

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

At 7:03 p.m. Ms. Lown called the meeting to order in the Selectmen's Meeting Room.

Open Forum

There were no requests to address the Committee.

FY10 Budgets and Articles

MIS/GIS

Mark Stockman, MIS/GIS Director, presented the budget request for FY10. The MIS/GIS Department supports computers in all town departments except schools, and maintains the town's web site including the GIS pages. The budget is level funded, with a reduction in hours for the part-time position from 10 hours per week to 4, and a slight decrease in expenses. Expenses include a decrease in repair/maintenance of computers, a decrease in training and education, an increase in contract services (for MEC internet services, firewall, and content filter, Virtual Town Hall web hosting, and AFI GIS data hosting), and increases in software maintenance. Ms. Casemyr noted that the reduction of hours was expected, and is due mostly to the hiring of a full-time director.

The town follows a repair / replacement plan for all town computers. Currently there are 100 computers in town offices (not including the schools.) 40 of these are 6 to 7 years old and will need to be replaced in the next 2 or 3 years. The town has purchased computers under the state contract to reduce costs. Ms. Casemyr suggested computer purchases be discussed with the Capital Expenditures Planning Committee, as the total cost is \$20,000 - \$25,000 each year. The town also owns 24 laptop computers, not including those deployed in police cruisers. Ms. Lown requested an updated inventory. She asked about the town policy on securing laptops, if there was insurance, and about data security for remote use. Mr. Stockman will review the policies and is currently doing an inventory of all computers, and will be prioritizing them for replacement according to use. Mr. Watts asked about training offered. Mr. Stockman does not currently have any training scheduled for town employees, but will offer training as needs are identified. Funds budgeted for GIS training would be for the MIS/GIS staff, so they can upgrade and maintain the current GIS portion of the town web site. The town is now using CollectPro (Patriot Properties) for Treasurer/Collector property information, with a yearly licensing maintenance fee of \$5,500.

The GIS database needs to be updated. Some layers have been maintained very well, but other areas need upgrading. The last flyover included was in 1999. The state did a flyover in 2008, but this only includes the eastern ½ of town. Plot lines are the least accurate of the features, as this can't really be done well from the Orthophotos.

Fire Department

Nick Perron, Fire Chief, presented the Fire Department budget request. Mr. Johnson distributed an impact statement, and information on a new requirement for computers in ambulances.

Mr. Perron noted that the level-funded budget is actually a \$98,000 cut when you take into account contractual salary increases and other increased costs. This will affect all areas of service. One firefighter is scheduled to retire as of 12/31/09 and will not be replaced, so that shift will run one firefighter short for the second half of the fiscal year. This may result in an increase in overtime depending on call volume. Departmental Training

wages will be cut by \$11,604, eliminating 1/3 of training. All unused wire (approximately 60 miles long) resulting from conversion to radio box fire alarm system will be left in place until poles are replaced. Call Department training will be cut by \$5,084, eliminating training for call members. Overtime—Other will be cut by \$11,594, which will eliminate funding for public education in the schools, annual “smoke detector battery exchange day” for seniors (\$1,500), and fire department involvement with the town’s Holiday Lighting. The state mandated liquor license inspection program (resulting from the Station Nightclub fire) will be done differently, making it inconvenient for business owners.

EMS Recall will be cut \$6,088. Currently, when two of the three ambulances are called simultaneously, off-duty people are called in. With this cut, off-duty people will be called in only when a third call is received, resulting in a 5-minute delay in response to the third call. Last year, 3 simultaneous calls were received approximately 100 times, of the total 894 multiple (2 or more) calls. Ms. Lucas is very concerned about any response delay EMS recall cut would cause. Ambulance calls billed \$975,000 last year, which goes into the general fund rather than back to the ambulance corps. Mr. Johnson suggested not changing this policy, but cutting the budget for now and requesting a transfer if the actual number of multiple calls force the costs over budget.

