

**Westborough Advisory Finance Committee Meeting (Hybrid)
Memorial Hall in Town Hall, 3rd Floor.
34 West Main Street, Westborough, MA 01581
Minutes of Meeting #12 of FY24
January 8, 2024**

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TOWN OF WESTBOROUGH

DATE APPROVED: January 18, 2024

Members Present: W. Leslie (Chair), G. McMahon (V. Chair), P. Ahuja, A. Bradley (remote for part of the meeting/logged off due to technical issues), B. Blumberg (remote), J. Brandt, J. Clapp, T. Dolan, Jr., R. Shaffert.

Others Present: Kristi Williams, Town Manager
Chris Payant, DPW Director
John Arnold, Town Moderator

Call to Order and Announcements

Chair Leslie called to order the January 8, 2024 meeting of the Westborough Advisory Finance Committee, the twelfth meeting of fiscal year 2024.

Chair Leslie announced that: Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this meeting will be conducted in person and via remote means, in accordance with applicable law. This means that members of the public body as well as members of the public may access this meeting in person, or via virtual means. In-person attendance will be at the location posted and it is possible that all members of the public body may attend remotely, with in-person attendance consisting of members of the public. This meeting may be accessed remotely using the link provided. When required by law or allowed by the Chair, persons wishing to provide public comment or otherwise participate in the meeting, may do so by in-person attendance, or by accessing the meeting remotely, as noted in the agenda. Additionally, the meeting will broadcast live, in real time, via Verizon channel 28 and Charter channel 192 or via WestboroughTV's online platforms at WestboroughTV.org and Youtube.com/WestboroughTV. This meeting will be recorded and live streamed by Westborough TV.

Public Comment

None.

Discussion/vote – ARPA allocation

Town Manager Kristi Williams explained that the Town received \$5.7M in ARPA Funds, which need to be obligated by the end of Calendar Year 2024. The majority of the funds have been awarded and obligated, a balance remains of just under \$105,000. In December a letter was sent to confirm that the recipients would still be utilizing their awards. The School Department noted they would be returning \$116,000 of the available balance for their HVAC project, and the Police Department has an overage of \$83,883. \$300,000 is available; DPW received a bid in excess of their award, a \$400,000 overage for the Chlorine Booster Project. The recommendation is to award the remaining balance and reallocate the \$50,000 awarded to the DPW for the Lead Service Project. Other additional funding should be available as well. Ms. Williams recommended the Committee recommend the Select Board award up to \$400,000, so as the additional funding comes in, that would be moved to the DPW project.

DPW Director Chris Payant explained that the bid was over by \$100,000 for construction, which makes the total cost of the project go up. Mr. Payant agreed they are contracting up to \$220,000 for construction services, and not a lump sum after Mr. Shaffert stated he would agree if they only charge us based on what they spend and not a lump sum; Ms. Clapp inquired if there is a concern as to the timing, if they cannot re-obligate that contingency portion if it's not spent; Ms. Williams agreed there is a danger of losing that, and is

important that these projects are completed in time for reallocation. Mr. Payant noted the expected timeframe for completion is in late summer/early fall; within the period where they could be re-allocated.

Motion: A motion was made and seconded (G. McMahon/T. Dolan) to recommend reallocation of \$50,000 of American Rescue Plan Funds from the Lead Service Project to the Chlorine Booster Project, and further, to allocate up to \$350,000 of ARPA Funds to the Department of Public Works Chlorine Booster Project. There were some technical issues, at this point Mr. Bradley logged off due to technical issues).

Vote: 8-0-0. Motion approved by rollcall vote.

Discussion: Annual Town Meeting including:

- **ATM Articles and Budget**

Ms. Williams explained that the AFC had previously approved a Reserve Fund transfer to contract with an interim Treasurer/Collector who is continuing work on an interim basis. After several interviews they are expecting to extend an offer of employment.

The Finance Director has given notice that he will be leaving, his last day is this Friday; the Select Board will be assigning the Finance Director's responsibilities to the Chief Assessor, John Steinberg. We are asking the Select Board to approve the job description/classification plan to create a full-time Administrative Assistant to the Treasurer/Collector's office to be responsible for payroll. The Finance Director is responsible to act as the Town Accountant as well; it is in the FY25 budget to have a standalone Town Accountant position, and a Finance Director. Ms. Williams will be coming back to the AFC for a Reserve Fund transfer to fund the Town Accountant position.

Ms. Williams noted that she spoke with Chair Leslie regarding an Article on the March Town Meeting Warrant to replenish the Reserve Fund. Creating the two positions now, which are proposed in the FY25 budget, will have an impact on the FY25 because they are currently proposed for half the year.

