

Westwood Finance and Warrant Commission
September 17, 2013
Meeting Minutes

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

Finance and Warrant Commission (Fincom) member absent: Ray Sleight.

WestCat was not present at the start of the meeting; however, they did arrive shortly thereafter and the Chairman gave permission to WestCat to record the meeting.

Attending tonight's meeting to address both the Fire issue and fall Town Meeting articles:

Board of Selectmen Chair Nancy Hyde	Police Chief Jeff Silva
Town Administrator Mike Jaillet	Special Counsel Dan Bailey
Finance Director Pam Dukeman	Town Planner Nora Loughnane
Fire Chief Bill Scoble	Planning Board Chairman Bruce Montgomery

Chairman Leblanc Cummings:

- Welcomed everyone to tonight's meeting and to the start of another busy year. A special welcome to newly appointed members Kevin McManus (who previously served on the Fincom) and Peter Kane.
- All members introduced themselves.

***Fire Study/Long Range Financial Planning Committee (LRFP)/
Municipal Facilities Task Force Update***

Board of Selectmen Chairman Nancy Hyde:

- Provided a handout summarizing the objectives, timeline, and next steps. Some major comments:
 - Last spring when preparing for the annual town meeting, the Fincom expressed much concern regarding the level of Fire Department staffing.
 - An outside consultant's study had just been completed.
 - The Selectmen presented and Town Meeting approved the FY14 Fire Department budget to include overtime funds for 7-person staffing.
 - The Long Range Financial Planning Committee (LRFP) was established by the Selectmen in 2003 to look at the Town's long term goals. The Committee consists of 15 members of various Town boards such as the Assessors, Tax Collector, Fincom, School Committee, etc.
 - The Fire issue discussion continued over the summer at LRFP meetings.
 - A smaller group (Municipal Facilities Task Force) was established to focus primarily on public safety facilities and associated staffing needs. A consultant (Compass Project Management) has been hired to work with the Task Force. Task Force members:

Consultant Tim Bonfatti – Compass Project Management	
Nancy Hyde, Chairman	Fire Chief Bill Scoble
Maureen Bleday (Board of Assessors)	Police Chief Jeff Silva
Al Wisialko (Tax Collector)	Finance Director Pam Dukeman
George Hertz (Fincom)	Human Resources Director Marybeth Bernard
Russ Lavoie (Resident)	Library Director Tom Viti
Town Administrator Mike Jaillet	Town Planner Nora Loughnane

- Now that the University Station project is moving forward, the Town can better consider its public safety needs.
 - The Task Force will study options such as whether there should be two or three fire stations; is there a need for a new police station; should a combination facility be considered. What are the resultant staffing needs?
 - Criteria have been developed to evaluate several options with the goal of recommending three possibilities to be discussed at public meetings early in 2014.
 - Following a decision on the best scenario, the objective is to request design (and possibly construction) funding at the 2014 annual town meeting.
- The Fire Department is currently hiring two replacement firefighters and has begun the civil service hiring process for four additional positions.
 - The Board of Selectmen has requested further clarification (particularly the timing) on the funding source(s) for the four additional positions to ensure their sustainability.
 - Chief Scoble explained the civil service hiring process which can take several months to complete.
 - The Chief also explained that having the overtime funds for additional staffing has been very successful; the program is currently under budget; staff is maintaining detailed records.
- If Fincom members have any questions the Task Force is available for discussion at any time.

Initial Review of Fall Town Meeting Articles

Board of Selectmen Chairman Hyde:

- Provided a handout summarizing the articles for the November 18 town meeting. Some major comments:
 - The University Station mitigation articles will address only the immediate payments.
 - The FY14 appropriation of additional state aid is approximately \$168K more than the annual town meeting appropriation.

Westwood's new Police Chief Jeff Silva introduced himself and provided some comments on his background and objectives.

Planning Board

Town Planner Nora Loughnane reviewed the initial zoning articles. The Planning Board's public hearing is scheduled for October 8 and the Board will vote on the articles at its October 15 meeting. A Fincom member requested a "red lined version" (old vs. new) of the articles.

Fincom Chairman's Update

- Three priorities for the upcoming year include:
 - **Brevity** – Fincom members work long days and it seems our meetings run late. The Chairman would like to adjourn meetings by 9:30 to the extent possible. Meeting guests will be asked to estimate the length of their presentations to encourage some self-discipline. This will allow the Fincom to budget its time.
 - **Transparency** – This was a major priority in the Town Charter; everything Fincom does is transparent and independent. The Commission plays a large role in providing checks and balances within the Town government and it is important that we maintain that independence.
 - **Town Bylaw - Fincom Duties** - A copy of the Bylaw pertaining to Fincom duties is in tonight's meeting packet. The Chairman read the applicable sections.

- Chairman asked Sheila to summarize her role as Fincom Administrator.
- Next Fincom meeting is scheduled for October 8 in the High School professional development room.
- October 21 is the scheduled Fincom town meeting public hearing. Article recommendations will be voted that evening and member comments will be due to Sheila by October 25.
- It is unclear at this time whether the November 5 meeting date will be necessary.
- Craig Foscaldo is the Vice Chairman for the upcoming year. The overall subcommittee assignments are included in tonight's meeting packet.

Miscellaneous

- Suggestion that fully complete warrant articles be forwarded to Fincom in advance of meetings; specifically by Friday of the week previous to a meeting.
 - The upcoming Fall Town Meeting schedule does not allow extra time for changing articles; recommend that issues wait for the annual town meeting if not fully prepared.
- Chairman will work with Sheila on notifying the Selectmen and Planning Board of the need for Fincom to receive material well in advance of our meeting so that we can undertake an intelligent review and formulate questions.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:30 P.M.

**Next Meeting – October 8, 2013
7:30 P.M., High School Professional Development Room**