

WARRANT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES SEPTEMBER 8, 2004

Handout(s) given out tonight:

1. *Proposed Subcommittees*
2. *Fall Budget Schedule*
3. *FY04 Budget vs. Actual – FY05 Revenue Preliminary vs. New Estimates*
4. *FY04 Budgeted Revenues/Expenditures vs. Actual*
5. *FY06 Budget Discussion 8/25/04 memo from Town Administrator Kleckner to the Board of Selectmen*

Members absent: J. Heigham, D. Hobbs

Also present: Selectman Paul Solomon, Assistant Town Administrator Joyce Munro, School Director of Finance and Administration Dr. Gerry Missal, and Town Accountant Barbara Hagg

Chairman Widmer called the meeting to order at 7:40 PM. He recognized Ralph Jones and Lynne Doblin as new members of the Warrant Committee. There is still one vacancy on the Warrant Committee.

Acceptance of Minutes

The Committee discussed the minutes of the June 30, 2004 meeting.

- *Member Brusch made a motion, Member Oates seconded said motion, and the Committee unanimously voted to accept the minutes as amended of the June 30, 2004 meeting.*
- *Member Stratford abstained from said vote.*

Nominating Committee Report

Members White, Tillotson, and Brusch are on the Nominating Committee. Their purpose is to nominate the Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary. The Nominating Committee recommended Michael Widmer (Chair), Ralph Jones (Vice Chair), and Phil Curtis (Secretary).

- *Member Hofmann made a motion, Member Oates seconded said motion, and the Committee unanimously voted to accept Nominating Committee's recommendations.*

Subcommittee Assignments (Handout 1)

Chairman Widmer passed out a proposed listing of this year's subcommittees. The Committee reviewed the listing and will report any requested changes to Chairman Widmer in the next week.

Summer Task Force

Tax Exempt Properties

Member Callanan is having difficulty connecting with the Assessors Office. Chairman Widmer will also make an effort to reach Assessing Administrator Reardon. Member Callanan would like Mr. Reardon to come to the next meeting so the Committee can hear the Assessors concerns. At the minimum, we would like to know the next steps in regard to this subcommittee work.

Asset Management

Member Kobus said their Task Force plans to meet on September 23.

Non-Profit Use of Town Property

Member Curtis thinks this Task Force will recommend a set of protocols, and he would like to focus on the per pupil cost issue (see below). He added that a report should be available in October.

Building Services

Member Brusch is prepared to give a report for the next meeting (9/22). The three administrators have met this summer (Town Administrator Kleckner, School Superintendent Dr. Holland, and Library Director Maureen Connors) and have kept this Task Force updated. It is unlikely there will be a consolidation within those three groups.

Computer Leasing

Member Fitzgerald noted their report would be ready for the 9/22 meeting.

Per Pupil Costs

Member Hofmann is looking at two issues: to see if the State is doing an equitable comparison, and to see what the Town really spends on education (what is included and not included in their number). The Task Force is working on this issue along with Town Accountant Hagg. For instance, Member Curtis pointed out there is a certain flexibility as to what is reported to the State as what is included in the per pupil costs. There are sometimes agreements between a municipality's Town and School Departments. The Task Force has asked Town Accountant Hagg gather information from area towns that are comparable.

Fees as Part of Revenues

This did not become a Task Force.

Budget Ad Hoc

This will be reported as part of the next agenda item.

Consolidation of 911

Member White said it is an ongoing, very long-term project. The Task Force met with members of some local Warrant Committees this summer to see their 911 expenditures.

The second issue is to look at the feasibility of consolidating area communities. The Task Force is meeting again later this month.

Look at Town Manager

Member Heigham was not present at the meeting to report on this topic.

Overtime

This is an ongoing Task Force.

Energy Savings

This is an ongoing Task Force.

Pension Obligation Bonds

This topic will be on hold until a permanent Treasurer is on board. Member Oates asked if there is anything that will change with having an Acting Treasurer as far as the Warrant Committee's planning. Assistant Town Administrator Munro said the same expectation is there overall. Bond issues are typically done through bond consultants, so that is not expected to change. Town Accountant Hagg added we have authorization to borrow another \$4.4 million. Everything is in good shape for the next 18 months, unless something unexpected comes up.

Assistant Town Administrator Munro also mentioned that Town Administrator Kleckner would like the position appointed instead of elected. There is always an inherent risk of qualification/experience when a position is elected versus appointed. To change this, it would have to go on the ballot at an annual April election.

Selectman Solomon would like the Warrant Committee's recommendation and input fairly soon on elected versus appointed treasurer's positions. Within the State, there are more appointed than elected treasurers. Member White pointed out that even more important is whether that position is considered the CFO.

Member Hofmann is concerned that the position would be elected in April as well as the position be voted appointed instead of elected. Then we would still have a Treasurer for the next three years that would be elected, with an appointed person coming in subsequently three years later.

Chairman Widmer asked Member White and the General Government Subcommittee to work on this with Town Administrator Kleckner.

FY06 Budget Process

Chairman Widmer passed out the Fall Budget Schedule (*Handout 2*). The Budget Ad Hoc Task Force met this summer to plan the FY06 Budget process using the lessons learned from FY05. We will begin a similar process to put together a pro-forma analysis assuming certain revenue levels that includes a budget gap analysis. This process will be a little different for FY06 due to the possible override. A financial working group will

meet September 15 at 7:30 AM to look at this process. Sometime in the fall, the Warrant Committee will see the pro-forma analysis. This 9/15 meeting is not intending to include the Town/School allocation discussion; it is just bringing the information we need to be pulled together.

Chairman Widmer asked Member Stratford and Assistant Town Administrator Munro (*Handout 5*) what each side of the budget process included for FY05 and going forward for FY06. Chairman Widmer then reviewed the proposed schedule with the Committee. We may have to adjust the schedule due to a fall Town Meeting.

Member White and Vice Chair Jones will present their Subcommittee Report on October 13.

Member Curtis thinks we need to philosophically look at what level of service do we want as a Town, and how are we going to pay for it. Chairman Widmer thinks the spirit of what the Town/Schools are asking department heads is important. Member Hofmann added the need to have an alternative budget ready, or at least in discussions, in case the override does not get passed. Member Oates added that she received good feedback from the “menu” choices of A, B, and C from a few years ago.

Other

Town Accountant Hagg thoroughly explained *Handouts 3 and 4* with the Committee.

The Warrant Committee’s schedule for the fall will be September 22, October 13 and 27, November 10 and 17.

Member Hofmann made a motion, and it was voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:22 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristina E. Frizzell

Recording Clerk