

THE MINUTES OF THE WARRANT COMMITTEE MEETING April 17, 2002

Chairman Brusch called the meeting to order at 7:38 PM. This is a joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen.

Members absent : P. Curtis, and L. McCormick

Also present: Town Administrator Melvin Kleckner, Assistant to the Town Administrator Joyce Munro, Capital Budget Committee Chairman Michael Speidel, Town Meeting Member Neil Wasserman (Precinct 8), Director of Finance and Administration Dr. Gerry Missal, Treasurer Susan Kendall Freiner, and Selectman Paul Solomon

Discussion of FY2003 Budget and Town Meeting

Chairman Brusch informed the Committee of the upcoming events pertaining to Town Meeting:

- Monday April 22nd -every Town Meeting member will be given the budget resolution package, but not the 5-year projection which will be presented on the 29th as a slide presentation.
- Wednesday, April 24th - Special Town Meeting

The goal is to end the 1st session of Town Meeting on April 29th. The next Town Meeting session (Phase 2) will be May 20th. There is a potential of meeting scheduled for Tuesday/Wednesday of Memorial Day week to vote on the budget. There will be two budgets to vote: a potential one if an override passed and one if it did not. There will potentially be an override vote on the first week of June. Mr. Kleckner passed out a spreadsheet indicating the Town Meeting Order. A copy is on file with the Clerk.

Selectman Brownsberger reviewed with the Committee where the Board of Selectmen are relating to the budget. Mr. Kleckner passed out the document "Draft 4/17/02" which includes the budget resolution and narrative. A copy is on file with the Clerk. Selectman Brownsberger discussed Resolution Option B, which includes the set of expenditures the Board of Selectmen would like to put back (\$750K for the Town and the \$400K for Health Insurance and \$800K for teacher cuts). Selectman Brownsberger reviewed the latest health care estimates, which is about \$300K more than previously discussed.

Chairman Brusch also mentioned an "up to \$600K" deficit in the Health Insurance this fiscal year. Ms. Munro informed the Committee of the new Health Insurance rates for FY2003:

- Harvard will be about an 11.4% increase (projected 15%)
- Unicare, the Town's Self-funded Program, will be up to a 26% increase (projected 15%)

Chairman Brusch questioned if the lower % increase will offset the \$400K for the Schools. Ms. Munro responded that since Unicare is so largely increased, the amount budgeted will need to be slightly more, about \$70K for the Schools. However, Chairman Brusch asked if there is another place where this amount can be absorbed in the budget.

Member Clark offered some wording changes in the Resolution A. He also questioned how the Town Moderator and Board of Selectmen would vote on this. Selectman Brownsberger responded by (1) taking the votes in the following order: Resolution A then C then B, (2) taking votes on all three proposals, and then (3) when taking a vote on Option B if you are willing to vote for the level service (Option C), then you should also vote for this one too. It is necessary to explain the significance of each vote to Town Meeting. It should be financially and politically sustainable. His feeling is there should be a \$4 million override on the ballot only if there is a strong vote for it at Town Meeting. Member Oates foresees some confusion in the ballot box, no matter how much information is given to the voter. Selectman Mahoney questioned if Town Meeting members should vote on what they themselves think is correct, or do they vote on what they think their precinct wants? Member Widmer responded by he or she should vote his or her conscience. Member Hilgenberg agreed with Member Widmer that a person should vote their conscience as well. Chairman Bruschi thinks that not only must a Town Meeting Member vote what they prefer but also what they think will fly with the most people in their precinct. Member Schafer and Member Flewelling also agreed.

Member Hobbs suggested having only one "yes" up-and-down vote. Member Hilgenberg does not think there will be a clear majority either way if only one "yes" vote is allowed.

The Committee further discussed the type of voting. Member Clark wondered if a Town Meeting Member voted no change, then it would be no change from what? Also, if you allow people only to vote once and you have 3 resolutions, then you run the risk that none of them pass. He thinks each resolution should be an "up and down." Member Widmer agreed with Member Clark and that it would be good to get one clear vote on a "No" override. Selectman Solomon agreed with Member Widmer and acknowledged that each option needs to be made clear to Town Meeting, saying to vote on \$0/\$2/\$4. Member Hofmann reiterated each scenario needs to be explained to Town Meeting citing what amount of services is included with each option. The education process is extremely critical for people to understand. Member Flewelling agreed.

Speaking as a Town Meeting Member, Mr. Speidel offered two suggestions: 1. In addition of \$2 million and \$4 million, give the impact to each "average" household taxes. 2. A presentation suggestion: Option C contains all of the cuts and then Option B contains all of the cuts; it's too confusing. Treasurer Freiner passed out a spreadsheet of FY03 Budget Options - Tax Impact. A copy is on file with the Clerk.

