

Westborough Advisory Finance Committee Meeting (Hybrid)
Memorial Hall in Town Hall, 3rd Floor.
34 West Main Street, Westborough, MA 01581
Minutes of Meeting #13 of FY24
January 18, 2024

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
2024 FEB -1 AM 10:01
TOWN OF WESTBOROUGH

DATE APPROVED: January 29, 2024

Members Present: W. Leslie (Chair), G. McMahon (V. Chair), P. Ahuja, A. Bradley, J. Brandt, J. Clapp, T. Dolan, Jr., R. Shaffert.

Call to Order and Announcements

Chair Leslie called to order the January 18, 2024 meeting of the Westborough Advisory Finance Committee, the thirteenth 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: Annual Town Meeting including:

- **Budget Public Hearing 1/23 and Budget Summit 1/25**

Chair Leslie announced that there will be a Public Hearing on the FY25 Budget on January 23, 2024 at 7:15 PM; there will also be an all-day Budget Summit a week from today beginning at 8:30 AM.

- **ATM Articles discussion/vote**

Chair Leslie noted that Members should have received the FY2025 Budget Table; he noted he is thankful to Town Manager Kristi Williams and John Steinberg for pulling that together so quickly. Ms. Clapp offered to send an Excel version to the Committee Members.

At the Budget Summit, there will be six Departments represented; Community Development (Conservation), Recreation, DPW, Police, Fire and Schools. There will be a Finance Committee meeting next Monday to transfer AFC Reserve Funds for legal fees, as well as securing staffing in the Finance Department. The Town Clerk is also looking to discuss funds for clickers for Town Meeting, as well as printing costs for ballots.

Chair Leslie reviewed the items listed on the Budget Table with the Committee. Chair Leslie explained that Operating Budgets will be discussed and voted on, the Committee will decide if more detail is needed.

The Elections budget is straightforward; it is a decision to move it out of a department budget as a recurring Article, as it varies year-to-year. Ms. Clapp noted that she would be interested in the Committee reviewing the details on this item.

Reserve Funds are a typical, annual matter; Chair Leslie noted that the Committee may want the Small Business Grant Program to come in and give an update as they did last year.

As liaison to the Capital Improvement Committee, Mr. Bradley gave an overview as to how their process works in choosing Capital projects. Mr. Bradley noted that it the process has pivoted a bit;

the biggest change is that there are many different projects moving into the Capital conversation. The Capital Improvement Committee is looking at the full scope of Capital plans for the entire Town. Mr. Bradley explained that it is not a rank and choose process, it is more of an evaluation about the items that can be agreed upon for some priority.

The process of reviewing Warrant Articles was discussed; if there are certain Articles that are of particular interest to the Committee, discussing with the experts is the best way to have questions answered. Mr. Ahuja inquired if questions may be submitted to presenters at the Budget Summit beforehand; Chair Leslie said he would be happy to forward questions to those people; this way they would be sure to cover it in their presentation.

Chair Leslie noted the Committee will want to hear from Historical Commission, as well as Open Space, Library, and Affordable Housing Trust. We will hear from Conservation at the Budget Summit, and also from the Planning Board.

- **Report and Recommendations**

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

Chair Leslie reviewed the upcoming meetings, and noted he would start scheduling people to come in.

AFC Liaison Reports and Discussion.

Ms. Clapp, School Committee Liaison, reported that Hastings School had roof replacement slated for FY26; they had some damage from the recent storm which involved substantial flooding in the school, and damage to the roof and HVAC system. The School Committee voted last night to continue the process of drafting the Warrant Article; they are hoping to use State Emergency Funds. An insurance claim was filed; insurance won't cover the roof replacement but will cover the interior damage.

Mr. McMahon, Police/Fire Liaison, noted that he had followed up with Chief Purcell regarding the Engine trucks as discussed during the Committee's prior meeting. Mr. McMahon reported that the first Engine truck's delivery date has been pushed back to April due to supply chain issues. They anticipate there may be a delay on the delivery of the second Engine truck as well to April 2025. The delivery of an ambulance is also expected to be pushed out to September.

Chair Leslie updated the Committee on the Library construction project; he noted that they did an initial cost estimate but there wasn't enough time to deliberate on it. The Library Building Committee will be meeting again to wrap up the recommendation on the repair effort and will attend an upcoming AFC meeting to go through the information in more detail.

Approval of Minutes: #12 January 8, 2024 if available.

Mr. Shaffert suggested an edit to the minutes.

Motion: A motion/second (R. Shaffert/A. Bradley) was made to approve the meeting minutes as amended.

Vote: 8-0-0. Motion approved.

Mr. Shaffert discussed the higher costs of design on many projects they are seeing; he noted that in speaking with John Arnold it was discussed that review of contracts falls under the responsibility of the AFC. Mr. Shaffert noted he would be interested in having a discussion about how some of that gets contracted and how we hire professional services. Ms. Clapp agreed that she would be interested to see how we manage those things as a Town; Chair Leslie agreed this discussion can begin following Town Meeting.

Adjourn

Motion: A motion/second (R. Shaffert/T. Dolan) was made to adjourn.

Vote: 8-0-0. Motion approved.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:10 PM.

Associated Documents referenced during the 01/18/2024 AFC Meeting

- AFC Meeting Agenda, 1/18/2024
- FY2025 Budget Table
- AFC Draft Meeting Minutes, January 8, 2024

Respectfully submitted by Laura Clifford