

## Advisory Committee

### Meeting Minutes

October 16, 2019

Present: Arthur Frontczak, Dave Lutes, Jon Hurwitz, Mike Hough, Kristen Balash and Susan Jacobson

Arthur Frontczak called the meeting to order at 7:01PM.

Arthur stated that the Committee would receive an update from Town Administrator Blythe Robinson and then move on to any articles that we can vote and assign.

Blythe stated that the Select Board decided last night that articles 19-23 are going to go first on the Warrant.

She added that the version in the current draft warrant is written to look like one article, with one motion for the whole thing. The potential final format is currently being discussed with the Attorney General's Office and Town Counsel.

Also, The Select Board will sign the Warrant on the 29<sup>th</sup> and the Committee will fill in the Advisory's recommendations and get it out by the 4<sup>th</sup> of November.

Blythe and Todd Lindmark, town Finance Director, presented the board with a few changes to the articles. They are:

1. Added \$15,000 for the defense of Rockwood Road
2. For the Snow and Ice budget, it was decided to use Free Cash
3. The Select Board felt strongly that there needed to be an increase to fund roadway improvements Blythe passed out the presentation made by the DPW last night. Todd and Blythe had determined that they did not want to continue to use Free Cash. Their recommendation is to borrow \$100,000 and add two streets into the plan. In general, Blythe would prefer not to use Free Cash in case something comes up during the fiscal year and it would be needed. The town has some short term debt coming off and it would be responsible borrowing. Blythe hopes that this is a start and will hopefully show the residents that we are taking it seriously and will add to it each year. Mike wanted confirmation that debt spending is coming off and this will not impact the budget. Arthur asked about inside levy borrowing and what that means to them. Todd said that this would be within the budget. Blythe would like to have a policy on how we do this and that we only borrow for certain things and we get to the point that this is how it works in Norfolk.  
Mike said it was reasonable to him.
4. Blythe has discussed the issue of the new radios with the Police Chief and the town will buy half the radios this year and half next year rather than over the next three years. The new radios will work with our current system.

Blythe said that through Todd's work we got the free cash certified at \$1,142,024.00. The proposed budget spends \$496,753.07 with a balance of \$645,270.93. Kristen asked if this was similar to past years. Kristen asked if our road budget was funded and we were just adding to it. Blythe said that Chapter 90 monies is paid to each community we have only budgeted \$400,000.00 and we are trying to slowly increase funding and grow it. Blythe said we can spend a million dollars but our staff cannot carry out all the work that needs to get roads ready to pave. We have 9 employees and that work is not possible. Kristen said that she believes some people will want to know what roads will be done. Kristen asked if the information from complete streets will be used.

Kristen asked about the radios and if we reduced anything else in order to buy half now and half next year. Blythe spoke about a grant and they will put the balance of \$8,500 and \$5,000 for fire department tablets.

Dave said many years ago we had an override for roads, which was diverted after the first year to other uses, which is something to keep in mind as you develop the plan. Blythe said she could appreciate that.

Mike said that there was a question on the roll off truck. Blythe discussed the costs of the roll off truck. We would have to increase our budget to be able to contract it out if we did not buy the truck.

The committee then reviewed and acted on Warrant Articles:

**Article 1:**

A motion was made by Mike Hough to approve Article 1. It was seconded by Jonathan Hurwitz and so voted. All were in favor.

Article 2 was determined to be not applicable

Article 3 There was a discussion about what the money could be used for. The motion indicates that we would use it to purchase transportation signage.

A motion was made to approve article 3 by Michael Hough. It was seconded by Jonathan Hurwitz. All were in favor.

**Article 4:**

Jon asked if we did not match it does it mean we get nothing. Blythe said we have to come up with \$8,600.00 as a match. Jon wanted to know if it was specifically earmarked for this sign. Blythe stated that as a for instance if there was an emergency and need two signs we would not have the ability to do this.

A motion was made to approve Article 4 by Michael Hough. It was seconded by Kristen Balash and so voted. All were in favor.

**Article 5:**

A motion was made by Dave Lutes to approve Article 5. It was seconded by Kristen Balash and so voted. All were in favor.

