget was decreased by moving the remainder of the seasonal and temporary salary to the revolving account expenses. Each program offered will be evaluated to look for ways to cut expenses or raise fees. The department has renegotiated service contracts with several third party program providers to get more money returned to the town. The department may need to eliminate a few programs that aren't well subscribed.

The Department concurs with the Coordinator's recommendation. This budget shift may be a struggle, but as they can generate funds through fees they should be OK. Currently, there is no family cap on fees. They do offer scholarships / fee waivers based on need. Several local groups (including the Men's and Women's Softball Leagues) donate money to the department each year specifically to provide scholarships to kids.

Current revolving account balance is approximately \$95,000, with expenses from the basketball program still to be paid. There are no capital construction projects currently. They have been able to use donations for many capital projects in recent years, and the town resources are now in good shape.

Approval of minutes – Meeting No. 13, February 19, 2009.

Mr. Watts moved to approve the minutes of meeting No. 13, February 19, 2009. The vote to approve the minutes was 7 in favor and 1 abstention (Hirsch), with 8 being present.

Warrant Articles

Ms. Lown read a summary of articles included in the draft warrant. Mr. Arnold pointed out that the total of the articles is more than what was anticipated, and more than the last excess levy capacity estimate. Ms. Lown reported that Westborough also submitted requests for federal stimulus monies for the public safety facility, the wastewater treatment plant upgrade and several DPW items. These items are on the state's list of "Unreviewed" shovel-ready projects. They are:

Sewer System Study and Evaluation	\$463,000
East Main/Beechmont Street Sewer Pump Sta. Rehb	\$600,000
Low Pressure Main Replacement	\$1,300,000
Public Safety Facility	\$30,382,621
WWTP	<u>\$67,000,000</u>
	\$99,745,621

The state list of reviewed projects does not include any municipal projects at this time. Only state projects have been reviewed.

Liaison Updates

Mr. Watts reported that the School Committee will begin budget meetings on March 11. Mr. Watts and Ms. Lucas will meet with Assabet Valley Regional Vocation H.S. District on Thursday.

Ms. Lown spoke with Maryanne Bilodeau and got the Vehicle Safety Policy which the town uses. Some cars are approved for 24 hour use, including safety vehicles. Having the Safety Policy resulted in savings on insurance.

Mr. Arnold has met with all his committees.

Ms. Casemyr reported that the WWTP will provide more information after their next meeting. The Board of Selectmen has declined to put an Article for the Public Safety Building on the Warrant for May ATM, and will wait for a Special Town Meeting. Dexter Blois has given a very rough estimate of \$30 million for the building.

Mr. Meachen reported that his departments are all ready to present their budget request if necessary. While all departments are invited to make a presentation if they want, committee consensus was that the Veterans Services, Personnel Board, and Trustees of Soldiers Memorials did not need to do so, but the Town Clerk budget and Article should be presented. Mr. Arnold requested a written explanation of the salary increases in Warrant Articles 6 and 7 from the Personnel Board, in lieu of a presentation.

Town Meeting Booklet

Mr. Johnson had distributed historical budget figures for each department going back several years. Mr. Johnson had also written an article for publication explaining how the Advisory Finance Committee works. They will be discussed at the next meeting. Ms. Lown has sent out press releases including agendas to local news outlets.

Ms. Lown requested committee members think about what needs to be highlighted in the ATM booklet as presentations are being heard. She also asked committee members to begin thinking about what graphs might be useful to include in the booklet.

Comments and Concerns of Committee Members

Mr. Watts reported that Congressman Jim McGovern has kept \$500,000 in the federal budget for funding for the Wastewater Treatment Plant. This is good news, although the amount seems small when compared to the total cost of the project.

Ms. Lown called attention to the latest appropriation report in members' folders, and the invitation to a fundraiser sponsored by the Newcomer's Club.

Mr. Linnane suggested adding time to each presentation scheduled for future meetings.

Adjournment

At 9:18 p.m. Ms. Lucas moved to adjourn the meeting. The vote to adjourn was unanimous, 8 in favor with 8 being present.