

Members Present: Ian Johnson, Chair, Carolyn Spring, Judy Lucas, Cliff Watts, Ronn Moody, John Arnold, Brigitte Casemyr. Absent: Jo Lown.

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.

### **Approval of minutes – Meeting No. 22, April 10, 2008, FY2008.**

Mr. Watts moved approval of the minutes of Meeting No. 22, April 10, 2008. The vote to approve the minutes was 7 in favor with 7 members being present.

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

Dr. Anne Towle, School Superintendent, Rod Jane, School Committee Chairman, Bruce Tretter, School Committee Vice-Chair/Secretary, Stephen Doret, Craig Harris, and Karen Henderson, School Committee members, Kathy Martin, Technology Department Director, Dan Hendricks, Director of Business and Administration, presented the School Department budget request of \$36,343,425, an increase of \$1,058,517 (3%) over last year's budget.

Dr. Towle went over the School Committee Goals for the year (see the School Department's web site for the complete list.)

The School Committee created a task force to evaluate the Foreign Language program, which recommended adding Mandarin to middle school and high school program of studies. They are still waiting for the course enrollment numbers to see if Mandarin will be offered. Other Foreign Language offerings include Latin, Spanish and French. There will be the same number of foreign language sections but with a different mix of languages.

The numbers of classes at each level are driven by enrollment – next year there will be a decrease of one 4<sup>th</sup> grade class at Mill Pond and one 1<sup>st</sup> grade class at Fales, and an increase of students at Gibbons will necessitate an additional Social Studies teacher at Gibbons. Increased enrollments in honors Math and Science classes necessitate additional teachers at the High School.

Research has shown that quality Professional Development is one of the most important components to improve learning. State Education Reform obligates the School District to offer classes necessary for teachers to maintain their certification. This budget includes a \$25,000 reduction in funding. Westborough is below the state average in spending per teacher on Professional Development.

Currently, between staff and students, there are 4,000 users / day on the school computer network. This increased use has made the network very slow. The budget includes \$140,000 to fund building a fiber network (including installation) to provide the increased bandwidth needed to keep the network viable. The fiber cables would provide 10M of band width to replace the two T1 lines (3M of band width) currently in use. The School Department is looking at several options, including a lease/purchase program which would eventually allow the town to own the cables. Verizon's lease program would be expensive and would be a continual yearly expense. The School Department is talking with Henry Danis and Joe Lawrence about building a town-wide network.

The Superintendent's initial budget request included \$1,565,545 in increases needed to keep the same level of services as last year. Salary increases include \$221,351 for contracted increases, \$443,877 for steps/lanes/longevity increases, and \$91,324 for non-union raises. The Substitute account has traditionally been funded partly from savings that occur when teachers retire, but this year there are only three retirements expected so the account will need an additional \$155,000. The largest percentage increase was for utilities at \$374,000 (40%). The current contract for electricity will end on January 1, 2009 and the School Department is expecting the cost to increase dramatically. The current budget for tutors has historically been under-funded (this year by \$36,120) and additional tutors are needed for math at Mill Pond and for English Language Learners, resulting in an increase of \$62,000. Out-of-district tuition rates have increased by \$100,000 as private school increases have been approved by the State Rate Setting Board. The Transportation budget has increased \$41,800. Bus service is being evaluated, and the School Committee may decide to eliminate some late buses or charge a fee for this service.

In order to reach the 3% increase recommended by the Town Coordinator, additional cuts were made to the budget including one Administrator position (\$100,821), 3.9 Teachers (\$136,000), 3.1 Paraprofessionals (\$62,000), Stipends in the amount of \$93,220, \$40,000 from Athletics, \$40,000 from Fine Arts, \$25,000 from Professional Development, and \$20,000 from Transportation (cutting late buses) for a Total Current Service Reduction of \$517,041.

