

Members Present: Ian Johnson, Chair, Judy Lucas, Cliff Watts, Ronn Moody, Jo Lown, Denzil Drewry, John Arnold, Brigitte Casemyr, Carolyn Spring. Absent: None.

At 7:05 p.m. Mr. Johnson called the meeting to order in the Selectmen's Meeting Room. Mr. Johnson welcomed Brigitte Casemyr as an official member of the committee.

### **Open Forum**

There were no requests to address the Committee.

### **Approval of minutes –Meeting No. 7, November 5, 2007, FY2008.**

Mr. Arnold moved approval of the minutes of Meeting No. 7, November 5, 2007, FY2008. The vote to approve the minutes was 8 in favor and 1 abstention, with 9 voting members being present.

### **Discussion on Resident Outreach**

Ms. Casemyr presented a proposal of steps to be taken by the committee to improve outreach to citizens, which can be implemented in stages.

- Monthly memo to citizens – this would be a summary of issues being discussed by the committee, including the “bigger picture” of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts financial situation as well as the town's financial situation. This memo could be posted on the town web site and sent to the email list of residents requesting information.
- Update the AFC page on the town web site to include AFC members' email addresses.
- Announce these changes to the press.
- Synthesize information available on the [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov) Department of Revenue web site to make it easier for town members to look at, including drill-down menus.

Mr. Drewry thanked Ms. Casemyr for her efforts, and suggested discussing any initiatives with the Board of Selectmen and other town committees. Mr. Arnold agreed that this should be discussed with other committees, possibly at the joint meeting between the AFC, Board of Selectmen, and Capital Expenditures Committee. He also suggested that any presentation should be informational only, and should start with links to the DOR web site.

Further discussion among the committee members yielded the following ideas:

- All documents put on the web site should also be posted at the Senior Center and Library.
- Items presented to the public should be informational, and for educational purposes only.
- Information already published by the DOR should be used if possible, including videos and summaries posted on their web site.
- Westborough-specific examples should be included.
- Committee should develop a FAQ on tax rates, levy capacity, free cash, and Proposition 2½.
- Educational information should be made available in hard copy at town meeting.
- Definitions of terms could be added to the Town Meeting booklet.
- An explanation of Advisory Finance Committee mandate and power should be included.
- AFC calendar of meetings, including scheduled presentations, could be made available on the town web site.

For the February AFC meeting, Mr. Johnson asked committee members to brainstorm ideas for primers on specific topics, with point of view kept as neutral as possible. Mr. Arnold will contact the MIS/GIS Department about email addresses for committee members, and a general email address for the public to ask for information. Ms. Casemyr and Mr. Arnold will work on a sample web page.

### **Planning for FY09 Budget Review Season**

Mr. Johnson had no financial updates for this meeting, as initial budget requests from the town departments are due next week. This year all departments and committees may be asked to provide two budget requests.

AFC calendar will be set up at the February meeting. Traditionally, the committee begins meeting twice each week after February vacation (February 18 through 25.)

### **Liaison Updates**

- Mr. Drewry has reviewed the budget of one of his departments and spoken with a couple others.
- Ms. Casemyr has met with the Planning Board, Cultural Council, and Board of Health. All committees are aware of tight fiscal situation.
- Mr. Arnold reported that the Government Study Committee is winding down. They have drafted recommendations which are being reviewed by Mr. Franks. The Committee will present their recommendations to the Board of Selectmen. Changes to the Town Charter being proposed should require a vote at Town Meeting, not in a general election.
- Mr. Arnold noted the Library is kicking off the 100<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary.
- Ms. Lucas reported that Gene Carlo, Assabet Valley Regional Technical School District, estimates a 5% increase in their budget. Changes to Westborough's assessment are not yet known.
- Mr. Johnson pointed committee members to several items:
  - Invitation to the Cultural Council Grant Awards Ceremony
  - Snow budget as of 12/20/07
  - The Personnel Board will hear a presentation by the Council on Aging concerning the Outreach Coordinator position at their next meeting
  - Board of Selectmen has begun a liaison system.

### **Adjournment**

At 7:53 p.m. Mr. Watts moved to adjourn the meeting. The vote to adjourn was unanimous (9 voting members present and in favor).