

**Westwood Finance and Warrant Commission**  
**December 10, 2013**  
**Meeting Minutes**

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Chairman LeBlanc Cummings called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M.

Finance and Warrant Commission (Fincom) members absent: Rick Cocivera, Denise Murphy, Rob Uek.

Permission was granted to WestCat to record the meeting.

Chairman LeBlanc Cummings:

- Welcomed newly appointed member John Grogan. John previously served for five years on the Fincom.
- Extended thanks to all presenters at tonight's meeting.

***Town Clerk Dottie Powers***  
***Open Meeting Law***

Chairman LeBlanc Cummings stated that in an effort to continue the transparency of the Fincom's work, and to ensure the Fincom is in accord with the Open Meeting Law (OML), Town Clerk Dottie Powers was asked to attend tonight's meeting to provide some guidance on the section of the law pertaining to subcommittees and emails.

Dottie provided members with a detailed packet of information pertaining to the OML and verbally provided comments related to subcommittee meetings and email communications. Some major comments:

- Like the Fincom, its subcommittees are public bodies subject to the same OML requirements. A quorum of a subcommittee (majority) reviews and deliberates on specific issues and subsequently reports its findings to the full Fincom.
- Subcommittee meetings should be posted.
- Subcommittee members should use caution when emailing amongst themselves; suggestion for members to direct emails to Sheila who will determine how best to circulate information.

***Finance Director Pam Dukeman***  
***Financial Update***

Pam provided members with a copy of tonight's presentation. This is the first Fincom meeting that Pam has attended this season; the November Fall Town Meeting delayed the Selectmen's review of the FY15 budget until their December 9 meeting. At that meeting, the Selectmen set forth their initial plan for the FY15 budget which Pam verbally detailed.

Chairman LeBlanc Cummings suggested Pam attend the January Fincom meeting to address in more detail the Town's Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) liability.

***Board of Selectmen Chair Nancy Hyde***  
***Compass Management Consultant Tim Bonfatti***  
***Fire Department Staffing/Facilities Update***

Nancy Hyde:

- Thanked everyone for their role in the Fall Town Meeting, which was the first since the adoption of the new Town Charter. Nancy asked the Fincom to provide feedback to the Selectmen of their

view of that Fall Town Meeting; the Fincom will discuss the Fall Town Meeting later in tonight's meeting.

- This past summer the Selectmen created the Municipal Facilities Task Force to review Town facility needs, particularly those of the public safety departments as well as the University Station impact on public safety staffing.
- The Board of Selectmen previously approved the hiring of four firefighters. That process was moved forward and four firefighters will be on staff around January, 2014 (active duty sometime between July and September, 2014). The initial cost of these new firefighters will come from the University Station development agreement. That funding is not included within the 3% -4% anticipated FY15 municipal operating budget increase; these four firefighters will be funded going forward from new University Station taxes and/or mitigation/ambulance funds.
- The progress of the project will determine when hiring of the next four firefighters would occur.
- Suggestion the Fincom consider a tour of the current public safety facilities.

Tim Bonfatti:

- Provided and reviewed a handout with members.

Some Fincom member comments/questions:

- Will there be community representation on the Task Force?
  - Not at this time but the Task Force will discuss and perhaps consider that option. The group expects to make all the considerations a topic at a separate public meeting held prior to the 2014 Annual Town Meeting.
- Some property in Islington has recently been sold?
  - The buyer (of several Islington parcels) wants to work with the Town and is aware a Fire Station may be a consideration in the future. The Town continues discussions with the buyer who is interested in development of Islington as a whole.
- Is the thought to include a facility proposal at the 2014 Annual Town Meeting?
  - Although it is an aggressive time line, the Task Force is moving toward that effort.
- It would be helpful if residents knew not only what is proposed for Islington but also for High Street.
  - The Task Force will shift to review the High Street needs; i.e., what is the staffing capability that the public safety facilities need to provide in the future.
- Should a recommendation be completed in time for the Annual Town Meeting, the following is the Fincom schedule:
  - Warrant article sponsor meetings – January 28 and 29.
  - Public hearings – February 24/25 and final hearing March 24/25.
- Would Tim send the Fincom a copy of the map of potential sites being considered.

### *Approval of October 8, 2013 Meeting Minutes*

Mr. Foscaldo moved approval of the October 8, 2013 meeting minutes; seconded by Ms. Delisle. Members in attendance at that meeting approved.

### *Chairman's Update*

- January 7 is the next scheduled Fincom meeting followed by warrant article sponsor meetings on January 28 and 29.
- There will be no February 13 meeting.
- Members seemed interested in participating in a tour of public safety facilities. Marianne will discuss with Sheila when that could be scheduled and will be in touch with members.

### ***Fall Town Meeting***

Members discussed the November, 2013 fall town meeting which was the first conducted as an option under the new Town Charter. Some comments and suggestions for future Town Meetings:

- Increase resident participation at Fincom public hearings in an effort to provide sufficient background on the intent of the warrant articles and to involve residents in the extensive review undertaken by the Fincom.
  - Chairman LeBlanc Cummings previously asked Sheila to reach out to additional sources to better publicize Fincom meetings. Sheila's update:
    - Meetings to be included in WestCat's local cable station "rolling bulleting board" which includes upcoming monthly meetings.
    - Meetings will be posted on *Westwood Patch*.
    - Notices will appear in the weekly *Westwood Press*.
- Fincom members suggest by consensus that sponsors of warrant articles, including the Board of Selectmen, take ownership of their respective articles so as to provide residents with the information necessary for informed decision-making. It was the consensus of Fincom that the Fall Town Meeting did not provide adequate information to residents, particularly with respect to the Obed Baker article, which failed. Warrant article sponsors need to account for the fact that although Fincom's hearing process is transparent, most residents do not participate or view these hearings.
- Consider what the Fincom itself could do better.
  - Possibly assign Fincom member article writeups (that appear in the Fincom's Town Meeting report to residents) in January to allow sufficient review time and perhaps more clarity. This may better educate residents on the full intent of articles.

### ***Miscellaneous***

Town Planner Nora Loughnane came to tonight's meeting to address a concern over the Fall Town Meeting zoning article pertaining to the number of dogs (4) identified in the section entitled "personal dog kennel". There had been discussion during the article review period of whether that number should be 4 or 3 (which was preferred by at least one member). Nora has met with Town Counsel and the Town Clerk to further discuss whether this zoning amendment that passed at the Fall Town Meeting is in violation of or in accordance with State law.

**Meeting Adjourned at 10:15 P.M.**

**Next Meeting – January 7, 2014  
7:30 P.M., Library**