

Westwood Finance and Warrant Commission
September 9, 2014
Library
Meeting Minutes

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

Finance and Warrant Commission members absent: Barb Delisle, Peter Kane.

Permission was granted to WestCat to record the meeting.

Attending tonight's meeting to address Special Town Meeting warrant articles:

Board of Selectmen Chair Pat Ahearn	Police Chief Jeff Silva
Selectman Michael Walsh	Town Planner Nora Loughnane
Town Administrator Mike Jaillet	Compass Management Consultant Tim Bonfatti
Fire Chief Bill Scoble	

Chairman LeBlanc Cummings stated the Special Town Meeting is scheduled for November 17 and the Fincom public hearing and member voting will be held on October 20.

Initial Review of Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles

Town Planner Nora Loughnane provided members with a handout summarizing the proposed seven Planning Board warrant articles – six of which involved amendments to the Zoning Bylaw and one proposes an addition to the Town's General Bylaws.

Ms. Loughnane verbally explained each of the articles. The precise language of each proposed article could change as a result of discussions in the course of the Planning Board's public hearing (September 30).

Town Administrator Mike Jaillet distributed a list of the Board of Selectmen articles to which Selectman Ahearn provided verbal comments.

Some questions/comments:

- Fincom member Margery Eramo Young recused herself from the discussion of the "road acceptance" article concerning Phillips Way.
- In the FY15 operating budget, \$502K was approved for "University Station related expenses" funded from University Station tax revenue. It appears that we are on track to reach that amount and the Selectmen will consider the hiring of additional firefighters, police, and some inspectional service expenses.
- An article requesting the Town adopt the additional .75% on the current 6.25% excise tax on restaurant meals was discussed:
 - Two Selectmen seem to think it is time for Westwood to adopt this change for which an additional \$175K has been estimated. This estimate could increase to \$400K when University Station is on line.
 - Local businesses could comment at the September 22 Board of Selectmen meeting.

- Many surrounding towns have adopted this additional tax, with the exception of Medfield and Dover.
- Selectman Ahearn is not inclined to “earmark” these funds for a specific purpose...he would prefer to utilize some of the funds for the fire station debt service. The Selectmen will vote on this on September 22.

Chairman LeBlanc Cummings introduced Compass Management Consultant Tim Bonfatti and stated Tim has made several presentations including one to the Fincom in June. Fincom member George Hertz has been representing the Fincom on the *Public Safety Task Force* since it was first organized in 2013. The Chairman extended thanks to George for his service and that of the other Task Force members.

Tim provided a detailed handout summarizing the work of the *Public Safety Task Force* since its inception in 2013 and what work has been done during the past few months. Videos of the current Fire and Police facilities can be seen via the Town’s web site.

- Regarding the recommendation(s) to be put forth at the November 17 Special Town Meeting:
 - Islington Fire design appropriation - \$1M. This includes funding to create a temporary Fire Department at existing third base line DPW garage.
 - Police Station/connector Road design appropriation - \$1M.
- At this time it is expected that construction costs for the Islington Fire facility will be requested at the May, 2015 Annual Town Meeting and for the Police Station at the November 2015 Fall Town Meeting.
- The main Fire facility, although not an immediate priority, will continue to be studied.
 - Chief Scoble stated the Town needs to move forward and address the Islington Station and he supports the recommendation of the Task Force. The new facility will serve the department well.

Selectman Ahearn stated the Board of Selectmen has not voted to proceed with the recommendation of the Task Force; that vote is expected to occur at the September 22 Board of Selectmen meeting. Should Fincom members have any questions between now and the September 23 Fincom meeting, please email Sheila who will work with Christine McCarthy (Selectmen’s Office) to respond.

Some Fincom member comments/questions:

- Suggestion to provide an estimate of the construction cost(s) when requesting the design funds. It would also be helpful to include an estimate for the main Fire station, if known.
 - Tim replied that some funds to further study the main Fire station are included within the \$2M being requested at the November special town meeting.
- Helpful if Pam Dukeman came to a future Fincom meeting to show how the initial cost(s) as well as construction expenses will be funded.
 - Selectman Ahearn stated he expects Pam to attend the September 23 Fincom meeting.
- Comment that the Town should continue its OPEB funding and how does that fit with these facility costs?

- Westwood is doing better than many other communities with OPEB funding....the Selectmen have not forgotten about OPEB and will continue to address this at the 2015 annual town meeting.
- What is the current and proposed square footage of the Islington Fire and police facilities?
 - Current Islington facility is approximately 4,000 sq. ft. and the proposed will be 11,000 sq. ft.
 - Current police facility is approximately 6,000 sq. ft. and the proposed will be 20 – 22,000 sq. ft.
 - Selectman Ahearn added that communities sometimes do a disservice by making new facilities too small....the Town is trying to deliver certain service levels and also provide adequate space for several years to come.

Public Comment

Resident Kevin McManus, 51 Millbrook Road, asked a few question regarding the DPW garage at the proposed Islington site and the cost to continue the main Fire station study.

Approval of the June 24, 2014 Meeting Minutes

Craig Foscaldo made a motion to approve the June 24, 2014 meeting minutes; seconded by David Blessing. Members in attendance at that meeting approved.

Chairman's Update

- The Fincom has a targeted meeting time end which is 9:30 P.M. This seemed to work well last year and does not extend members' days beyond a time when they feel productive.
- A copy of the Town Charter and Bylaw sections pertaining to Fincom duties is included in tonight's packet; please note Chapter 30, Section 6 in particular.
- Thank you to members who have agreed to serve as subcommittee chairs.
- If members need information or have specific questions, please email Sheila.
- Goals for the upcoming year:
 - Transparency – The Fincom operates under the MA Open Meeting Law, which prohibits email deliberations. We make every effort to inform residents of our meetings and encourage their participation.
 - Productivity – Again, the 9:30 ending time for meetings seems reasonable. The intent is to streamline, not compromise discussions.
 - Mutual respect – The Fincom talks about sensitive issues – we will disagree but don't need to be disagreeable. Please raise your hand if you want to speak and wait to be recognized.
- I look forward to our discussions and to working with all of you.
- Next Fincom meeting will be held on September 23 at the High School Professional Development room at 7:30 P.M. Special Town Meeting warrant article sponsors will attend this meeting.
- October 20 is the Fincom public hearing for the Special Town Meeting. Members will vote at the conclusion of the hearing. This will probably be a later night.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:25 P.M.
Next Meeting
September 23, 2014 – 7:30 P.M.
High School Professional Development Room
Special Town Meeting Warrant Article Sponsors