

**Advisory Committee Meeting  
Wednesday, February 10, 2016  
Juliani Room, Town Hall**

Citizen's Speak:

There was no one present for Citizen's Speak.

Public Hearing for 2016 Annual Town Meeting:

Tom Frisardi called the Public Hearing for the 2016 Annual Town Meeting Warrant to order at 7:05pm. Those present included Mary Crown, Tom Fitzgibbons, Chad Harris, John Hartnett, Mike Hluchyj, Mark Kaplan, Michael Mastrianni, Frank Pinto, Alena Poirier, Sara Raveret, Mason Smith, Ria Stolle, and Scott Tarbox.

Each article was presented individually and the public was invited to comment.

Two citizens commented on Article 22: "To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, or borrow a sum of money, to be expended under the direction of the School Committee and Board of Selectmen, for a planning and feasibility study of the renovation, reconstruction, addition, consolidation or replacement of the Hardy, Hunnewell, and Upham Elementary Schools; or take any other action in relation thereto."

Quintus Medley expressed his support to keep the Hardy Elementary School open. He argued that studies show that the size of the elementary school affects the educational experience for children. He explained that many residents moved to the Hardy neighborhood for the school. He wishes the study committee had presented several options, instead of only one; he thinks further studies on how to keep Hardy open should be done. Marina Gil-Santamaria pointed out that there is an online petition to keep Hardy open that has more than 1,000 signatures. She also believes that smaller schools are better for children. She urges the Town to change course and to further evaluate how to keep Hardy open. Matthew Kelley, Chair of the School Committee, explained that the decision has been made to complete further enrollment and traffic studies at this time.

*A motion was made by Alena Poirier to close the 2016 Annual Town Meeting Public Hearing. The motion was seconded by Michael Mastrianni and approved by a show of hands. Tom Frisardi closed the 2016 ATM Public Hearing at 7:40pm.*

Tom Frisardi called the meeting of the Wellesley Advisory Committee to order at 7:45pm.

Finance Director, presentation of balanced FY17 omnibus budget:

Sheryl Strother, the Finance Director, addressed the committee. Current sources and uses were reviewed. Initially, the proposed budget was \$1.9 million over guidelines; now there is a \$997,630 deficit. Boards and departments made voluntary cuts: for example, Public Works reduced capital spending for roadwork; the Schools made reductions to their operating budget; and the Police Detail account was adjusted. Cash capital is up 15%, but is less than it started out. We are still waiting on health insurance updates from West Suburban Health. If free cash were to be used for the deficit, the reserves would be at 8.19%, which falls within the 8-12% goal. Deficits are forecasted for FY18, FY19, and FY20.

School Committee: Hardy-Hunnewell-Upham (HHU) planning:

Matthew Kelley and Sharon Gray from the School Committee (SC) addressed the Advisory Committee. Mathew Kelley reviewed the history of HHU, including the 2012 SMMA conditions assessment for all of the Town's schools; the 2012 Cropper GIS enrollment study;

and the School Facilities Committee (SFC) that was created in 2013 to prioritize the school facilities capital maintenance projects and to develop a long-term school facilities master plan. The Schools have applied several times to the MSBA for funding, but each request has been denied.

In the fall of 2015, the SFC final recommendation was presented: to build a new Upham, to renovate and expand Hunnewell, and to close Hardy. Five presentations and Q&A were held from September to November. As a result of feedback from the community, an HHU Parent Advisory Committee was formed; they met seven times from November to January. The committee was divided and ended up with a 2/3 consensus recommending consolidation to six schools. While the original plan was for the SC to request an appropriation for a feasibility study at the 2016 Annual Town Meeting (ATM), the revised plan is to request an appropriation for further enrollment and traffic studies. A final decision on the next step will be deferred until the completion of the new studies. The Board of Selectmen (BOS) and the SC will create an HHU Advisory Committee that will have mixed representation from the BOS, SC, other boards, staff, and community members; this committee will be charged with the responsibility of engaging consultants to complete the new enrollment and traffic studies. The SC plans to ask the 2016 ATM for an appropriation of \$200,000 for completing the enrollment and traffic studies. Advisory members questioned the size of the HHU Advisory Committee, how accurate the 2012 Cropper GIS enrollment study has proven to be so far, how much will the delayed start time of the project cost the town, and how long will it take to complete the new studies.

Important factors that have to be included in the decision process for how to proceed are the conditions of the buildings, the enrollment projections, and the capacity of each school. The current buildings do not support the educational programs we have today. Our enrollment has actually dropped more than predicted by the Cropper GIS study in 2012. The neighboring towns are not experiencing this enrollment drop; however, they have experienced growth in high-density rental housing and real estate development (which Wellesley doesn't have space for). Decisions have to be made regarding the capacity we should plan for, plus where to educate the children during the renovations. Consolidating our elementary schools down to six would result in a \$500,000 operating cost savings per year. There is a sample map to project what the neighborhood districts might look like with six schools—it is very similar to the map of the Wellesley school neighborhoods before the Sprague Elementary School opened in 2002.

Approval of minutes:

*Mason Smith made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting on February 3, 2016. Mary Crown seconded the motion; the motion was approved by a show of hands, 13-0.*

Old business/new business:

Assignments of write-ups for the 2016 ATM Advisory Report were discussed. The FY17 Advisory Committee budget was discussed. Liaison reports were presented.

The FY17 omnibus budget was discussed. One member questioned why more money isn't taken out of the capital budget instead of using free cash; the Five-Year Capital Plan was discussed and how the Town needs to stay on top of plans to not fall behind. One member questioned why CPC funding isn't being used for the renovation of the bathrooms at Hunnewell Field. Members discussed that because of the time the Advisory Committee spent on the two Special Town Meetings, the committee has been unable to fully scrutinize the FY17 budget; this is unfortunate. Members questioned whether it makes sense to increase the personal services budgets for both the Permanent Building Committee and the

Facilities Maintenance Department; agreements should be made as to how these departments should work together before each department ramps up their own staff. One member questioned whether it makes sense for the FMD to take over the maintenance of the Public Works buildings if it is going to cost more—why not leave things as is? One member is concerned that there is already a discussion about an override for FY18 while we are still in the FY17 budget discussions. Members agreed that any board or committee who presents to the Advisory Committee should submit their presentation ahead of time; this would allow for a more thoughtful and productive discussion during our meetings.

The next Advisory meeting will be on Wednesday, February 24, at 7pm in the Juliani Room of Town Hall.

Tom Frisardi adjourned the meeting at 10:50pm with no objections.