Member Clark offered a presentation suggestion based on (1) a matrix and (2) how "Option A" is listed on the "Draft 4/17/02" document. Selectman Brownsberger is hoping that total-staffing levels will be shown with each option, so that people have a sense of the size of aggregate they will get with each option. Member Clark also stated the presentation sheet would have to say "THIS IS ILLUSTRATIVE ONLY." Member Oates mentioned she preferred the format of earlier Budget Option documents that lists the amount listed along with the staffing levels and other information.

Member Hilgenberg questioned Treasurer Freiner if whether the numbers on the Tax Impact spreadsheet included the amount for the Town Hall Complex Debt Exclusion, and Treasurer Freiner responded that it does not because that impact is not felt until FY04. Mr. Speidel suggested there be one more line with the difference between A and B and

the difference between B and C. His math shows Option B costs \$292 and Option C costs \$584 plus McLean Tax Capacity.

Member Hofmann asked for an explanation of McLean Tax Capacity. Chairman Brusch explained where the figure came from and how it got there. Selectman Brownsberger stated as McLean does develop, the first taxes will reduce McLean's payment until it goes to the \$100K level. Then the Town will be able to see new growth.

Member Widmer questioned how the Warrant Committee Report for April 29th will get done and who will be doing it. Mr. Kleckner said there are the Resolutions to be included and possibly Treasurer Freiner's spreadsheet. The 5-year projection would not be handed out until the 29th. Mr. Kleckner asked Member Widmer to include methods with his narrative for the Report. Mr. Kleckner asked the Committee if their recommendations would be included in the Report? Chairman Brusch stated they would be done orally.

Mr. Wasserman questioned the Committee regarding: why are we voting on each of A, B and C rather than voting on A and then B and C to be determined by the voters on the ballot? Chairman Brusch responded we haven't gotten to that yet because it may be too confusing and there is too much education needed to get to the voter between now and Town Meeting.

Member Widmer informed the Committee on the recent State history of pyramid voting. Selectman Brownsberger has a different reason for preferring to go with one option to the voters. He would like to go to the voters unified with Town Meeting. He wants a sustainable level of spending that people think is necessary.

Member Oates questioned if the ballot could be simplified: Do you want an override? Yes or No. If Yes, then \$2 million or \$4 million?

Member Flewelling questioned if the Board of Selectmen will be taking a position on the override amount because a consensus of the Board of Selectmen will have a large effect on Town Meeting. The Board of Selectmen agreed they would take a position in time for Town Meeting.

Dr. Missal observed the Town of Carlisle uses pyramid ballots in which the questions must be separate, not contingent. As an independent observer regarding the debt exclusion for the Town Hall Complex, he voiced that you should not underestimate the education of the voter.

Mr. Speidel questioned if there was a specific capital budget number in each of the scenarios. Ms. Munro stated the Capital Budget amounts for each scenario would be:

- Option A \$1.5 million
- Option B - \$2.0 million
- Option C - \$2.1 million

Chairman Brusch explained a pyramid override will not be brought out to Town Meeting unless the Board of Selectmen bring it up on the 29th. She also reviewed there will be a vote on Option A first which is no override, then C then B and that Town Meeting Members that vote "Yes" for C should be voting "Yes" on B.

Mr. Speidel mentioned the Capital Budget Committee is intrigued with borrowing for the communications tower, which costs \$460K. Also, the Capital Budget Committee will need to know if the debt service can fit under any of the scenarios. Selectman

Brownsberger responded they would be working many financial issues in the upcoming weeks.

Consideration of Other Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles (with 14 members present)

Article 2 Authorization to Represent Town's Legal Interests

- Member Heigham made a motion, Member Flewelling seconded said motion, and it was unanimously voted in favor of said action.

Article 13 Appropriation for Design Services - Town Hall Complex

Mr. Kleckner says the Town Hall Complex Building committee has expressed an interest before the fall to appropriate some money for designs. He differentiated Article 13 from Article 11, saying #11 is broad and money can be appropriated through that Article, but that Mr. Hall said design (#13) and construction (#11) must be done under two different articles. Mr. Kleckner stated the best option is to do the design now under #13. Member Hilgenberg asked is there could be a motion to amend the Article, but Chairman Bruschi stated that it would be beyond the scope of the Article.

- Member Heigham made a motion, Member Flewelling seconded said motion, and it was unanimously voted in favor of said action.

Article 16 Authorization to Allow Consolidation of Town and School Buildings and Facilities Functions

Mr. Kleckner stated there is no specific plan, but the idea is to have Town Meeting allow the Board of Selectmen and the School Committee to continue to work and plan on this issue. Member Miller informed the Committee the School Committee is in favor of this Article.

