

Warrant Committee

Minutes of meeting held Wednesday, Oct. 23, 2002
7:30 pm in the Chenery Community Room

Present: All members except Penny Schafer and William Hofmann
Also present: Selectmen William Brownsberger and Anne Marie Mahoney,
Town Accountant Barbara Hagg, Town Treasurer Susan Kendall Freiner;
Town Administrator Mel Kleckner, Ass't. Administrator Joyce Munro.

1. There being a quorum, the meeting was called to order at 7:35PM by Chairman Michael Widmer.
2. It was announced that the Saturday morning schedule of dep't. heads' reports will stay the same; we will stay with 3 Saturdays, scheduled for 1/25, 2/1 and 2/8.
3. As not all Warrant Committee members received the minutes of the last meeting, we will review the last meeting's minutes at the next meeting.
4. Update by Will Brownsberger: While we couldn't get all the necessary steps completed for an Oct. 28th Town Meeting which would have dealt with the Fire Station and the Senior Center, various Town personnel are actively working with the Kendalls and the Tarabelsis and are looking at alternatives. It now seems the next date for a Town Meeting will be in Jan., 2003. It was also noted that the Planning Board has not given its support to the present proposals.

Re the Senior Center: the Selectmen have chosen the Kendall School site. Consideration was given to the cluster plan on Concord Ave. but it didn't save any money, it rearranged the order of other projects and was too dense a location. It also impinged on athletic fields.

Consideration is being given to ? a branch library at that site and possibly some additional uses.

Decisions about projects and placement must be done in context of an overall plan which considers timing of Wellington, other projects highlighted by the facility audit, road money, etc.

5. An estimation of \$150/year on the average tax bill for the fire station project was given, along with \$50/year for the senior center project.
6. From Robie White: working on budget projections along with Barbara Hagg. This will be a major item at next Warrant Comm. Meeting. A spread sheet for FY04 shows a projected shortfall of something between \$1.5 million-\$2.5million. Phil Curtis asked if this assumed insurance savings with a health insurance provider change: yes.

7. Per Mel Kleckner: all municipal contracts expire in June '03 so there are no new contractual obligations at this point.
8. Anne Marie Mahoney: request that school dep't. keep separate line items for money associated with attrition and for choice.
9. Per Robie White: Jerry Missal should list all revenues and all offsets as it is important to see gross amount of salaries and anticipated attrition. We need to understand step increases and impact of attrition.
10. Per Will Brownsberger: We don't anticipate money inflow for FY04 from McLean's or the Uplands project.
11. Barbara Hagg said there will be quarterly budget summaries so we can see spending trends more quickly.
12. Pat Brusch: the school department is 1/2 the budget so we should notify school department re comparable decrease in costs.
13. Pension Funding:
 - Mike Widmer: Issue is the Town's annual contribution.
 - Pat Brusch and Susan Kendall Freiner are meeting with the Retirement Board. There isn't much we can do since the Retirement Board is an entity in and of itself. It makes a decision and then tells us.
 - When will unfunded portion be taken care of? 2018? 2028?
 - Can Retirement Board come to the Warrant Committee with their consultants?
 - Mike Widmer: in pension every year there are on-going funds and then an unfunded piece which is the responsibility to fully fund. In the time frame of the unfunded liability what are assumptions?
 - Phil Curtis asked who decides how the pay out goes? Ans.: the Retirement Board.
 - Pat Brusch: seeks to see administrative expenditures of the retirement board as shown on an audit.
 - Next meeting: start with retirement board @ 7:30 pm.
14. Cost-cutting initiatives:
 - Purchasing: now as needed with Staples
 - Pat Morley: try going out to bid with office supply houses by giving them lists and negotiating best prices. Note: the School Dep't. orders via a few big orders per year but this might not work as well with Town Departments that have changing needs.
 - With Staples, have ad hoc ordering and multiple runs. Just the figure of \$50,000 says we should go out to bid.
14. Financial Implications of Collective Bargaining Contracts:
 - Some department heads felt constrained re staffing by contracts

Concrete steps for each bargaining unit: what is increase in salaries just because someone is here another year?

15. Branch Libraries: operating costs: Benton=\$3200/yr., Waverly=\$4400
D. Hobbs: One librarian serves both libraries for total of 30 hours/week
No capital costs in the immediate future
No savings in staff since the librarian would have to go pick up the extra work @ the Main Library
Potential for revenue enhancement if Benton branch sold? The assessed value=\$550,000
Jim Heigham: Waverly branch will change locale after Fire Station changes.
Main library has real staffing problems.
Consider moth-balling costs associated with closings, including maintenance of building.
16. Public Works Department: ? Consolidate Highway, Cemetery, Grounds portion of facilities
A report will be ready in November
17. Town-owned Vehicles: next meeting
18. Resource Sharing Among Departments
Need new mission statement, meet with department heads: a work in progress
19. Other cost-cutting issues: Gerry Missal wants to take out some things prior to town-school split, like out-of-district placement. This needs further discussion.
20. Issue of 53-week payroll this year: Selectmen support Mel's position that the 53rd week be paid to Town employees at the same rate as the prior 52 weeks. (Agree that elected officials get salaries voted on & can't change.) The Committee voted upon a motion by J. Heigham and a second by W. Flewelling to accept Mel's proposal; there was one abstention from Diane Kobus.
21. Upon a motion by W. Flewelling and a second by L. McCormick, the meeting was adjourned @ 9:48pm.

Respectfully submitted,


Linda Oates, Clerk