

*Westwood Finance and Warrant Commission*  
*October 16, 2012*  
*Meeting Minutes*

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Chairman Masi-Phelps called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

All Finance and Warrant Commission (Fincom) members present.

Chairman Masi-Phelps asked if anyone wished to record the meeting; no one was in attendance.

Chairman Masi-Phelps:

- Welcome all to the first Fincom meeting this year; we will conduct some business for about one-half hour and continue at the joint Selectmen/Planning Board/Fincom meeting regarding the University Station development.
- Welcome new members David Blessing, Barb Delisle, and Tom Looney who spent a few moments introducing themselves.
- Thanks to Pam Dukeman and Sheila for conducting the Municipal Finance Workshop last month for new members.
- Members have been notified of their subcommittee assignments for the upcoming year.
- The University Station Subcommittee (George Hertz, Barb Delisle, Ray Sleight and Margery Eramo-Young) have already begun attending University Station Planning Board meetings and will continue to do so over the next few months.

This subcommittee, the Fincom Chair, Town Planner, and the Town Administrator met last week for a worthwhile discussion of University Station. This session provided the subcommittee with very useful background information as the project moves forward over the next few months.

- February 28, 2013 (snow date March 4) has been tentatively set for a special town meeting to address zoning issues related to the University Station project. Changes will be made to the Fincom's original meeting schedule for issues related to the special town meeting; i.e., public hearing, etc. Members will be notified as soon as those dates are confirmed.
- All upcoming Fincom meetings will be recorded by WestCat and can subsequently be viewed on the Town's local Channel 8.
- The first meeting of the Long Range Financial Planning Committee (LRFP) this year was held in September with another scheduled for October 17. The LRFP was formed several years ago and is compiled of representatives from various boards as well as town staff. The focus of this committee has been on long term and capital issues, financial policies, etc.

At the September meeting, the LRFP reviewed the financial policies:

- Much progress has been made on many of the targets.
- Are the targets still appropriate or should they be reviewed?
- Should there be an OPEB target? Rating agencies have indicated the Town needs to meet targets on existing policies before adding additional ones.
- Pam indicated the Town still intends to go ahead with \$435K toward OPEB on an ongoing basis.
- Discussion surrounding whether to appropriate from free cash a sum to OPEB or the stabilization fund? This discussion occurred at Fincom meetings last year. At that time and presently the thought is to achieve the Town's stabilization fund goal before appropriating any additional funds into OPEB. Another consideration is that in the future, funds can be appropriated from the stabilization fund (2/3 vote of Town Meeting) if necessary; this could not be done with OPEB funds. This discussion will surely come up at a future OPEB Task Force meeting.
- Members discussed the need to have a more reliable source of funding for capital.

- Pam reported the FY14 budget at this time appears to have no significant changes from FY13. Something for Fincom subcommittees to keep in mind is that all employee contracts will be up for renegotiation this year. The Town's ability to maintain services within Proposition 2 ½ and stay within similar operating budget targets of recent years will be determined by the outcome of those new contracts. Subcommittees should keep in touch with their department heads.
- Continuing a discussion begun last year, the Fincom requested a time line of the capital process. In particular, when and with whom are capital requests discussed and how are final items selected to be put forth to Town Meeting?

Subcommittee Reports:

- ***Education Subcommittee*** – Chairman Russ Lavoie has a meeting scheduled with the School Superintendent on October 17.
- ***Municipal Subcommittee*** – Chairman Rob Uek indicated their group has not met. A point of much interest last spring among some Fincom members was the adequacy of the Fire Department's staffing level. The subcommittee plans to continue that discussion this year.
  - Chairman Masi-Phelps suggested the subcommittee should perhaps discuss “national standards” for the Fire Department with the Chief, Pam and/or Mike Jaillet and consider how other communities handle staffing.
- ***University Station Subcommittee*** – Chairman George Hertz reported their subcommittee has attended many Planning Board meetings. Subcommittee members also attended a meeting arranged specifically to provide background information on the University Station project which was very beneficial. The project is very complicated and the February 28 tentative special town meeting presents a very aggressive schedule to meet.
- ***Town's OPEB Task Force*** – Fincom members Peter Neville and Russ Lavoie serve on this Task Force. Although a report is expected from the State providing OPEB guidelines for communities, Peter stated the Town should not wait for those guidelines. Westwood is in a better position than many other communities in beginning to address its' OPEB liability. A future Task Force meeting date has not been scheduled.
- ***Town's Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee*** – Chairman Masi-Phelps serves on this committee and there was nothing to report at this time.

*Approval of June 19, 2012 Meeting Minutes*

Ms. LeBlanc moved approval of the June 19, 2012 meeting minutes; seconded by Ms. Delisle. Members in attendance at that meeting approved.

**Meeting Adjourned at 7:30 P.M. to attend the joint Planning Board/Board of Selectmen/  
Finance and Warrant Commission meeting relative to University Station.**

**Next Meeting  
November 13, 2012  
7:30 P.M., High School Professional Development Room**