

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

At 7:10 p.m. Mr. Johnson called the meeting to order in the Selectmen's Meeting Room.

Open Forum

Town Moderator Joe Harrington appeared before the committee to request recommendations, from committee members and from the public, to fill the opening on the AFC. Mr. Harrington has posted a description of the selection process on the town's web site on the Town Meeting page.

Mr. Harrington also explained to the committee the process that might occur if the town votes to spend more money than the levy capacity allows. Mr. Arnold and the committee requested a meeting of the AFC, Mr. Harrington, Mr. Danis, and Mr. Franks to discuss the role and responsibility of the AFC in making budget recommendations to the town when the town is facing a tight fiscal year. Mr. Harrington suggested that the AFC could recommend a budget that remains within the Proposition 2½ limit, and perhaps recommend some items to consider subject to an override vote.

Approval of minutes –Meetings No. 14, March 10, 2008, and No. 15, March 13, 2008, FY2008.

Mr. Watts moved approval of the minutes of Meetings No. 14, March 10, 2008 and No. 15, March 13, 2008. The vote to approve the minutes was 7 in favor, with 7 members being present.

Budget and Article Review – Youth and Family Services

John Badenhausen, Director of Youth and Family Services, and Michelle Grasso and Andy Rosenshine, Youth Commission members, presented the Youth and Family Services budget request of \$160,842, an increase of 5.08% over last year's budget. The salary increase of 5.43% includes only cost of living and step increases for staff. Two staff members are on the maximum step. The expense budget is level-funded.

The department had considered increasing their budget for the Hot Summer Nights Program to cover the increased costs of providing bus service for field trips but decided to wait until next year due to the town's financial situation. They have not charged for transportation in the past. Attendance in the program was down a bit last year but they are expecting a rise this year. They have noticed that attendance is cyclical, changing as the age of the regular attendees changes. The same program coordinator will be returning this summer, and they have a senior volunteer as well.

Youth and Family Services has been extremely busy during the last year. They have a clinical intern this year, and everyone has a full caseload. They continue to get new referrals. The School Counselors and the Police Department are major sources of referrals, both recommended and court-mandated referrals, as are community members and former clients.

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

B. (Youth and Family Services) Requesting reauthorization of a revolving fund for the purpose of receiving and expending funds for youth activities. Funds received come from the Hot Summer Nights Program and the Baby-Sitter Training.

The Youth Commission is beginning to look at doing a formal needs assessment of youth services for the town. They are working with the various town departments and community partners, and looking at what information is currently available and what studies have recently been done.

Budget and Article Review – Fire/EMS Department

Nick Perron, Fire Chief, presented the Fire/EMS Department's budget request of \$3,082,835, an increase of 1.23% from last year. Expenses have increased \$18,645 over last year. This figure includes increases in:

Line 5202 Grounds and Building Maintenance, \$3,000, to replace a 60-year-old air tank used to pressurize the air brakes in the fire trucks. This repair was strongly requested by the town's insurance inspector. The new tank will be moved to the new facility when it is completed.

Line 5203A Repair and Maintenance Radio, \$5,400, for the new maintenance agreement for the town's radio infrastructure. This agreement covers only fire equipment.

Line 5203C Repair and Maintenance Air Packs, \$1,980, to pay the increased cost of testing the Self Contained Breathing Apparatus. This equipment is used often by firefighters.

Line 5203D Repair and Maintenance Vehicles, \$6,000, to buy a new stretcher for the new ambulance.

Line 5205D Operating Equipment – Turnout Gear, \$2,000, to pay increased costs for repair/replacement of worn gear.

Salary increase of 0.68% includes only step increases as the firefighter's current contract expires 6/30/08. They are currently in negotiations and hope to complete the process soon. This contract covers all firefighters. The Chief's contract has been settled.

There are several new State Mandates that will affect the department's budget over the next several years. The Office of Emergency Medical Services has instituted new regulations regarding training and certification of EMTs. St. Vincent's Hospital, Westborough's affiliate hospital, has implemented a new system of training for EMTs which will cost \$500 per EMT per year. The department is looking at affiliating with another hospital in order to avoid the cost increase of \$25,000. The State requirement for Advance Medical Reporting will cost the department an estimated \$50,000 to put computers in three ambulances and install software at the station.

The town's conversion to a wireless radio alarm system will be complete after the next phase. All corporate alarms have been upgraded, and the town buildings will be complete after this next year.

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

A. (Fire Department) Requesting reauthorization of a revolving fund used for receiving and expending funds for public CPR and First Aid Training by the Fire Department.

K. (Fire Department) Requesting \$61,201 for the fifth of five yearly lease/purchase payments for a fire pumper.

Budget and Article Review – ARTICLE 18. Purchase Vehicle for Fire Department (Fire Chief)

Requesting \$35,000 to purchase a new four wheel drive vehicle for the Fire Department. This new vehicle will replace a 1996 Chevy Blazer that has over 100,000 miles. The department is looking at a Ford Explorer or Ford Expedition, as a large vehicle is needed to carry gear and equipment. This vehicle is used to accompany the ambulance of EMS calls.

As with the Police Department, all vehicles are bought on State bid through MHQ Municipal Headquarters Vehicles. This vehicle will have rubber flooring (no carpet) and is equipped with heavy-duty shock absorbers. New emergency lights, siren, and radio are included.

The fire trucks are in very good shape. Next year there will be more equipment needed, including replacement of two defibrillators. The department has received grants of \$80,000 to purchase portable radios and \$140,000

to upgrade the Self Contained Breathing Apparatus. They are currently writing grants to purchase protective clothing. No outside funding sources have been identified to pay for vehicles, computers, or defibrillators.

Ambulances last eight years on average because they are well-maintained. The Ambulance fund is not an enterprise fund, so ambulance receipts of \$900,000 go into the town funds. Other towns do run Ambulance enterprise funds, but Chief Perron has not seen a need to do this in Westborough.

Liaison Updates

- Mr. Johnson reported that the State Local Aid resolution has been finalized as of 3/12/08. Mr. Johnson handed out a copy of an article from the Boston Globe pertaining to two Warrant Articles dealing with Storm Water Drainage regulations. The cost of maintaining the new drains is estimated at \$200,000 per year. Mr. Johnson also noted the fleet list of town vehicles, and a packet of information from Assabet Valley Regional Technical School District containing information about a public meeting scheduled for March 18, 2008. Mr. Johnson will speak with Leah Talbot, Town Accountant, on Thursday
- Ms. Casemyr has met with Alma DeManche. There are only small increases in the Senior Center budget. Ms. DeManche was asked her opinion about the Article requesting funds to repair the roof, and responded that there are other repairs that are also necessary such as resurfacing the parking lot. She also would like to see the building expanded at some future time.

Adjournment

At 8:37 p.m. Mr. Watts moved to adjourn the meeting. The vote to adjourn was unanimous (7 members present and in favor).