

Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes 3/23/16

Room 124 @ Town Hall

Present was: Dave Benton, Pat Snead, Jonathan Hurwitz, Jim Tomaszewski, Arthur Frontczak, Steve McDonough, Arlie Sterling, Lisa Keating and Marian Harrington, Administrative Assistant.

Dave Benton called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. Dave Benton said tonight we will work with the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) and Jack Hathaway with budgets.

Cyndi Andrade, Chair of the CPC said Article 19 is her budget. This is where they have always put their \$35,000 in the budget for any due diligence issues.

Cyndi said Article 20 is to pay for putting money into a fund for due diligence or Conservation appraisals, etc. They would just leave it there. It wouldn't be rolled over year to year. It is the only mechanism for them to pay for those types of issues. They want \$25,000 to make up the difference of the \$35,000 that they usually have in their budget. She had a meeting with the Conservation Commission and they are in favor. There is not a high degree that they would be appraising something that is not historic purposes.

Cyndi told the Committee that the Conservation Fund used to get money from the General Fund of around \$10,000. Any person can donate to the fund. They can't leave the \$25,000 in the undesignated funds because they have to get town meeting approval.

Arlie asked how you would keep it separate. Julie McCarthy said it would be pooled with the rest of the accounts, and it would be segregated as needed.

Article 21 is transferring monies to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. They haven't received a figure yet from the Affordable Housing Committee. She has no idea what they are going to be requesting.

Article 22 is land acquisition. Land is on the Franklin line. It is flat, treed land. The owners live in Franklin, and it's been in their family since the 1800's. It is 18+ acres and agreed to a selling price of \$232,000. There are cart roads going through there, and they would like to have a road there, or parking for hiking, skiing, dog walking, etc. She needs the figure for all the other stuff like legal, surveying, etc. Part of the property goes into Franklin, so she needs to see what needs to be done in order to get their 18+ acres. The history is it was a

farm. There were potato fields – 21E? There is a hayfield further back. It is grown up – 20 years old and around the pond are very old trees too. Cyndi said it is good for open space and passive recreation. Site is earmarked for potential field development, but not in the near future.

Pat asked if this was a deal for the town, or is it up for sale. It is up for \$799,000. They came to the town, and we made an offer. It is taxed for \$400,000. Cyndi said they offered less than \$232,000 and the owners came and offered the \$232,000, and we took it. Cyndi said they took into account costs involved. Town of Norfolk owns the pond. It is culverts that it goes through. Behind is railroad tracks, so there is no access there.

Cyndi said the property owners asked to retain a driveway easement on the cart path to be able to get into their Franklin property. Her board was okay with this. She said they have done the appraisal. It is significantly lower.

Cyndi said this property would only be one or two house lots. The source of this \$100,000 is out of open space and the \$132,000 is out of undesignated reserves.

The money wouldn't be available until July 1. We would have to do the 21E and we would have to close. Her guesstimate is the end of July. Jonathan said what do we need to do once it closes. Can people just come in and use the place? Cyndi said the only thing they need to do is a fence. Can be used immediately. Cyndi said they would have to mark where the private property is, so that people wouldn't be wandering into people's yards.

Article 23 will be submitted by the Board of Selectmen. The Selectmen will set the amount as part of their fee structure.

Article 24 – Transfer funds for baseball/softball. Ann Proto spoke on the Master Plan which includes the fields. The field at the Freeman/Kennedy School is not used very much. We are going to adopt the Cal Ripken League. \$61,500 includes a small contingency.

Jonathan felt there should be a shed closer to store the mound, etc. Feels the equipment is being put at risk by not being closer. Ann agreed. He said baseball has a large amount of money and wondered why the town is paying, and not baseball. Ann said that they contribute in many ways as to the maintenance of the fields, as does softball. Ann said the taxpayers would never pay for anything like replacing the mound because there is a user fee that pays for that.

Jack Hathaway was present to review the General Government budgets as well as the Police Department budget. Julie McCarthy and Jeff Palumbo were also present.

Jack introduced Julie to anyone who hadn't met her yet. She is the Finance Director/Town Accountant and has been here since October.

Jack said they have been working on balancing the budget, and \$569,000 is what the gap is narrowed down to now, from \$1.2 million.

Jack reviewed the general government budgets. Jim T. asked how did you find the money? Jack said that KP reduced their budget by \$400,000 and that was the chunk of money.

Jack discussed the police budget. Jim T. asked about how we compare to other towns. Jack said it's a mixed bag. Our dispatchers are not unionized, but the other towns are. Jim Lehan said we looked at the regional dispatch in another town, and we are comparable. Jim said as far as police officers salaries, we are a little low for the younger officers, but we have 4 or 5 higher officers that are going to be retiring soon. We will be getting rid of a lot of high salaries. Jack said we are facing 2 retirements soon – one is a mandatory because the officer will be 65, and one is a disability.

Jack said capital will be discussed at the next Selectmen's meeting.

Julie reviewed the employee benefits with the Board. Jonathan asked if we have an incentive to have employees opt out of insurance. We said no, but we've discussed it. There was a lot of discussion about the health insurance plan, and the share the Town pays.

Archie asked about retirement. Julie said that we need to be fully funded in 2035.

Jack discussed the Capital List. He mentioned DPW items. Two police cruisers are on the list. Fire Dept. Marine 1 request and personal protective gear dryer is on the list. The schools have 3 requests. Underground storage tank, driveway at H. Olive Day School needs substantial work, and roof repair. First two are priority, and roof repair can be held off. Jack is trying to figure out how much free cash we'll have. KP will not be making a capital request this year.

Julie and Jack tried to think of new ways of revenue that could be earmarked for things like vehicle stabilization or capital.

Jack said that we have added a 20-hour position to the IT staff on the municipal side. Otherwise, there are no new positions.

Arlie would like to see the savings that we get from the solar. He would like it visible. Jack will put this together.

Dave would like a money in, money out on each revolving fund. Julie will put that together. Hold off on approving article until the next few weeks.

Dave asked if we could have Loraine in on the 6<sup>th</sup> to do the Assessors' articles.

Dave said he would like to approve the rest of the articles next week, as well as approve all the minutes next week.

A motion to adjourn was made by Arthur Frontczak. It was seconded by Arlie Sterling and **so voted. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m.**

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