

Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 25, 2018

Present was: Jack Hathaway, Town Administrator, Todd Lindmark, Finance Director, Stephen McDonough, Joyce Terrio, Jim T., Arlie Sterling, Brian Beachkofski, Chief Bushnell, Pat Snead and Peg Drisko.

The meeting was called to order by Stephen McDonough at 7PM.

Audience: Anthony Turi

Article 12: Anthony Turi spoke to the Citizens Petition this is a copy of Westwood's recall position and they operate under a Charter. Anthony does not believe it should go to the legislature. The article is missing a section (section 7). It speaks to not recalling anyone after the first 90 of the election. It is a sore loser provision. This petition is missing that and it means that someone can do the recall the minute someone is elected. Anthony recommends sending it to a committee to study or indefinitely postponing it.

Jack does not believe in local politics in having a recall. They can be emotional and he has spoken to other Town Administrators. Most of our boards only serve three years so there is the ability to vote them out. He does not see the need to have a local recall provision. Arlie asked what the average turnout is for a local election. Jonathan asked how many votes would be needed to get the recall started. 200 votes would be required. Steve said he agrees with Jack and that some of the recalls can be led by special interests groups or a group that may have a vendetta against someone. Democracy is supposed to have the opportunity to allow the person elected to govern as they were just voted for.

Jonathan asked how many people are hold paid positions that are voted into office. Jack said only the Town Clerk is an elected paid position. He believes this would prevent people from wanting to volunteer at all.

Joyce said you can petition the state and have them investigate and if it is egregious enough the State will do something. Joyce said the town has other options.

Arlie said if the petitioner was here to explain this it would best. He does not believe that is necessary and that 200 people would be a stiff bar and the town doesn't have a mechanism for recalling someone. He feels if there are 200 registered voters who wanted to act upon this he believes that would be ok. Steve said that if you are elected into the office why you should have to go through that all over again.

Jonathan said put best intentions aside and if someone wins 800 to 200 and the 200 people that voted against that person and did not want that person in office if approved could start the recall provision. Peg said in a tighter election with 100 votes apart this could happen. Jon said if there were parameters he would feel better about this. 200 to initiate and 15 % you would need to get 900 signatures to move forward. Joyce asked how much a regular election costs Anthony said about 10,000 but he could not

confirm that number. Steve said he felt the study committee should study this down the road. Steve believes like Jonathan that it should be only for serious egregious acts.

Brian asked since this can be handled by a Bylaws or a Study Committee.

A motion was made by Arlie Sterling to IP Article 12. It was seconded by Pat Snead and so voted. All were in favor.

Article 14:

A motion was made by Arlie Sterling to re-open Article 14. It was seconded by Peg Drisko and so voted. Susan Jacobson said that the Town Clerk would like some additional time evaluate this and felt the AC should allow her that time.

A motion was made by Arlie Sterling to allow additional time for the Town Clerk to evaluate this article. It was seconded by Peg Drisko and so voted. All were in favor.

Article 6:

Water Budget: Jack stated that Bob McGhee was happy to come in but his budget is only up ½ percent and Jack said he would present this budget and answer any questions.

There are no significant changes being made to the operation this year. The day to day budget will stay the same they would like to put more money into the roads. The overall operational budget is relatively flat. Different chemicals are being used and that is more expensive but it is more corrosive and we are returning to the less corrosive materials. Jim asked if the same number of user's are using the transfer station Jack said the numbers are pretty close. They will be the paving the lot this year.

A motion was made by Joyce Terrio to approve the Water Budget as presented. It was seconded by Brian Beachkofski and so voted.

Town Budget:

Jack discussed new growth (see presentation): Free cash used last year was \$300,000 this year we are using \$380,000 of free cash. Available free cash \$1.5 million dollars.

Jack said we will hold off on most of capital until the fall because of the budget. We have \$684,000 of free cash. They are proposing that \$380,000 be used for the operating budget and \$91,000 for Transfers. They are not proposing to close the snow and ice deficit it us just under 200k they would like to keep the free cash available in reserves on our balance sheet. This number would roll into the 2019 and they can transfer what is needed at a later date.

Brian Beachkofski asked how the balance got to \$1.5 million and are we taking it down to zero. Todd provided an explanation. Jack said we can only overspend elections and snow and ice budgets. Jack said generally we have \$600 to \$800 in free cash and they are typically conservative with the numbers.

Jack said we have not taken money out of the stabilization account since 2003.

Jack spoke about the major expense components see handout

All expenses are up \$1.5 million dollars. Arlie asked if the retirement covered the costs of KP Jack said it does not cover teachers, their retirement is paid into a state retirement.