Teacher reductions will include a 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher at Fales, a 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Mill Pond, a SPED teacher at Armstrong, and an 0.4 Preschool teacher at the High School. 3.1 Paraprofessionals cut will include 0.5 Preschool, SPED teachers, and the Elementary Library Assistants. The \$93,220 stipends will come from eliminating team leaders in the K-3 grades, having only 1 team leader per grade at Mill Pond, and having Department Chairs but no team leaders at Gibbons. Team leaders had provided the required second evaluation for their team members and participated in regular meetings with the principals. These services will be provided by the Curriculum Specialists and Principals at each school.

General maintenance items in the budget include necessary repairs for safety related items only, for a total of \$183,850. Some repairs can be done in-house, some must be contracted out. Repairs include:

- fixing cracked pavement on walkways at Armstrong, Fales, Gibbons and parking lot at Fales
- replacing a circuit breaker box at Armstrong which is not up to codes
- repairs to exterior steps at Fales and Gibbons, doors, and roof at Fales
- repairs to playground at Fales
- retaining wall replacement at Gibbons
- water main repairs at Gibbons
- additional building access control equipment at WHS (card key system for staff)
- pump coupling repair at WHS

Mr. Tretter noted that the State Building Assistance grant program now will include preventive maintenance. The School Department is working on a package of repairs to Gibbons Middle School to submit for SBA grant funding for next year.

Dr. Towle noted that the State Chapter 70 funds are up \$400,000, 20% increase from last year.

Activity fees from Gibbons and WHS will remain the same as last year. These funds are used to pay for Officials at sporting events, transportation to sporting events, and advisors/stipends for programs. No parking fees have been added.

Total spending for Special Education has gone down over the last two years. Providing in-house SPED programs has cut costs.

#### **ARTICLE 14. Various Capital Outlays (School Committee)**

Requesting \$345,000 for the following capital outlays to the Westborough Public Schools:

- re-pointing of exterior brick at Hastings School (\$55,000) – 2<sup>nd</sup> half of project begun last year
- replace duct work at Armstrong School (\$35,000)
- install ice and snow guard on roof at Mill Pond School (\$35,000)
- repair deteriorated exterior stairwells and walkways at High School (\$35,000)
- purchase and upgrade instructional technology for the school system (\$185,000) – to replace aging computers at Gibbons Middle School and Westborough High School

#### **Discussion and votes on various FY2009 budgets**

Mr. Johnson noted that votes on the Assessors and Fire Department budgets on the agenda for this meeting will be postponed until next Monday.

A table of votes taken is attached to these minutes.

#### **Liaison Updates**

- Mr. Moody noted the additional information on painting the water tank in committee members' folders. He will follow up with the DPW. The cost estimated in the Warrant currently is \$625,000. The additional information raises the cost to over \$1,000,000
- Mr. Arnold reported the Government Study Committee will attend the Board of Selectmen presentation on 4/17.
- Mr. Johnson has spoken with Leah Talbot who will provide an updated budget request for the Town Clerk, Assessor's Office, and Fire Department on Thursday, for vote on these budgets next Monday. Ms. Talbot will also provide an updated recap sheet. Mr. Harrington has provided information requested by the AFC in the Moderator's memo in committee members' folders.
- Ms. Casemyr gave a recap of an article in the Worcester Telegram and Gazette on EPA mandates.
- Mr. Johnson spoke about the press release from the School Committee about negotiations with the Teachers Union. The School Committee has requested a non-binding fact finding process that will take at least 60 to 120 days, so there will be no settlement before the May ATM.

#### **Discussion on Calendar – Voting Schedule**

Mr. Johnson went over the scheduling for the next two weeks in April. The presentation schedule is:

April 17 – 7:10 p.m., Board of Selectmen presentation on Articles, 7:45 p.m., Anyu Caj presentation on Citizen's Petition, followed by voting on Articles by AFC Committee

April 21 – voting on remaining budgets by AFC Committee

April 24 – voting on remaining Articles by AFC Committee

#### **Comments and Concerns of Committee Members**

Ms. Casemyr was reminded of the upcoming need for funding using a Debt Exclusion for the Public Safety Building, and asks how the AFC plans for these expenses. Mr. Johnson admitted the committee has been struggling with this issue for quite some time. The Capital Expenditures Committee has been trying to get three to five year plans from Town Departments and Committees but it is not always successful.

