

**Advisory Committee Meeting
Wednesday, March 9, 2016
Juliani Room, Town Hall**

Tom Frisardi called the meeting of the Wellesley Advisory Committee to order at 7:00pm. 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 Kathleen Woodward.

Citizen's Speak

No one wished to speak at this time.

Discussion and votes on recommended actions, Annual Town Meeting (ATM) Articles 6, 7, 8, 18, 24, 26, 27, 28, 33, 34, 36, 38

Article 18

An Advisory Committee member reported on information received from the Department of Public Works (DPW) regarding Advisory members' questions on the restroom facility project. The DPW will be responsible for the cleaning/maintenance of the new restroom facilities. Security will be handled the way it currently is handled for the existing facility—there will be a keypad and the town coaches will be given the code. It does not make sense for the Facilities Maintenance Department to be responsible for the cleaning of this facility at this time. The Natural Resources Commission requires a cement/paved space for portable toilets to be placed on, plus vehicle access for maintenance of the portable toilets; therefore, portable toilets are not an option in this location. Several Advisory members expressed their discomfort with the \$300,000 price tag and plan to vote for unfavorable action on this Article.

Sara Raveret made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article 18, as proposed by the Board of Public Works, to borrow \$300,000 for the renovation of the Hunnewell Field Maintenance/Restroom Facility. The motion was seconded by Mason Smith; the motion was approved, 10 to 3.

Article 24

The Advisory Committee previously discussed this Article and members' questions and concerns are explained in the *Advisory Report*. It was noted that if Town Meeting recommends favorable action on this Article, then the decision will proceed to a Town-wide vote.

Sara Raveret made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article 24, as proposed by the Board of Selectmen (BOS) and the Council on Aging, to borrow \$7,500,000 to be expended under the Permanent Building Committee (PBC) for the construction of the Tolles-Parsons Center. The motion was seconded by Mason Smith; the motion was approved, 13 to 0.

Article 26

The proposal to improve the Route 9 intersection with Kingsbury Street has not been finalized, so no vote was taken on Article 26.

Article 27

Sara Raveret made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article 27, as proposed by the Board of Public Works and the BOS, to abandon easements at 65 Bristol Road. The motion was seconded by Mason Smith; the motion was approved, 13 to 0.

Article 28

Sara Raveret made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article 28, as proposed by the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) and the Planning Board, to rezone properties as spelled out in the Warrant. The motion was seconded by Mason Smith; the motion was approved, 13 to 0.

Article 33

The NRC clarified its proposed restrictions on paper bags in Wellesley and the updated information is available in the *Advisory Report*.

Sara Raveret made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article 33, as proposed by the NRC, to amend the Town bylaws to ban the use of plastic bags and to regulate the use of paper bags. The motion was seconded by Mason Smith; the motion was approved, 13 to 0.

Article 34

The PBC proposes three revisions to the Town Bylaws to manage its increased workload. The revisions would allow “Associate Members” to be appointed to the committee; the revisions would lengthen the period of time allowed on a proposed project from 90 days to 120 days; and the revisions would clarify the point at which the PBC is responsible for a project that must go before the Design Review Board.

Advisory had several questions about creating an “Associate Member” position. Would the position be for a defined term? Would the Moderator appoint the person? Would the person have a vote? If not, why not—if the person is the one attending on-site meetings? Has Town Counsel reviewed these bylaw amendments?

Because of the outstanding questions, the Advisory Committee did not vote on Article 34 at this time.

Article 36

Sara Raveret made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article 36, as proposed by the Historical Commission, to amend the Town bylaws to codify the authority of the Historical Commission to conduct inventories and surveys. The motion was seconded by Mason Smith; the motion was approved, 13 to 0.

Article 38

Motion 1: This Motion seeks to rescind debt that was previously appropriated. The amounts sought to be rescinded were never borrowed and the authorization to borrow the sums is no longer needed to complete the projects for which they were initially authorized.

Mason Smith made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article 38, Motion 1, as proposed by the BOS. The motion was seconded by Mary Crown; the motion was approved, 13 to 0.

Motion 2: This Motion seeks to rescind the appropriation of \$249,583 that was borrowed to design the Fiske/Schofield renovation project and to transfer this amount to the Schofield/Fiske renovation project.

Mason Smith made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article 38, Motion 2, as proposed by the BOS. The motion was seconded by Mary Crown; the motion was approved, 13 to 0.