Buildings and grounds will be cut \$12,000 from last year. Included in this budget line are electrical repairs, Caterpillar generator maintenance, cleaning supplies, and miscellaneous building repairs. The Department is hoping for a new Public Safety Building soon. Ms. Lucas noted that while the building is maintained as well as possible, some major repairs will be needed if the new facility is delayed too long.

Equipment repair will be cut by \$8,100. A needed spring replacement for Engine 2 and Rescue 1 will be delayed. The Department will defer corrosion repairs and replacement of any of the mechanics tools. The town owns \$4,000,000 in equipment which costs \$31,000 each year to maintain. Deferred maintenance will not be a safety issue at this time. Brakes on vehicles are checked regularly and are kept in good repair. Protective Clothing will be cut by \$1,500. The Department will not replace any Biochemical Hazard suits. The Department owns one suit for each firefighter, but these are rarely used. The Department will decrease cell phones from 8 to 4, resulting in a \$1,152 decrease. Hose line purchase will be decreased \$4,150, deferring replacement until next year. Professional dues will be decreased by \$300, eliminating the Worcester County Mutual aid radio and the Fire District 14 911 backup system.

Training and education expenses will be cut by \$3,850, eliminating the CPR Instructor recertification, and therefore the CPR Certification programs for the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Senior Center, and other groups. Training at the Worcester Fire Department Burn Building will be cut from 4 days to 2 days of training, and other seminars for firefighters will be eliminated. Fire Prevention materials provided to school children will also be eliminated. Professional services, covering state mandated physical ability testing for firefighters, will be cut \$500. As there is a hiring freeze, this will not be needed this year. CD Training Program update will be eliminated, saving \$700. Gas and Oil will be cut by \$500, by testing the emergency generator every other week and keeping the tank half full rather than testing every week and keeping the tank filled.

Ms. Lown listed some sources of grant funding from the federal stimulus funds, which might be available to fund state or federal mandates. Chief Perron commended Matt Stockwell and Pat Purcell for their successful grant writing on behalf of the department, resulting in grant awards for replacement of turnout gear and other equipment. The Department has done very well in getting targeted funding as a result of their efforts.

Chief Perron discussed the electronic patient care reporting system, which will cost approximately \$60,000. This system would meet the state requirements regarding collection and maintenance of standardized patient data and information by ambulance services. This system would improve patient care, improve quality of incident documentation, streamline and improve billing and collections, provide advanced management and statistical reporting, and improve operational and administrative efficiency and effectiveness. Towns that have

already implemented this have seen an increase in receipts from insurance companies. The deadline for compliance with this unfunded mandate is July, but with the current fiscal situation in most towns, the state will not be enforcing this deadline. This upgrade will need to be done eventually.

ARTICLE 21. Purchase New Defibrillator (Fire Chief) (\$26,000)

These funds are requested to purchase one new 12-lead defibrillator. The Department currently owns three defibrillators, one for each ambulance, which were purchased in 1997. They are now outdated, and the plan is to purchase one each year for the next three years.

Chief Perron would like to have the revolving fund reauthorized, even though the CPR training will not be occurring. Chief Perron and the AFC reviewed prior spending authorizations, and the Chief will release \$1,106 in funds not spent. All other authorizations will be used.

Finance Committee

Ms. Lown noted that the wages for the AFC may go over budget by \$200 this year, depending on the number of meetings needed before Annual Town Meeting. She is planning on holding 32 meetings for the FY09. The AFC budget is level-funded, and will continue to be level-funded, but Ms. Lown suggested cutting the total budgeted for printing rather than the professional services line. This line is used to pay a stipend for the clerk, who can be a committee member or other party, to schedule presentations as required in the By-laws. The committee discussed budgeted funding for Dues and Memberships, which includes funds used to register new AFC members at the annual Association of Town Finance Committees conference, and concluded that while this conference is valuable, but the cost may need to be re-evaluated.