Jon asked of the 134 retirees that are paying where does that money go. Todd said it went into the cost of the Health Insurance Fund. Jon said he understands what the projections are but where is the gap today? This is not fully funded today. Blythe said that the government accounting standards board makes us report this liability. Todd said we outsource this actuary. Blythe said we covering retirees health coverage, etc., within the operating budget. It will start to get more difficult when the Police Chief retires. When we cover the current Chief and the new Police Chief, the numbers will grow significantly. Todd said he can send the full report. It is going to get increasingly challenging as current employees retire and others come on. We need to look at other ways to reduce our healthcare costs. We need to push the state. Jon asked if there was a way to retrieve that money if people move away or pass away. Blythe said if that happened in this state then many other communities in the same situation. Mike said we can afford to put some in now and hopefully continue to add to it in the future. Jon asked if we have a buyout program Blythe said that it may not be something that helps as much as it has in other communities because our employees pay 35% of their healthcare costs and that may be high in the private sector but it is not high within the municipalities. Blyth stated that that the Trustees are the BOS, Town Administrator, TA, and Finance Director, Chair of the Advisory Board.

A motion was made Mike Hough to approve Article 9. It was seconded by Jonathan Hurwitz and so voted. All were in favor.

**Article 10:**

A motion was made to approve Article 10 by Jonathan Hurwitz. It was second by Kristen Balash and so voted. All were in favor.

**Article 12:**

A motion was made by Dave Lutes to approve Article 12. It was seconded Mike Hough and so voted. All were in favor.

**Article 13:**

A motion was made by Mike Hough to approve Article 13. It was seconded by Kristen Balash and so voted. All were in favor.

**Article 14:**

Blythe said that Barbara Barthomeau made a great presentation to the Select Board and some of the work was done this spring and they wish to continue it. Arthur made a presentation to the BOS and he is directly impacted by this so he will abstain. Dave wanted confirmation that it could come out of the CPC funding. Blythe said this was tested before other towns and it has been allowed.

Jon asked why are the weeds an issue now, Arthur said that it is outside boats and geese that are bringing it from other regions and it is spreading. Jon wonders if are we just putting a Band-Aid on this should we be looking at the source and try and resolve the problem. Arthur said they lay dormant and each pods makes dozens of pods. You have to control it over five years. If we got every weed on the surface it is a multi- year problem. The only way to prevent pods from coming in is you must wash your boats prior to entering ponds and lakes. Some lakes will never get ahead of it. It will choke up the lake and turn it into a swamp. Blythe said you can use treatments to keep it at bay.

Jon asked if we should be planning and funding it each year. Dave said they are town owned ponds. Dave said the Lawrence Street north end of the pond is now a swamp it used to be a pond. He is part of a homeowners association that owns part of a pond. They use to manage and they cannot afford mechanical items so they are going to lose their pond. Blythe would like it to get it into the Capital Budget or we figure out a multi- regional solution. The local community went out in boats to try. Con Com manages our open space they have to authorize it but they should not manage it.

A motion to approve Article 14 was made by Michael Hough. It was seconded by Dave Lutes. Arthur Frontczak abstained as an abutter. Motion passes.

#### **Article 15: Hold invite Ann Proto/Recreation Director**

Jon said the weather will not cooperate and the fields will not be ready. He feels that the timing would be better after next baseball season. It would not like to start this he does not believe that it will be successfully completed because of weather. He is in favor of allocating the funds.

#### **Article 16:**

Technology has changed state law that came into effect in 1989: How we handle bidding has changed this was put into law in 1936. Dave said that at one point the TA was our procurement officer is the Town Finance Director our procurement officer. Todd is not sure what our bylaws state for it.

A motion was made by Mike Hough to approve Article 16. It was seconded by Jon Hurwitz and so voted. All were in favor.

#### **Article 17:**

Blythe stated that if for some reason an article was e approved at town meeting with incorrect numbering the clerk would be able to correct this. All changes have to go to the Attorney General's Office with both a clean version and a tracked version with an explanation. Kristen said we have already approved the codification of the bylaws and they will be doing this over time. Jon wondered if both those groups make those changes. Blythe said they are not going to make any changes when we work with them we put them up we have to decide to either yearly or every other year they go up. They may make recommendation but ultimately the town will

decide to codify them and put them on the website. They cannot make actual changes to the bylaw.

A motion was made to approve Article 17 by Mike Hough. It was seconded by Jonathan Hurwitz and so voted. All were in favor.

**Article 18: POSTPONE**

Blythe said she has asked Town Counsel to get back to her with additional information. There are three sections where there is severability. The article would strike those and use this for all. This language may change so we may want to wait on that until she hears back.

Blythe wanted us to wait on the Road acceptances so we may not bring motions for those to Town Meeting.

A motion to adjourn was made by David Lutes. It was seconded by Kristen Balash and so voted. All were in favor.

Meeting adjourn at 8:49PM

Respectfully submitted



David Lutes, Clerk



Susan Jacobson, Administrator