- Member Flewelling made a motion, Member Hofmann seconded said motion, and it was unanimously voted in favor of said action.

Article 18 Amendment to By-Law - Financial Management

Mr. Kleckner informed the Committee, the Article is being withdrawn and will not be pursued as a by-law.

Article 19 Amendment to Town Clerk's Fee By-Law

- Member Hofmann made a motion, Member Flewelling seconded said motion, and it was unanimously voted in favor of said action.

Article 24 Amendment to By-Law - Composition of Board of Selectmen

Chairman Bruschi reminded the Committee they decided at a prior meeting to pass on making a recommendation for this Article since it had a minimal financial impact on the Town. After discussion, Member Flewelling made a motion, Member Heigham seconded said motion and it was unanimously voted to re-discuss this Article. Member Flewelling stated there is no reason to go to five members. Selectman Brownsberger agreed with Member Flewelling. Member Flewelling stated with three, there is no place to hide and there is more accountability, decisions can be made quicker, and meetings will be shorter than with five Board members. Member Hilgenberg abstained until she hears the arguments in favor of it. Members Miller and Hobbs abstained as well.

- Member Flewelling made a motion, Member Hofmann seconded said motion, and 11 members voted not to recommend said action.

- Members Hilgenberg, Hobbs and Miller abstained from voting.

Article 25 Removal of Town Hall Annex from Historic District

Chairman Brusch stated this Article would be withdrawn due to legal requirements for removal.

Article 26 Appropriation to Construct New Town Hall Annex

Chairman Brusch stated Article 26 is tied to 25 in that you cannot demolish it without removing it from the District. Therefore, this Article is expected to be withdrawn at Town Meeting.

Article 27 Proposal for Required Quarterly Report

Selectman Brownsberger said there was a good discussion with Jim Fitzgerald at last night's Board of Selectmen meeting. He stated there are 3 things to do: 1. Increase the volume of things on the Town's web site 2. Create and make it possible for people to subscribe to updates for the web site 3. Have some kind of newsletter so that people know this stuff is available on the web site Mr. Kleckner stated there was support from the Board of Selectmen for this Article. Also, he informed the Committee Mr. Fitzgerald stated he was flexible regarding integration with the web page. Chairman Brusch asked for a dollar figure for this Article. Mr. Kleckner said the Article was not intended to place costs in the motion. However, in order for the Warrant Committee to vote on this issue, a cost needs to be projected. Mr. Kleckner will make a motion to encourage the Board of Selectmen to develop some things. Member Hofmann wondered if withdrawing or postponing this Article until it is more finalized would be better. Member Oates, as an original signer to the Article, stated this was a more formal attempt to give residents things that would pique their interest. The Warrant Committee will wait for Mr. Kleckner's motion and will vote on this Monday or Wednesday.

Consideration of Special Town Meeting (with 13 members present)

Article 2 Approval of and Appropriation for Librarian's Union Contract

The Committee is waiting on more information regarding the contract from Member McCormick.

Article 3 Appropriation (Transfer) of Funds

Mr. Kleckner said the idea is to identify as much as possible the unexpended funds in FY02 and transfer it to the Reserve Fund. It is expected to be around \$500K, including the Snow & Ice accounts.

- Member Heigham made a motion, Member Hobbs seconded said motion, and it was unanimously voted in favor of said action.

Article 4 Authorization of Easements for Pleasant Street Construction

Mr. Kleckner stated there are no cost implications for this Article. He has asked Town Engineer Tom Gatzunis to create a table with the parcels on the list including size and temporary nature. Chairman Brusch asked Mr. Kleckner if the Committee needs to take a position, and he replied no.

Other Issues

Chairman Brusch told the Committee Wednesday May 1st the Board of Selectmen have scheduled a "Mega-Meeting." Selectman Brownsberger informed the Committee Mr. Speidel could not attend, so he would like to make it another day. Chairman Brusch stated the Warrant Committee would still meet that night since the budget is going to press shortly. Subcommittee reports will also be done for May 1st as well.

Wednesday May 8th is a possible Warrant Committee meeting.

Monday May 13th is the Board of Selectmen discussion of the Senior Center.

Tuesday May 14th is a Board of Selectmen open meeting regarding the Fire Stations.

May 15th will also be a Warrant Committee meeting (not a "Mega-Meeting") taking a vote on the Uplands, Tower, Senior Center, Capital Budget and whatever budget scenarios the Committee has.

Member Heigham made a motion, and it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 10:24 PM. Respectfully submitted,

Kristina E. Frizzell

Interim Recording Clerk