Accountant

Ms. Lown met with Leah Talbot, Town Accountant, to discuss her department budget request. The 2.93% increase in this budget reflects increases to salary and wages line only. There was no decrease in hours to department staff. Both employees are at max step, so the increase is as recommended by the Personnel Board only. Dues and Memberships for this department are those required to attend conferences and trainings needed to keep current on rules and regulations for Town Accountants. Office supplies budget is \$100 only. This department generates no receipts.

Approval of minutes – Meeting No. 14, March 2, 2009.

Approval of minutes was deferred until the next meeting.

Liaison Updates

Mr. Linnane reported on John Badenhausen's response to a question about grant funding. Mr. Badenhausen has been advised in the past not to apply for grants, as programs begun with grant funds leave the town responsible for funding when the grant runs out. Mr. Badenhausen does work cooperatively with other towns to maximize resources. Ms. Lown noted a letter from a town resident in support of the Westborough Youth and Family Services.

Ms. Lucas will speak with Town Assessor Linda Swadel, and will ask about the new growth estimates.

Mr. Watts reported that the School Committee will begin budget hearings next week, continuing for 4 weeks. The School Committee presentation should be scheduled for mid-April. They are still trying to sort out federal stimulus package funding and what will come to Westborough, although this may not be known before ATM. AFC Committee members pointed to a recent newspaper article on school funding inequities in the Worcester Telegram & Gazette, Monday, March 2, 2009, "Recession freezes school funds reforms" By Priyanka Dayal.

Ms. Lucas and Mr. Watts met with the new Superintendent of Assabet Valley Technical School District, Mary Jo Nawrocki. The assessment for Westborough will decrease from last year. The district's total budget

increased only 2.5%. They will give a presentation focused only on Westborough. Assabet's MCAS scores are good, and enrollment is up so that they may have to deny acceptance to some applicants. Each prospective student is required to submit an application which includes an interview. The Warrant Article is to comply with a court order, and was chosen as the fairest of all options which maintain one representative per town.

Ms. Lown reviewed the liaison assignments and presentation schedule. The Warrant closes 4/16. Ms. Lown would like to complete the AFC booklet by May 4. Ms. Lown spoke with Jack Goodhall of the WWTP, who reported that the latest electrical bill has not arrived. Ms. Lown will meet with Maryanne Bilodeau on 3/17 and with Greg Franks on 3/10.

Mr. Johnson met with Chief Perron, and will set up a liaison meeting with the DPW on Articles.

Ms. Casemyr reported that the WWTP upgrade project is moving forward. 99% of the paperwork is complete, and advertising for bids begins 3/11. State stimulus funding is still uncertain. The project is on the "un-reviewed" list of "shovel-ready" projects. The Article in the draft Town Warrant is worded correctly but the number may change as the market is very competitive currently. Due to higher energy costs there is a faster payback on spending for alternative energy. The EPA has been kept abreast of the progress of work, and so far there have been no repercussions to being past deadline. There are still no written guidelines on the 0% funding application. At this time it appears stimulus funding will go through the SRF program.

Committee Reports

Mr. Johnson has revised an article for publication explaining how the Advisory Finance Committee works, and would like to vote on it next Monday. Ms. Lown has sent out a press release which includes some educational information. The committee discussed possible placement.

Ms. Lucas reported on the Town Manager search. First interviews will be held on March 12th. Candidates include James J. Malloy of Sturbridge, Jill R. Myers of Uxbridge, and Suzanne K. Kennedy of Medway.

FY09 - Snow & Ice Budget

Discussion and voting on request for deficit spending is deferred until after Board of Selectmen vote on request.

Town Meeting Booklet – Planning

Ms. Lown asked for committee members' input on message to voters. Mr. Watts would like to give more information on how enterprise funds affect total cost for residents. Further discussion was deferred until next meeting.

Comments and Concerns of Committee Members

Ms. Lown called attention to the Snow and Ice Budget report.

Adjournment

At 9:20 p.m. Ms. Lucas moved to adjourn the meeting. The vote to adjourn was unanimous, 6 in favor with 6 being present.