

Members Present: Ian Johnson, Chair, Judy Lucas, Cliff Watts, Jo Lown, John Arnold, Carolyn Spring, J. J. Malone (arrived 7:07 p.m.), Ronn Moody (arrived 7:27 p.m.). Absent: Polly Howard.

At 7:03 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.

Liaison Updates

Mr. Johnson noted that the final town meeting warrant is in each folder. This version removes two articles which will be paid from Chapter 90 funds, and adds a new article (Article 16) from the Open Space Preservation Committee. In each folder is also a letter from Representative Karen Polito. Mr. Arnold also added an email sent from Ms. Polito's office with updated local figures for several state aid categories. Mr. Johnson has printed a spreadsheet of town budgets and the voting schedule. Voting on Monday April 16 may include all articles in the warrant except 6, 12, 13, 16, 22, 23, 25, 30, 39, 40, and 41.

Article Review – Joseph Harrington, Moderator

Article 35. Revisions to Home Rule Charter (in approved Town Warrant)

Joseph Harrington, Moderator, discussed changes to the Town's Home Rule Charter recommended by the Government Study Committee. The Board of Selectmen received the interim report from the Government Study Committee, accepted the report, and gave the Moderator the task of creating Articles.

- A. This section revised the list of committees, to delete those which are not staffed and to include current committees. The Board of Selectmen may still appoint committees not listed in the charter.
- B. and C. These sections codify current operating practice regarding appointment to the Capital Expenditure Planning Committee. The change is to make a one appointment to the committee a member of the School Committee (rather than the School Department) and to decrease the Moderator's appointments to two.
- D. Changes the notice required for Town Meeting to conform to Massachusetts General Law, 14 days for a Special Town Meeting and 7 days for Annual Town Meeting.
- E. Adds Sexual Harassment Officer to positions appointed by the Coordinator
- F. Clarifies the rules for appointment of a Deputy Moderator.

Article 36. Revisions to Town By-laws (in approved Town Warrant)

Joseph Harrington, Moderator, discussed changes to the Town's By-laws recommended by the Government Study Committee.

- A. This section codifies present practice, and makes notice same as M.G.L.
- B. This section sets the rules of order for articles that differ only in the amount of money involved or amount of time involved.
- C. This section sets the hierarchy of motions.

Budget Review – School Department

Dr. Anne Towle, Superintendent, Craig Harris, School Committee chair, Rod Jane, Karen Henderson, Bruce Tretter, and Steve Doret, School Committee members, presented the School Department budget. Please see the 2007-2008 Budget Presentation posted on the Westborough Public Schools web site at <http://westborough.ma.schoolwebpages.com>. Dr. Towle reported that the School Committee met just before

this presentation and have changed their budget request to \$35,254,969, or a 3.38% increase from last year. Changes include adding in activity fees with a family maximum payment of \$175 for the high school, adding an increase in funds generated from the Community Education Program, a salary reduction due to the resignation of Dr. Les Olson, and the re-negotiation of the custodial supplies contract.

Job positions that are currently in negotiation are teachers, secretaries, custodians, cafeteria workers, administrators (not principals), and paraprofessionals.

Dr. Towle went over the seven goals set of the School Department, giving the goals and targets for each.

Staffing analysis:

Armstrong School staffing stays the same although there will be a reduction of 23 students. Recent years have seen a large influx of students in August in both kindergarten and 4th grade. Mill Pond 4th grade is adding a teacher to compensate for the late registration, although they may be able to eliminate a teacher position in the fall if the expected late registrations do not happen.

At Gibbons Middle School the decrease in enrollment is only for this year. There is a large class of students who will be in 7th grade beginning in 2008. At the middle school and high school levels teachers must be certified in a specific subject area so it is difficult to move them around to fit changing enrollments.

System-wide, 14% of students in kindergarten through 3rd grades are English Language Learners (ELL.) In kindergarten alone 25% of students are English Language Learners. Students remain in ELL classes until they reach a certain level of proficiency. Some students phase out of the program in three years, other students remain in ELL classes for 5 or 6 years. Much depends on whether or not English is spoken at home.

Comparison with other districts:

Westborough spends \$495 more per pupil than the state average. We spend more than other towns in classroom teachers, guidance counselors, and operations/maintenance of buildings. We spend less than other towns in central administration, principals, other teachers, supplies, and in-district transportation. The state average includes all but the technical schools.