Article 6

The BOS sets the Town Clerk's salary based on benchmark towns and comparable Series 40/50 employee salaries. The salary in FY16 was \$87,874. The proposed salary for FY17 is \$88,212. This reflects a 2.5% increase.

Sara Raveret made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article 6, as proposed by the BOS, to set the Town Clerk's salary at \$88,212. The motion was seconded by Mason Smith; the motion was approved, 13 to 0.

Article 8

Schools: The liaisons reported that getting accurate numbers from the Schools was challenging. It was noted that it is hard for the Schools to move forward with the Strategic Plan with guidelines set at less than 4.5%. The Town and the Schools need to agree on what items from the Strategic Plan are going to be implemented and then stick with the financial commitment agreed upon. Relying on the School PTOs and the Wellesley Education Foundation is not a workable model; the Schools do not want to start programs without the money required for the programs allocated in the operating budget.

There are certain fluctuations in the budget that are inevitable: special education, collective bargaining, and turnover. While some argue that the Schools should keep the number of new FTEs down by adding responsibility to existing staff, the teacher contracts often prohibit this. An Advisory member asked whether the number of FTEs might start to decline as a result of decreasing enrollment. The small neighborhood schools make it difficult to adjust to lower enrollment. Currently, 42% of the current elementary school sections are below guidelines. One Advisory member suggested that the Schools should evaluate the existing guidelines by looking at guidelines in benchmark towns. The Schools' projections of enrollment have been very accurate in recent years.

One Advisory member pointed out the extraordinary effort and collaboration among all Town members that was put into the Schools' Strategic Plan and that a solution needs to be found to enable the Strategic Plan initiatives to move forward. The Schools made significant cuts to the Capital Budget this year, and the Schools' Public Hearing was overcrowded with parents and students advocating for items to be left in the budget. An Advisory member suggested that the new Unified Plan should not only include the Town-Wide Financial Plan (TWFP), but it should also include the Schools' Strategic Plan. Placeholders in the TWFP are needed for Strategic Plan initiatives. There is a concern that the FY17 budget was balanced by putting pressure on the FY18 budget (delaying capital projects). It was noted, again, that the Town "signed off" on the Schools' Strategic Plan but now is not funding it.

The best way to limit the school budget going forward is to keep the staff count down (limit new FTEs).

General Budget: The FY17 budget is balanced by using \$2.5 million of Free Cash. The Town's reserves will be above the 8% guideline established by the BOS. The increased savings in healthcare costs were fortunate this year. One member emphasized the importance of consolidating efforts among the Town departments and the Schools. One member was disappointed that the Schools' budget came in at 4.2%. There is an inherent problem with the Schools' budget going up more than 4% each year, with Proposition 2 ½. This member plans to vote against the Town budget to send a signal that the budget planning process has to be improved. One member asked whether the larger growth in property taxes from new construction might help the Town avoid an override. The committee discussed new FTEs in the FY17 budget. One member questioned the need for a .5 FTE for the Sustainable Energy

Committee; another member pointed out that the committee is required to publish a report so the committee needs administrative help.

Sara Raveret made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article 8, Motion 1, as proposed by the BOS, to appropriate \$1,000,000 paid to the Town from the Municipal Light Plant. Mason Smith seconded the Motion; the motion was approved, 13 to 0.

Sara Raveret made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article 8, Motion 2, as proposed by the BOS, to appropriate \$153,463,908 to the Town Boards and officials for the purposes outlined in the 2017 Omnibus Budget. Mason Smith seconded the motion; the motion was approved, 11 to 2.

Sara Raveret made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article 8, Motion 3, as proposed by the BOS, to transfer \$2,498,871 from Free Cash, as certified on July 1, 2015, to reduce the tax rate. Mason Smith seconded the motion; the motion was approved, 13 to 0.

Approval of minutes

None were presented at this time.

Old business/new business

Liaisons discussed updates on the Hardy-Hunnewell-Upham project.

The *Advisory Report* was discussed. More work is needed on the Article 8 write-up, plus a few sections have not yet been submitted. The Report goes to the printer on Friday 3/11.

The next Advisory meeting will be on Wednesday, March 16, at 7pm in the Juliani Room of Town Hall.

Tom Frisardi adjourned the meeting at 10:30pm with no objections.