#### **Adjournment**

At 9:02 p.m. Mr. Watts moved to adjourn the meeting. The vote to adjourn was unanimous (7 members present and in favor).

## **Votes taken at the Finance Committee meeting on April 14, 2008**

### **1) Budget votes**

Budgets are voted on using figures current as of 4/14/08.

#### **Moderator, Dept. No. 11141**

Salary \$250, Expenses \$0, Total \$250

Mr. Moody moved to accept the \$250 salary.

Vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 7 in favor with 7 being present.

#### **Selectmen/Coordinator, Dept. No. 11221, 11223**

Salary \$286,612, Expenses \$48,250, Total \$334,862

Mr. Moody moved to accept the \$286,612 salary and \$48,250 expenses.

Vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 7 in favor with 7 being present.

#### **Advisory Finance Committee, Dept. No. 11312, 11313**

Salary \$1,952, Expenses \$2,880, Total \$4,832

Mr. Moody moved to accept the \$1,952 salary and \$2,880 expenses.

Vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 7 in favor with 7 being present.

#### **Accountant, Dept. No. 11341, 11343**

Salary \$134,804, Expenses \$545, Total \$135,349

Mr. Moody moved to accept the \$134,804 salary and \$545 expenses.

Vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 7 in favor with 7 being present.

#### **Treasurer/Collector, Dept. No. 11381, 11383**

Salary \$203,812, Expenses \$50,925, Total \$254,737

Mr. Moody moved to accept the \$203,812 salary and \$50,925 expenses.

Vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 7 in favor with 7 being present.

#### **Legal, Dept. No. 11511, 11513**

Salary \$107,667, Expenses \$60,135, Total \$167,802

Mr. Moody moved to accept the \$107,667 salary and \$60,135 expenses.

Vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 7 in favor with 7 being present.

#### **Personnel Board, Dept. No. 11522, 11523**

Salary \$4,527, Expenses \$48,638, Total \$53,165

Mr. Moody moved to accept the \$4,527 salary and \$48,638 expenses.

Vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 7 in favor with 7 being present.

#### **Communications, Dept. No. 11573**

Salary \$0, Expenses \$41,500, Total \$41,500

Mr. Moody moved to accept the \$41,500 expenses.

Vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 7 in favor with 7 being present.

#### **Central Purchasing, Dept. No. 11583**

Salary \$0, Expenses \$97,000, Total \$97,000

Mr. Moody moved to accept the \$97,000 expenses.

Vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 7 in favor with 7 being present.

#### **Conservation Comm., Dept. No. 11712, 11713**

Salary \$37,904, Expenses \$4,125, Total \$42,029

Mr. Moody moved to accept the \$37,904 salary and \$4,125 expenses.

Vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 7 in favor with 7 being present.

**Planning Board, Dept. No. 11721, 11723** Salary \$196,482, Expenses \$9,850, Total \$206,332

Mr. Moody moved to accept the \$196,482 salary and \$9,850 expenses.

Vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 7 in favor with 7 being present.

**Board of Appeals, Dept. No. 11732, 11733** Salary \$11,794, Expenses \$1,610, Total \$13,404

Mr. Moody moved to accept the \$11,794 salary and \$1,610 expenses.

Vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 7 in favor with 7 being present.

**Buildings & Grounds, Dept. No. 11852, 11853** Salary \$178,574, Expenses \$205,050, Total \$383,624

Mr. Moody moved to accept the \$178,574 salary and \$205,050 expenses.

Vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 7 in favor with 7 being present.

**Insurance, Dept. No. 11933**

Salary \$0, Expenses \$10,529,592, Total \$10,529,592

Mr. Moody moved to accept the \$10,529,592 expenses.

Vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 7 in favor with 7 being present.

**Building Commissioner, Dept. No. 12511, 12513**

Salary \$263,355, Expenses \$35,359, Total \$298,714

Mr. Moody moved to accept the \$263,355 salary and \$35,359 expenses.

Vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 7 in favor with 7 being present.

**Weights and Measures, Dept. No. 12543**

Salary \$0, Expenses \$2,250, Total \$2,250

Mr. Moody moved to accept the \$2,250 expenses.

Vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 7 in favor with 7 being present.

**Animal Control, Dept. No. 12921, 12923**

Salary \$47,659, Expenses \$24,680, Total \$72,339

Mr. Moody moved to accept the \$47,659 salary and \$24,680 expenses.

Vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 7 in favor with 7 being present.

**Regional Vocational School Assessment, Dept. No. 12993**

Salary \$0, Expenses \$783,918, Total \$783,918

Mr. Moody moved to accept the \$783,918 expenses.

Vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 7 in favor with 7 being present.

**Street Lights, Dept. No. 14243**

Salary \$0, Expenses \$55,000, Total \$55,000

Mr. Moody moved to accept the \$55,000 expenses.

Vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 7 in favor with 7 being present.

**Sanitary Landfill, Dept. No. 14333**

Salary \$0, Expenses \$744,180, Total \$744,180

Mr. Moody moved to accept the \$744,180 expenses.

Vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 7 in favor with 7 being present.

**Board of Health, Dept. No. 15121, 15123**

Salary \$249,244, Expenses \$14,600, Total \$263,844

Mr. Moody moved to accept the \$249,244 salary and \$14,600 expenses.

Vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 7 in favor with 7 being present.

**Council on Aging, Dept. No. 15411, 15413**

Salary \$210,491, Expenses \$32,565, Total \$243,056

Mr. Moody moved to accept the \$210,491 salary and \$32,565 expenses.

Ms. Spring questioned salary figure – Coordinator's recommendation did not include increased hours for any staff members.

Vote to approve the budget recommendation is 6 in favor and 1 abstention (Spring), with 7 being present.

**Youth and Family Services, Dept. No. 15421/15422, 15423**

Salary \$150,942, Expenses \$9,900, Total \$160,842

Mr. Moody moved to accept the \$150,942 salary and \$9,900 expenses.

Vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 7 in favor with 7 being present.

**Veterans Services, Dept. No. 15431, 15433**

Salary \$16,234, Expenses \$44,150, Total \$60,384

Mr. Moody moved to accept the \$16,234 salary and \$44,150 expenses.

Vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 7 in favor with 7 being present.

**Trustees of Soldiers Memorials, Dept. No. 15483**

Salary \$0, Expenses \$1,800, Total \$1,800

Mr. Moody moved to accept the \$1,800 expenses.

Vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 7 in favor with 7 being present.

**Recreation, Dept. No. 16201/16202, 16203**

Salary \$218,328, Expenses \$0, Total \$218,328

Mr. Moody moved to accept the \$218,328 salary.

Vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 7 in favor with 7 being present.

**Cultural Council, Dept. No. 16303**

Salary \$0, Expenses \$2,000, Total \$2,000

Ms. Spring moved to accept the \$2,000 expenses.

Vote to approve the budget recommendation is 6 in favor and 1 opposed (Moody) with 7 being present.

**Historical Commission, Dept. No. 16502, 16503**

Salary \$22,643, Expenses \$10,125, Total \$32,768

Mr. Moody moved to accept the \$22,643 salary and \$10,125 expenses.

Vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 7 in favor with 7 being present.

**General Fund Debt Principal & Interest, Dept. No. 17103, 17203**

Salary \$0, Expenses \$8,517,657, Total \$8,517,657

Mr. Moody moved to accept the \$8,517,657 expenses.

Vote to approve the budget recommendation is unanimous, 7 in favor with 7 being present.

**2) Warrant article votes**

There were no votes on Articles.