Ms. Williams noted they will ask the Select Board to create a separate Town Accountant position on the classification plan; the March Town Meeting will propose an amendment to the Bylaw that pulls the Town Accountant position out of the Finance Director responsibilities. The Town Accountant will report to the Finance Director.

Ms. Williams noted that the draft of the Warrant Articles will be coming out tomorrow.

Chair Leslie noted that during the Finance Team Meeting it was learned that they are moving the Elections budget from the Clerk's Office budget and instead will be a recurring Article at Town Meeting due to the varying budget during different election cycles. Some election costs are reimbursed by the State. Chair Leslie noted that Debbie Leduc will be coming to a future meeting to request a transfer of funds for voting clickers.

- **Report and Recommendations**

Chair Leslie asked the Committee for feedback regarding whether to continue with the Report and Recommendations format; he noted that it will be a larger effort and commitment as there will be more Articles. Chair Leslie believes it was helpful for the voters to have the Committee Members' reasoning for voting as they did, to be included in the Books. Committee Members agreed it is valuable; Mr. McMahon suggested a live document that Committee Members could build/add to, if it is not a violation of the Open Meeting Law. Ms. Blumberg suggested capturing the essence of the Members' views during the meeting and including them in the minutes.

- **Future meeting agendas, plans, topics.**

Next meeting dates are January 18, 2024; the all-day Budget Summit is January 25, 2024; there may be a meeting January 22, 2024. Chair Leslie noted that in the Budget Book is the Capital Projects List for this year. Chair Leslie noted that at the Budget Summit meeting the Committee will hear from Police, Fire, DPW and Schools. If there are other groups that information is wanted on, it can be requested.

Ms. Blumberg requested a continued update from either the Country Club Building Committee, as well as the Library, the larger impact items. Mr. Shaffert, Country Club Building Committee liaison,

noted there has not been any activity as of yet. Chair Leslie noted the Library Building Committee will be a guest as there will be an Article at Town Meeting for the design portion of the repair. Ms. Blumberg inquired in regards to funds that were set aside for a new fire truck, if that fire truck has arrived; Chair Leslie noted that two pumper trucks were purchased and the first one is due this year, it has been a long wait. Mr. McMahon will check on this.

AFC Liaison Reports and Discussion.

Mr. Shaffert reported that the next Wastewater Treatment Plant meeting is Wednesday; he noted that the Capital Projects List did not include any of the Wastewater Treatment Plant work, and noted there may be some miscommunication.

Approval of Minutes November 30, 2023

Motion: A motion/second (R. Shaffert/G. McMahon) was made to approve the meeting minutes of November 30, 2023.

Vote: 8-0-0. Motion approved by roll call vote.

Adjourn

Motion: A motion/second (R. Shaffert/J. Clapp) was made to adjourn.

Vote: 8-0-0. Motion approved by roll call vote.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:15 PM.

Associated Documents referenced during the 01/08/2024 AFC Meeting

- AFC Meeting Agenda, 1/8/2024
- ARPA Funds Request
- AFC Draft Meeting Minutes, November 30, 2023

Respectfully submitted by Laura Clifford

AGENDA ITEM: ARPA Award

SUMMARY

As the Board is aware, the Town needs to obligate all ARPA funds by the end of 2024. On December 12, 2023 I sent the attached email to department heads who have been awarded projects to identify any available funds or expected overages. Based on the information I received as well as the updated balance of ARPA funds, I have identified approximately \$354,000 in available funds with the DPW identifying the need for approximately \$400,000 of additional funds to fund the Chlorine Booster project.

This link below shows the current awarded projects and amounts.

<https://ma-westborough.civicplus.com/556/American-Rescue-Plan-Act-ARPA-Projects>

The identified funds come from the following:

- \$104,958.47 remaining balance
- \$116,000 available from the school HVAC project
- \$83,883 available from the Police Officer hiring

Additionally, the DPW Director is requesting reallocation of \$50,000 from DPW Lead Service Line project to the Chlorine Booster.

The AFC will be considering this allocation on Monday, January 8, 2024.

TOWN MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

That the Board award up to \$400,000 of ARPA available funds to the Chlorine booster project. This would allocate the identified remaining balance as well as any other balance that becomes available up to a total of \$400,000. We do expect additional funds to become available that will fill this gap.

TOWN COUNSEL'S COMMENTS (AS APPROPRIATE)

n/a

RECOMMENDATION TO APPROVE

Move to reallocate \$50,000 of American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funds from the Lead Service Project to the Chlorine Booster project and further to allocate up to \$350,000 of available ARPA funds to the Department of Public Works Chlorine Booster project.

RECOMMENDATION TO DENY

Lack of motion/second.