

Approved February 15, 2023

**Advisory Committee Meeting
Zoom Video Conference
Thursday, February 9, 2023, 6:30 p.m.
and
Advisory Committee Public Hearing
Thursday, February 9, 2023, 7:00 p.m.
Zoom Video Conference**

Those present from Advisory Committee included Shawn Baker, Doug Smith, Madison Riley, Gail Sullivan, David Prock, Bill Schauffler, Pete Pedersen, Jenn Fallon, Christina Dougherty, Wendy Paul, Susan Clapham, Neal Goins, and Andrea Ward.

Shawn Baker called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and Doug Smith took roll call of Advisory members in attendance.

Article 22– Increase in the retirement COLA base

David Kornwicz, Chair, Retirement Board, and Sheryl Strother, Finance Director, were present and provided information regarding Article 22.

Questions

- As the average retirement pay goes up, are you trying to keep the percentage that is subject to COLA increases the same?
 - Retirement periodically looks at this and also whether it is on par with social security. The average social security benefit, if employees had participated, is about \$22,000 for full career; the actual average in Massachusetts is about \$21,000. Not only does it apply for every retiree today, but it also applies to every future retirement. In determining the costs and liabilities, not only are today's participants anticipated but also those who might be retiring in the future. Retirement tries to be mindful of keeping somewhat aligned with social security to have that equity, recognizing, of course, that the average benefit is growing faster in our system.
- Why is this increase taking place over three (3) years? It looks like the one year is in retrospect. Have you considered two (2) years instead of three (3) years in the chance that your discount rate of 6% proves inaccurate?
 - No, we considered going to \$21,000 (from \$18,000 to \$21,000) in one year but we have the ability to spread the results out over many years. If the 6% is not achieved or is outperformed, that's okay, because we will be able to smooth out the financial consequences. One of the things that was considered, if we couldn't structurally keep our appropriation in line with the budget expectations, was to raise the interest rate which we really don't want to do. We don't want to backtrack the board's goal to eventually become fully funded, or the target of 110% funding. This is an open plan, with the value of benefits accruing in any particular year at about \$10 million dollars. The liabilities continue to grow, and we want to have a cushion. We don't want to experience what happened in 2008 when the appropriations stopped, and no money was put in the system for 15 years.

Advisory Committee meeting was suspended and resumed at the close of the Public Hearing.

7:00 p.m. Public Hearing on the 2023 Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles

Chair, Shawn Baker, opened Advisory's Public Hearing on the 2023 ATM Warrant Articles and provided a brief overview of the Public Hearing's procedures. The purpose and process of the Public Hearing was

described. The Public Hearing is for citizen input on the articles for Annual Town Meeting. A description of the purpose and role of the Advisory Committee was provided. Advisory does not set priorities and policies for the town. Advisory's role during its Public Hearing is to listen to citizen input and to not engage in dialogue. However, Advisory members may ask questions for clarification. This is not the time to ask questions of Advisory, but a citizen can ask Advisory to investigate a question.

Vice Chair Doug Smith took roll call, and the following Advisory members were in attendance: Shawn Baker, Chair; Doug Smith, Vice Chair; Jenn Fallon; Neal Goins; Andrea Ward; Susan Clapham, Secretary; Wendy Paul; Pete Pedersen; Madison Riley, Vice Chair; Christina Dougherty; David Prock; Bill Schauffler; Gail Sullivan.

Citizens were asked if they wished to speak to an article after each Warrant article was read.

Article 36

Paul Awdeh, 90 Ivy – is a WHS student and expressed concerns about climate change and requested support for Article 36.

Mary Gard, 21 Laurel Ave – spoke on behalf of the leadership team of Sustainable Wellesley in support of Article 36.

Josephine Okun – spoke in support of Article 36.

Article 41

Michael D'Ortenzio, Russell Road – encouraged Advisory to look at the missing middle and expressed that there is a need for more housing in town for those currently who can't afford to live in town. The 250 units will add value and it was hoped that there will a broader range of accessibility for affordable units.

Chris Clements, Goulston & Storrs attorney – representing the developer proponent of Article 41; he indicated that the client is working with a negotiating committee of members of the town to explore a broader range of affordability for the development.

Article 43

Lara Crawford, 15 Rice Street – urged support for Article 43, Motion 1 and 2, and cited reasons.

Kiril Selverov, 27 Atwood Street – expressed strong support for Article 43 citing impact to the neighborhood and damage to Fuller Brook Park.