Jack said we reached out to KP to say that we could only give a 4% they wanted in the 7% range. They are now at 5.71% this is about \$100,000 more than we would like to pay. There will be a co-quorum meeting and we would like more information and what we would propose we do not have money in free cash and we cannot devastate departments we could have them come pitch to town meeting for us to remove money from the stabilization account. Jack said that it might be an ok process is because we have been putting money into the stabilization fund because we were at the low end of the formula now we are at the high end of the formula and we may need to take from our rainy day fund. Jim is concerned that it may not get the 7/8ths vote that it needs. Jack said he understands they have budget challenges but at the end of the day we can only pay what we can pay.

Brian asked about the facilities maintenance line there appears to be a significant increase. Jack said we are adding the Police Station and that is a major driver of that increase. The town will get some revenue from the MECC center about \$100,000 the total broken down is \$50,000 in rent and \$50,000 to help cover maintenance costs. Maintenance is also taking on some DPW's maintenance and we have had an electricity increase. Joyce asked if the \$350k that came out of free cash did it go to one area or did get spread out.

The Fire Department has had an injury and the storms that we have had has increased their salary expenses up \$40,000 in salaries. The Building Department has had many more inspections than anticipated. They need an additional \$15,000 the Facilities Electrical expenses is \$45,000 higher and the Zoning Board has some legal expenses that relate to the number of 40 b projects. The ZBA came to the Selectman and requested the ability to hire some Consultants and Special Counsel Services along with a LSP and a Scientist Hydrologist. We had originally budget \$10,000 and they have gone above and beyond that number and need an additional \$29,000. There is a very difficult one coming up they hope to push that to the applicant ledger.

Jack said there are two capital items one is the ambulance rescue 2 needs to be replaced it is originally a five year /10 year period it now needs to be a four year turn around this particular. 265k for ambulance and the software that is needed for the \$30,000 all in 295 they will ask for borrowing authorization and after approval BAND a short term borrowing note 5-10 years and pay it back with ambulance receipts. They would shoot for a five year term.

Arlie said no one is debating that we should get an ambulance but how we purchase is the question do we borrow, do we pay cash or do we do a bit of both. Arlie wondered if we should consider Borrowing vs. Buying imagine freeing up \$60,000 a year for KP if we pay cash for the ambulance this year.

Todd said he proposed borrowing because is cheap to borrow and to have it as a program on a going forward program buying an ambulance each five years. Jim T said he would like to agree with the recommendation that Jack and Todd have proposed Joyce agrees with staying on the conservative side.

Jack said we could look at a budget committee going forward Joyce side they sat for weeks and went through each line item.

Article 9: Capital Borrowing Authority

A motion was made by Jim T to borrow the necessary funding for the Ambulance. It was seconded by Joyce Terrio and so voted. Arlie Sterling was opposed and voted no.

A motion to re-open article 9 was made by Joyce Terrio. It was seconded by Brian Beachkofski. All were in favor.

A motion to approve to IP the borrowing of ambulance out of ambulance receipts was made by Pat Snead. It was seconded by Joyce Terrio. Arlie proposes to buy the ambulance using if he can't specify the financing Jack said he can specify the funds. Arlie would like to use the Identified ambulance receipts to purchase the ambulance. Brian said it limits the option to finance any purchase of the \$300,000 Brian said they could have chosen cash, borrow or anywhere in between. One vote by Arlie in favor all others opposed. A new motion was made by Jim T to borrow the funds for a new ambulance as presented. It was seconded by Joyce Terrio and so voted. Arlie was opposed.

Revolving Funds Jack said they need to remain open for now but next year they will be looking into lowering the number of revolving funds.

Affordable Housing language change Article 15: Jack said on page two there is some language change based on the feedback from the board. The motion would be as shown with the modification on the screen.

Arlie appreciated the changes and Rich listening to their feedback.

New warrant was acceptable.

Joyce asked Chief Bushnell if there is any chance the budget figures will change. He said it is a slim possibility. He said he would like to bring on the 14th person. As they move forward to the calendar year they may be able to bring that 14th person on board. Peg asked how to prevent the 14th person from leaving to another department. He does not have the answer for that.

Jonathan thanked the Chief for his presentation. The \$20,000 figure would cover the gaps Jonathan asked what the cost would be to hire the 14th firefighter. It would be a \$60,000 cost. Jonathan asked if the ambulance receipts could be used to fund this position. There is a move to make the ambulance self-funded. Jonathan said we just voted to borrow for the ambulance we have \$350,000 and the Chief is saying a there is a clear and present danger and the \$20,000 would plug the holes and the 14th person would cover those holes.

There was some additional discussion around the hiring of a 14th person. It will be discussed further down the road.

A motion to adjourn was made at 9:25PM by Jonathan Hurwitz. It was seconded by Joyce Terrio and so voted. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved Via e-mail

Stephen McDonough, Chair

Susan Jacobson

Susan Jacobson, Administrator

* re-approved 2/12/2020