

Members Present: Ian Johnson, Chair, Judy Lucas, Cliff Watts, Ronn Moody, Jo Lown, John Arnold, Brigitte Casemyr, Carolyn Spring (arrived 7:12 p.m.). Absent: None.

At 7:06 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.

Mr. Johnson listed items in committee members' folders.

### **Approval of minutes –Meeting No. 14, March 10, 2008, FY2008.**

Approval of minutes was deferred until the next scheduled meeting.

### **Snow & Ice Budget Deficit Spending Requests**

Committee reviewed a request to allow deficit spending on the Snow Budget, Wages of an additional \$5,000, and to allow deficit spending on the Snow Budget, Expenses of an additional \$33,000. Ms. Casemyr moved acceptance of this request. The vote to approve the deficit spending request was 7 in favor, with 7 members being present. The total deficit spending authorization to date is \$233,000 for the Snow Budget, Expenses, and \$75,000 for the Snow Budget, Wages.

### **Budget and Article Review – Police Department**

Allan Gordon, Chief of Police, presented the Police Department budget request of \$2,626,297, an increase of 2.9% over last year's budget. The salary increase of 3.0% includes a decrease of one clerical civilian dispatcher and an increase of one PT temporary Technology Specialist for a maximum of 500 hours per year. The Personnel Board has approved this position. Increases in salary are contractual. The Fitness Stipend has increased by one person (\$750) due to a retirement. Shift differential increase is due to collective bargaining agreement, and covers the same hours at a higher rate.

Expenses include an increase in dues for the Massachusetts Police Chiefs Association and an increase in the negotiated clothing allowance. Membership in the Massachusetts Police Chiefs Association offers training, networking, and lobbying at the State level, and is valuable to the department.

Police Department staff has 36 members. Chief Gordon was asked to consider ways to conserve fuel. The Department has been trying to use the motorcycle more frequently. The Department does not wish to become a reactive department, only responding to calls, so needs to have officers in patrol cars driving around town. The Department is working on this, however, and is more cognizant of fuel use.

Chief Gordon was asked about plans to enforce the Jet Ski ban on Chauncy Lake. The Department will use money from the Community Policing Fund. They will patrol the launch ramp. They will make an effort to educate the public and there will be signs listing rules of use posted at the ramp. They will work with the State Dept. of Fish and Game to patrol the state property around the lake. The State Environmental Police will be patrolling. The Sutton Police Department has offered to help using their boats.

### **Budget and Article Review – ARTICLE 9. Regularly Recurring Articles (Town Coordinator)**

**E. (Police Department)** Requesting \$69,855 to purchase two police vehicles and related equipment. The new vehicles will replace two 4-wheel drive vehicles, a 1997 Chevy Blazer and a 2000 Ford Explorer, each of which is expected to have at least 100,000 miles of use by the time of Annual Town Meeting. Both of these

vehicles would be traded in rather than kept for an alternate use. All police vehicles are bought through the MHQ Municipal Headquarters Vehicles at state bid rates. Chief Gordon's current vehicle, a 2005 Crown Victoria, will be transferred to the Detectives to replace the Chevy Blazer. Chief Gordon is looking at a Ford Taurus which will get better gas mileage, and will have all-wheel drive. Data terminals in old cruisers generally need to be upgraded by the time the cruisers are replaced. The Police Department just received a donation of one laptop computer valued at \$4,500 from the Westborough Civic Club to replace a broken laptop. The new Ford Expedition will be used for patrol and will have 4-wheel drive. The Department needs the larger vehicle to carry equipment (radios, rifles, etc.) and to use as a mobile command post.

Vehicles are left idling only when needed to run the flashing light bar.

The rifles purchased three years ago are in good condition and everyone is very pleased with them. They are mostly used for training twice each year.

### **Budget and Article Review – Cultural Council**

Lynn Watts, Chair, Jennifer Silverberg, and Helena Engberg presented the Cultural Council's budget request of \$2,000, level-funded from last year. The Cultural Council combines these funds with funding from the Massachusetts Cultural Council to provide grants and cover administration costs. Last year's grantees include: Assabet Valley Mastersingers, Inc., \$1,000; Audio Journal, Inc., for *Cultural Eyes Radio*, \$250; Richard Clark, for *And Now Mark Twain*, \$250; Jennifer and Colin White, for *Coolhead Luke and Other Stories*, \$150; Gregory Maichack, for *The Art of the Pastel II: the da Vinci Mode*, \$395; Maryan Pietropaolo, for *Vivaldi Cello Concerto Concert*, \$300; John Root, for *Popular Music of the Gaslight Era*, \$250; Symphony Pro Musica, for *Celebrating Us*, \$750; Westborough Community Chorus, to support a Chorus Show Production, \$1,000; Westborough Community Land Trust, for *Preserving our Habitat Earth Day 2008*, \$200; Westborough Player's Club, for *Seussical the Musical*, \$1,000; and Women of Note, for *Keeping Harmony Alive in the Barbershop Style*, \$200. Grants given last year totaled \$5,745.

The Cultural Council would like to expand their offerings to include a Coffee House series and an Arts and Cultural Fair. According to the Massachusetts Cultural Council, every \$1 spent on the arts brings \$5 into the community. All grants given by the council go to local organizations and individuals.

