

WARRANT COMMITTEE FY07 MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 6, 2006
7:30 P.M. CHENERY MIDDLE SCHOOL
COMMUNITY ROOM

Meeting was called to order at 7:32 by Chairman Jones.

Present: Town Administrator Younger, Assistant Town Administrator Conti, Town Accountant Hagg, Library Director Maureen Conners, and School Committee Member John Bowe

Absent: Members Christensen, Hobbs, Oates, and Paolillo

Library Request for Increased Hours for Children's Librarian

Library Director Maureen Conners was present to discuss the impact of increasing the full time equivalents (FTE) of the Children's Librarian from 25 to 35 hours per week. Brusch felt that this department was different than others in that it was overseen by an elected Board of Librarians. It was closer to the school department budget. Member White felt that this decreases the flexibility to the department in that it is more difficult to cut back FT hours rather than cutting back on PT hours. Member Doblin asked if it was service level neutral or a service level increase. Director Conners does not feel that this is an increase in FTE since there will be a decrease in PT hours (perhaps). Furthermore, in FY08, other librarians will not receive additional hours. Doblin feels part of the study that she has been involved with, shows that part time employees that receive benefits are very expensive to the Town. If we are going to offer benefits it should be for truly full time employees. The WC does not wish to set a policy by approving changes to position hours (FTE). Heigham motion to thank Director Conners for attending this meeting. Hagg requested that the BOS revisit the request for review for changes in FTE and the affect on future budgets.

Approve Minutes of 11-8-06 and 11-29-06

After changes and corrections, motion by Hofmann to accept the minutes of 11-8-06, seconded by Doblin was approved unanimously (except Member Callanan that was absent). After changes and corrections, the minutes of 11-29-06 were approved unanimously.

Executive Session

There was a roll call vote to go into Executive Session for the purpose of Labor Negotiations. Member Doblin asked if this can come later in the agenda since there are several community members present. The WC voted to postpone until later in the meeting.

FY08 Budget - Capital Budget Committee

The Capital Budget Committee represented by Member Brusch (as Chair of the CBC) has several items which she feels should be brought before the WC. There are things being requested from the CBC that do not qualify as capital, i.e. repairs and maintenance (painting, fences). Also, there continues to be requests for technology. Ongoing replacement of computers that are bundled together to meet a price threshold is not the purpose of the CBC. Although both technology and building maintenance have needs additional funding, this year is the year that this must be dealt with. Several years ago the exact amount of technology was taken out of the CBC and put into the operating budget but those funds have since been absorbed into the budget. Member Brusch wants the reinstatement of the capital lines routinely into operating budgets. Further, department heads need to know that there is another source for these funds. The definition of capital was non recurring, \$10,000 (non-bundled), and major equipment etc. This threshold was never changed. This cost of even a copier makes the cut. The CBC generally does not fund these

lower cost items but the department heads are faced with needs that never rise to the level of being funded by the C BC.

1. Money needed for smaller purchases,
2. Maintenance was funded in CBC but no longer will be (& insufficient funds in the operating budget for these costs)
3. Technology needs

Chair White feels that the CBC must set their own parameters early in the cycle so that all parties are aware of the changes. Member Doblin asked about whether a new threshold was being considered (yes, \$20 - \$25K).

Member White asked about impacts. Member Bruschi stated that the impact of the increased threshold will be small but will force the Town Administrator and School Department to look at absorbing the smaller purchases. Member Hofmann suggests adding an item called maintenance, or equipment replacement, and let the CBC do the work that they are appointed to do. Town Administrator stated that this will necessitate a life cycle system on a maintenance plan for all purchases: carpeting, fences, painting, etc. Member Curtis wondered whether \$20-\$25K was too low and doesn't allow the CBC to focus upon the greater purchases. Doblin expressed a desire to use free cash to take care of technology and deferred work on building maintenance. BOS Chair Jones stated that if we don't give the department resources to do the work, they are unable to do their job. There is however a concern that one time maintenance that is not kept up would be a problem. Chair Jones feels that the maintenance plan being suggested by Town Administrator Younger would be a first step. Member Tillotson also expressed concerns about specialized building projects that require special equipment to maintain (for example, the driveway at the Town Hall Complex that requires a special plow and a special truck).

Chair Jones suggests presenting this maintenance plan at TM. Younger will be proposing a combined town and school plan that he will work on.

Subcommittees

Member Heigham spoke regarding the General Government sub committee. Only the Treasurer has more than five employees. There will be no unusual requests of capital or operating funds. No particular revenue changes are anticipated. General Government cannot do anything about energy savings since they do not run buildings. Regarding outsourcings: both the Treasurer and Assessors outsource some functions. It is doubtful that further functions could be outsourced because of statutory requirements as well as specialty functions. Each department stands alone and has their own statutory requirements.

Member Allison spoke regarding Public Safety. The Sub Committee has met with Police and Fire. Chief Lane has presented a set of plans and has identified some potential energy savings. The Fire Department needs training funds and is concerned that the maintenance budget is sufficient since they have significantly higher expenses with these new buildings. Regarding outsourcing there is the issue of ambulance service and the larger issue of regionalization. The Assessment Center for Police is on December 13th and the candidates may be interviewed by the BOS the week after. The new Chief would be expected to take over by the end of January.

Vote to Enter Executive Session

At 8:32 p.m. a roll call vote was taken to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining. Each member voted yes. The WC will come out of Executive Session for further discussion and agenda items. Motion to come out of Executive Session Bruschi at 9:05 p.m.

Next Wednesday 12-13-07, the Large Structure Group will be meeting at 7:00 p.m. at the CMS. Member Curtis will not be present but Chris DeLorian will be speaking on the Health Insurance Group's behalf.

Budgets will be coming out the end of January since Gerry Missal has requested an extension. The Governors budget is expected the end of February; the House & Senate budgets would be the end of April so delaying the Town Meeting (for financial votes) to June would give the Town sufficient time to do this work. The CBC has the same kinds of restraints and requires their budgets by January 10th unless the TMs are delayed until June. Chair Jones expressed a concern about the School not being able to hire in the spring if the TMs are not held until June. He urges an agreement between the School Department and BOS to allow for that early hiring. BOS Chair Solomon agrees that a plan to have a budget meeting of the TM in June. Further BOS Chair Solomon will discuss this schedule at their meeting on Monday evening. Member Hofmann stated that with the new Governor and collective bargaining this year, the Saturday meeting schedule will have to be set soon so that schedules can be set. BOS Chair Solomon and Tom Younger will be setting a schedule for those Saturday meeting.

The first meetings in January will start January 10, 2007 and will run weekly thereafter.

Motion to adjourn by Member Heigham, seconded by Member Hofmann at 9:15 p.m.