

*Westwood Finance and Warrant Commission
June 16, 2015
Library
Meeting Minutes*

Fincom Administrator Sheila Nee called the meeting to order at 7:35 P.M.

Finance and Warrant Commission members absent: Paul Bierden, Jim Ferraro, Craig Foscaldo, George Hertz, Peter Lentz, Mike Powers

Permission was granted to WestCat to record the meeting.

Ms. Nee informed members of the following Fincom reappointments and appointments:

- Reappointments – Marianne LeBlanc Cummings and George Hertz.
- Appointments – Peter Lentz and Mike Powers.

Election of 2015 – 2016 Chairman

Member Barb Delisle nominated Marianne LeBlanc Cummings as the 2015- 2016 Fincom Chairman; seconded by Margery Eramo Young. VOTE: Unanimous.

Update on Public Safety Facilities

Attending tonight's meeting were Town Administrator Mike Jaillet, Police Chief Jeff Silva, and representatives from Compass Management and Dore & Whittier.

Members received a copy of tonight's presentation.

Mike Jaillet:

- Construction of the Islington fire station is now under the jurisdiction of the Town's Permanent Building Committee.
- Fire personnel and equipment have been moved to the temporary quarters.
- Ground breaking scheduled for June 19 at 8:00 A.M.
- University Station is progressing...first housing occupancy scheduled for July.
- The police station presentation to be shown tonight has been seen by the Selectmen who have approved the design and square footage.
- The plan at this time is to seek funding at the Fall Town Meeting for the Scout House acquisition and the road work. At the May, 2016 Annual Town Meeting funding would be requested to construct the new police station.
- The police station cost will be discussed in the Fall when there is more definitive University Station revenue information. The new station cost could potentially be more than \$14M.
- The Board of Selectmen will be discussing the project (including its energy standards) at their June 22 meeting.

Chief Silva:

- Thank you to all who have worked so hard on this project.
- Chief Silva provided verbal comments on the first half of the presentation.

Some Fincom member comments/questions:

- How many prisoners are brought in to the station per year and are they brought in one at a time?
 - Approximately 200 – 300.
 - Not necessarily one at a time.
- How many people are in the building at the same time?
 - Difficult to determine; additional personnel at shift change time, officers in and out doing road work details, etc. Daytime would be the busiest.
- What is the status of the Scout House?
 - Discussions are in progress.
- What, if any, requirement is there for a fitness area?
 - Policing is a physically demanding job; many collective bargaining agreements include provisions for fitness areas. Officers are subject to various physical problems and a fitness center would help in alleviating those problems.
 - Tim Bonfatti from Compass added that all the projects they are working on include fitness rooms.
- Comment that the Recreation Department is considering recommending a community building that would provide fitness capability. Such a community space would offer a broader use for all municipal employees and residents.
- Why is there no basement?
 - It would not provide sufficient storage to justify the cost.
- Were there plans to build a new police station prior to the current request?
 - The entire building was renovated approximately 15 – 20 years ago. At that time the Police Chief indicated the Town would have to do something more substantial in the near future.
 - Since that time, the Town never felt it had the resources to undertake reconstruction. Now that University Station is here it is time to make municipal capital improvements. Also, in the last 10 – 15 years the Town has built a new High School and renovated other schools.
 - A 2010 Town study recommended a 20,000 sq. ft. police station.
- One of the presentation slides provided 1967 and 2015 program numbers. A member requested program numbers from the year 2000.
- Comment that burglar alarms do not impact the usage of the building as opposed to the number of prisoners/housing of animals, etc.
- Suggestion that statistics be presented related to the number of liquor establishments in Town, University Station development, etc., which are impacting the police.
- Comment that technology has changed the continuing need for office space; how could the current design be changed due to technology improvements.
 - Due to privacy issues, the need for police offices would be less flexible than typical office space due to technology improvements.
- Is it necessary that the office spaces be so large. The Town has many other capital needs developing soon. Is the proposed police station just too big?
 - This design is for a 50-year building; need to be careful to consider future needs.
 - As the comparative information presented tonight indicates, the size is not extravagant against peer communities.

- What steps have been taken to make the building energy efficient?
 - The approach will be similar to that of the new Fire Station; i.e., amount of insulation, etc. It will be very similar.

Chairman LeBlanc Cummings:

- Fincom does not meet again until September. We would want the opportunity for further input as the process continues.
 - The design is advancing; work will not stop during the summer. We expect bids to go out by February, 2016. If Fincom anticipates a problem, it would be good to know that now.
- Thank you for tonight's presentation.

Other Fincom Comments:

- University Station will provide some revenue; however, the size of this project is very concerning. There are many other capital needs as well as the issue of providing tax relief to residents.
- Can the Town afford at least \$14M.
- What is going to happen with school space issues.
- There has to be more discussion between municipal and school officials.
- Operating budgets have been increased by over 5%, so we have already started to use additional University Station revenue.
- Suggestion that the Long Range Committee and Pam attend the September Fincom meeting with updates on additional revenue, including the meals tax.
- What will be the operating budget impact with this new building. Fincom needs some indication of police staffing needs.
 - Mike Jaillet replied the Long Range Financial Committee has been and will continue to discuss the use of additional University Station revenue.

Approval of the March 10 and May 4, 2015 Meeting Minutes

Peter Neville made a motion to approve the March 10 and May 4, 2015 meeting minutes; seconded by Cindy Buckley. Members in attendance at those meetings approved.

Chairman LeBlanc Cummings thanked former members David Blessing and Tom Looney. Also tonight is Administrator Sheila Nee's last Fincom meeting after 24 years. Good luck to Sheila in her future endeavors.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:25 P.M.