FY08 budget presented in the booklet includes the following (note: these numbers were prior to the changes made by the School Committee on 3/12):

- Salary increase 5.6%

- Expense decrease 3.8%

- Total increase 3.7%

- Grants/receipts of \$2,350,744

The circuit breaker money for Special Education programs will decrease next year, as the district has been sending fewer students out of district for their education.

Dr. Towle distributed a handout detailing the Grants and Awards received this year by the School Department.

Dr. Malone commended the School Department and the School Committee for keeping in mind the needs of children as well as the needs of the town. Chapter 70 funding from the state for next year has increased, however the increase in the school budget is twice the increase in Chapter 70 funds. We know there will most likely be other increases later in the year due to contract negotiations that we must keep in mind

The breakdown of budgets by school:

- Fales, \$3,086,584, 9% of total

- Hastings, \$3,683,277, 10%

- Armstrong, \$3,282,048, 9%

Mill Pond, \$6,690,796, 19%
Gibbons, \$5,232,803, 15%
High School, 9,715,052, 27%
District, \$6,023,153, 17%

Budget changes:

Step/lane changes, +\$623,410, this covers union employees under the current contract
Retirements, -\$100,000
Reallocation of federal grants for Special Education and Title 3 funding
Elimination of one secretary in the Central Administration, -\$40,000
Non-union raises, +\$85,312
Recommended new staff, +\$322,000
 Hastings Grade 2 teacher, ½ time preschool teacher, ½ time preschool paraprofessional
 Fales Grade 3 teacher
 Mill Pond Grade 4 teacher, language based SPED program teacher
 High School Wellness teacher, 0.6-time music teacher, 0.2-time business teacher, 0.2-time
 industrial technology teacher (0.2 = 1 day/week), library paraprofessional

Community Education Program offers after-school programs, enrichment courses/intramural sports, and summer day camps. The profit has increased more than projected. The funds reside in a revolving account.

Capital projects:

Hastings: ADA upgrades, carpet removal and tile installation, generator replacement
Armstrong: window wall replacement
Fales: freezer and refrigerator replacement, retaining wall repair
High School: locker room floor

Advocacy for state funding by parents, administrators, town officials, and the School Committee has resulted in an increase of \$429,000 for next year.

Discussion with Town Moderator

Mr. Harrington commented on some procedural changes put in place at last year's town meeting. There is a rule on reconsideration stating that it will not be used unless an error was made or something has changed since the vote. Pass over has in the past been used to defeat a contested article. This will no longer be accepted in contested cases. It will be accepted if a proponent wishes to withdraw an article.

Mr. Harrington pointed out the role of the Advisory Finance Committee as stated in Article 2.

Articles 28 and 29 (concerning the Nathan Fisher House) will be entertained together, with Article 28 first and Article 29 as an amendment. The amendment is voted first and requires a majority, the main motion will require 2/3 vote.

Articles 31 A and B. If Article 30 passes, Article 31A will be taken up immediately. Article 31B is not contingent upon either Article 30 or Article 31A.

The process for reserving space in the lobby is to start with Les Olson's office with a request to use school property. These requests are forwarded to Mr. Harrington.

Presenters at Town Meeting should make use of the town web site for "Tips for Presenters at Town Meeting."

The ATM workshop will be held on Thursday, May 10 at the library.

Liaison Updates

Ms. Lown presented a request from the library for a transfer of funds to pay for replacement of the air tank which failed an insurance inspection. Ms. Lown moved to transfer \$6,690 from reserve funds to budget line 16103-5202E. The vote to transfer the funds was 8 in favor with 8 present.

Ms. Lown also stated that Jack Goodhall reports that the Treatment Board will not ask for more money than its' current request.

Ms. Spring checked with Town Counsel about the wording in the Article requesting a wine and beer license. The Board could reissue the license but the license does not belong to either the property owner or the business. If the business does not continue the license reverts to the town, but only for use at that location.

Comments and Concerns of Committee Members

Mr. Johnson asks committee members to be prepared to vote at Monday's meeting.

Adjournment

At 9:30 p.m. Mr. Watts moved to adjourn the meeting. The vote to adjourn was unanimous (8 present and in favor).