State funding is a line item in the state budget and is not contingent on town funding contributions. The Council is estimating \$4,000 from the state. The Cultural Council can accept private donations. They also collect money at one of the Willows Summer Concerts.

Lynn Watts has been awarded a Leadership Circle Award at the Local Cultural Council 2008 Statewide Assembly, organized by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, and held March 12<sup>th</sup> in the Great Hall of Flags at the State House with a reception later at the ICA. Ms. Watts was one of six people from across the state to be given this award.

### **Liaison Updates**

- Ms. Lucas reported on the School Committee budget meeting held Tuesday. The School Committee has reviewed this year's budget to date.
  - Technology expenses at \$245,550 fixed cost.
  - In the current Transportation contract there is no surcharge for increased fuel costs.
  - Full-day kindergarten is requested more frequently than ½ day, and lotteries are being held for Fales and Hastings Elementary Schools.
  - Projected 32 student decrease is across all 12 grades.
  - Tuition will be raised 3% for preschool and for full-day kindergarten. No increases are planned for Community Education offerings or for Activity Fees.

- Westborough spends \$130/teacher on Curriculum and Professional Development. The state average is \$193/teacher.
- Principles will begin presenting individual school budgets next week.
- Current Payroll and Transportation Coordinator is retiring. School Department is looking at this position as it is difficult to find one person with this combination of skills.
- Budget presented is the Superintendent's preliminary budget, not the School Committee's final budget.
- Ms. Lucas will wait until after March 25<sup>th</sup> to schedule Assabet Valley Regional Technical School District.

### **Budget and Article Review – Personnel Board**

Kathy Wilfert, Chair, Lynn Watts, James Parker Jr., and Christine Gundling presented the Personnel Board's budget request of \$53,165, a decrease of \$565 from last year's budget. Salaries and wages request includes one step increase. Expenses are budgeted to be \$909 lower than last year. Training and Education for town employees (\$39,878) is budgeted based on submitted requests by employees. This is a union negotiated benefit for tuition reimbursement. Courses do not need to be job related, but do require students to achieve good grades. Westborough employees who take advantage of this benefit have proven to be very motivated students who achieve As and Bs consistently.

The Board is not currently aware of any Sick Leave Buy-Back pending so no funds have been budgeted. The Sick Leave Buy-Back is for retirees who have accumulated a minimum of 100 days of sick leave by the time they retire. The benefit pays up to \$2,500 per employee.

### **Budget and Article Review – ARTICLE 6. Amend Salary Administration Plan (Personnel Board).**

Changes requested are to eliminate an unfunded Maintenance Persons position in the DPW, to increase the requirements and the salary for Seasonal Help in the DPW, and to add the temporary Information Technology Specialist position in the Police Department.

### **Budget and Article Review – ARTICLE 7. Amend Section 25 Wage and Salary Schedule (Personnel Board)**

This is to increase the pay scale for the 29 non-union employees on the town's payroll. The increase of 3% is the average of the union increases last year. There is a 5% increase between steps. The AFC requested information on the legality and feasibility of giving the 3% increase only to those employees who are at Max Step, which the Personnel Board will research.

Members of the Personnel Board belong to the Central Massachusetts Employers Association and the Massachusetts Municipal Personnel Association (MMPA) which publish information on town salary rates. Salaries are re-evaluated every five years. Westborough's pay scale has tended to be in the middle of the pay range offered by comparable towns. The re-evaluation takes one year, and is done by job description only.

Ms. Spring asked the Personnel Board for their opinion on ARTICLE 28. Department Head Employment Contracts (Board of Selectmen). The Personnel Board consensus is that they are more comfortable with the newest version of this article than they were with the original version, but they are divided. This change would affect the DPW Manager only. The Board will pass along their decision when it is made.

### **Liaison Updates**

- Mr. Arnold reported that the Government Study Committee is working through a draft of revised recommendations to present to the Board of Selectmen.
- Ms. Casemyr will meet with Alma DeManche tomorrow.

- Ms. Lown met with the Wastewater Treatment Plant Board members and Chris (operator), Tom (Earthtek), and Jack Goodhall about the Article. Shrewsbury expects to make its final decision on the project revisions when the bids are opened on 5/8. The WWTP Board will meet on 5/14 to make its final decision. The Board believes the entire project, with all revisions, is eligible under the SRF for borrowing at 2% for 20 years. (If at a 30 year term, a higher rate of around 2.5 or 2.6% applies.) They do not expect the additions to impact the Town's bonding or borrowing capacity. The state is the actual borrower. Ms. Savignac is working on the cash flows and the Committee will seek her input on the borrowing costs. The impact on Westborough's water/sewer rates is also being calculated by the Town. Because the DEP and the EPA forced the timing of the WWTP project, it had to be submitted at last year's Town Meeting before all information was available. The proponents will explain the chronology, priorities, and cost benefits when they appear before the Committee.
- Mr. Arnold requested a discussion on the obligation of the AFC if the levy capacity is surpassed at ATM.

### **Adjournment**

At 9:10 p.m. Mr. Watts moved to adjourn the meeting. The vote to adjourn was unanimous (8 members present and in favor).