Jeanne Mayell, 27 Seaver Street – expressed support for Article 43, and support for an objective group which would conduct further analysis.

Christie Kovacs, 20 Clifford Street – expressed strong support for Article 43, and expressed concern about public health and unsupervised kids.

Laura Robert, 10 Fremont Ave - Spoke in support of Article 43, citing protection of the night, woodlands, and neighborhoods.

Kayla Sheets, 27 Atwood- spoke in support of Article 43, and expressed a need to understand the impact of the lights on the health of children.

Christopher Spagnuolo, Paine Street – asked Advisory to reject Article 43, citing the extensive approvals and studies already completed by committees, boards, and consultants for over 11 years.

Johanna Winkelman, 23 Cottonwood Road - asked for Advisory to recommend an independent review of the proposed light mitigation polies and to recommend that NRC add a public participation process to its usage policy development.

Tom Ruddy, 28 Twitchell Street – Felt there were shortcomings with the process of approving the lights and expressed support for Article 43.

Patti Quigley, 76 Fairbanks – spoke against Article 43, citing the multiple studies of the lighting that have already been completed. In addition, the lights have been approved by the School Committee and NRC.

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Jim Miller, 50 Pine Street – spoke in support of the proposed light project and does not support Article 43.

Sarah Little, 14 Montvale Road – spoke in support of Article 43, citing the private funding of public projects as a concern.

Nancy Cooper, 30 Amherst Road – expressed support for Article 43 and encouraging further study.

Josephine Okun, - spoke in support of Article 43, citing concerns about traffic and parking.

Bill Schauffler made, and Christina Dougherty seconded a motion to close the Public Hearing.

The Public Hearing was unanimously closed at 8:07 p.m.

Advisory Committee meeting resumed at the close of the Public Hearing

Article 4, Motion 1

Susan Clapham made, and Jenn Fallon seconded a motion for favorable action on Article 4, Motion 1

Discussion

There was a discussion on the voting process. Advisory members just received the draft motions yesterday and have not had a chance to review them. Some members of Advisory were not sure they had received anything.

It was agreed that a summary of the voting process would be sent to Advisory members and that Advisory members should review presentations, minutes, and meeting videos on each Warrant article in anticipation of voting in future meetings. The voting script will be circulated prior to a voting meeting; the script will indicate which articles and motions are ready for voting.

Jenn Fallon made, and Gail Sullivan seconded a motion to table the vote on the motion for favorable action on Article 4, Motion 1.

The vote on Article 4, Motion 1 was unanimously tabled.

Administrative

Liaison Updates

MLP/Neal Goins – Article 15 is a courtesy vote for Town Meeting as the Municipal Light Board has the full authority to set and implement their budget. Article 31 requires the town to agree to waive real estate taxes and personal property from the battery storage project and accept a payment from Citizens Energy in lieu of taxes. Advisory will not be voting on the approval of the battery storage facility, just the arrangement for payment.

School/Jenn Fallon – at the recent meeting, School Committee viewed a presentation of the MetroWest Adolescent Health survey; director of HR is retiring; discussed policies; and discussed the bully policy prevention and intervention plan.

Planning/Madison Riley– Eric Arbeene is the interim Planning Director. The Planning Director position will be posted for five additional days to see if anyone from other towns is interested in the position. If no names come forward, then the board will vote to make Eric the permanent director. Planning also discussed the role of a potential housing coordinator. Planning voted unanimously to support the DEI initiative; they are rethinking the large house review process.

BPW/Pete Pedersen – DPW budget FY24 will be voted on by BPW next Thursday; it is not clear if there is any impact on DPW's articles, as the EPA has not yet come out with regulations.

Recreation/Wendy Paul – Recreation discussed new proposals regarding the Morses Pond beach house project; they have found \$1.7 million difference between prefab and regular construction. Much of the

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difference is related to site work and the difference in the site work. There will be public hearings about the pickleball courts with regard to noise.

PBC/Wendy Paul – will provide update regarding whether supplemental appropriation will be needed on Hardy.

Select Board/Doug Smith – there has been a discussion about a transportation coordinator in town to coordinate the town's transportation needs; approved two (2) 15-passenger traditional vans for Recreation and Youth Commission; these will be leased to give the town flexibility in future vehicle decision planning; approved Town Clerk's salary increase.

Adjourn

Wendy Paul made, and Pete Pedersen seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Meeting Documents

<https://www.wellesleyma.gov/DocumentCenter/Index/1986>

- TOW Advisory 2/9/23