

Approved March 9, 2022

**Advisory Committee Meeting
Zoom Video Conference
Thursday, March 3, 2022, 6:30 p.m.**

Those present from Advisory Committee included Shawn Baker, Tom Cunningham, Jake Erhard, Jenn Fallon, Neal Goins, John Lanza, Jeff Levitan, Corinne Monahan, Doug Smith, Susan Clapham, Al Ferrer, Wendy Paul, Pete Pedersen, Madison Riley, Patti Quigley.

Neal Goins called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and introduced members of Advisory in attendance.

Citizen Speak

Emily Gan expressed support for Article 44.

Jo Zhou, expressed support for Article 44.

Rhea Wong expressed support for Article 44.

Suzanne Landen expressed support for Article 44.

Discuss and Vote 2022 ATM Warrant Articles

Article 8, Supportive/Unsupportive Votes for budgets out of guideline

Climate Action Committee FY23 Budget

Shawn Baker made and Doug Smith seconded a motion for support for the proposed FY23 Climate Action Committee operating budget, including benefits and merit pool allocations, which will result in an 44% (\$35,081) increase over FY22.

Discussion

- Support was expressed for making the Climate Action Director as part of government team. As this is an integral way to put sustainability into the day-to-day workings of town. It was felt this as a good step forward. In addition, working with the central staff will give sustainability more visibility.

Roll Call Vote

Jennifer Fallon – yes

John Lanza – yes

Corinne Monahan - yes

Patti Quigley - yes

Tom Cunningham – yes

Jake Erhard – yes

Jeff Levitan - yes

Doug Smith – yes

Susan Clapham - yes

Al Ferrer - yes

Wendy Paul – yes

Pete Pedersen - yes

Madison Riley – yes

Shawn Baker – yes

Advisory voted 14 to 0 in support of the Climate Action Committee FY23 budget.

Town Clerk FY23 Budget

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Shawn Baker made and Susan Clapham seconded a motion for support for the proposed FY23 Town Clerk's operating budget, which will result in a 17% (\$67,377) increase over FY22.

Roll Call Vote

Jennifer Fallon – yes
John Lanza – yes
Corinne Monahan - yes
Patti Quigley - yes
Tom Cunningham – yes
Jake Erhard – yes
Jeff Levitan - yes
Doug Smith – yes
Susan Clapham - yes
Al Ferrer - yes
Wendy Paul – yes
Pete Pedersen - yes
Madison Riley – yes
Shawn Baker – yes

Advisory voted 14 to 0 in support of the Town Clerk's FY23 budget.

Planning Budget FY23 Budget

Shawn Baker made and Doug Smith seconded a motion for support for the proposed FY23 Planning Board's operating budget, which will result in a 20% (\$74,378) increase over FY22.

Roll Call Vote

Jennifer Fallon – yes
John Lanza – yes
Corinne Monahan - yes
Patti Quigley - yes
Tom Cunningham – yes
Jake Erhard – yes
Jeff Levitan - yes
Doug Smith – yes
Susan Clapham - yes
Al Ferrer - yes
Wendy Paul – yes
Pete Pedersen - yes
Madison Riley – yes
Shawn Baker – yes

Advisory voted 14 to 0 in support of the Planning Board's FY23 budget.

Memorial Day Parade FY23 Budget

Shawn Baker made and Jenn Fallon seconded a motion for support for the proposed FY23 Memorial Day Parade's operating budget, which will result in a 16% (\$800) increase over FY22.

Roll Call Vote

Jennifer Fallon – yes
John Lanza – yes
Corinne Monahan - yes
Patti Quigley - yes
Tom Cunningham – yes

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Jake Erhard – yes
Jeff Levitan - yes
Doug Smith – yes
Susan Clapham - yes
Al Ferrer - yes
Wendy Paul – yes
Pete Pedersen - yes
Madison Riley – yes
Shawn Baker – yes

Advisory voted 14 to 0 in support of the Memorial Day Parade’s FY23 operating budget.

Risk Management FY23 Budget

Shawn Baker made and Corinne Monahan seconded a motion for support for the FY23 Risk Management operating budget, including benefits and merit pool allocations, which will result in an 30% (\$151,378) increase over FY22.

Roll Call Vote

Jennifer Fallon – yes
John Lanza – yes
Corinne Monahan - yes
Patti Quigley - yes
Tom Cunningham – yes
Jake Erhard – yes
Jeff Levitan - yes
Doug Smith – yes
Susan Clapham - yes
Al Ferrer - yes
Wendy Paul – yes
Pete Pedersen - yes
Madison Riley – yes
Shawn Baker – yes

Advisory voted 14 to 0 in support of the Risk Management FY23 budget.

Recreation FY23 Budget

Shawn Baker made and Jenn Fallon seconded a motion for support for the FY23 Recreation Commission’s operating budget, including benefits and merit pool allocations, which will result in an 4% (\$17,511) increase over FY22.

Discussion

Clarification was provided that this increase was due to the hiring of an employee at a higher level.

Roll Call Vote

Jennifer Fallon – yes
John Lanza – abstain
Corinne Monahan - yes
Patti Quigley - yes
Tom Cunningham – yes
Jake Erhard – yes
Jeff Levitan - yes
Doug Smith – yes
Susan Clapham - yes

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Al Ferrer - yes
Wendy Paul – yes
Pete Pedersen - yes
Madison Riley – yes
Shawn Baker – yes

Advisory voted 13 to 0, with one abstention in support of the Recreation Commission’s FY23 budget.

Board of Health FY23 Budget

Shawn Baker made and Corinne Monahan seconded a motion for support for the FY23 Board of Health’s operating budget, including benefits and merit pool allocations, which will result in a 5% (\$44,083) increase over FY22.

Roll Call Vote

Jennifer Fallon – yes
John Lanza – yes
Corinne Monahan - yes
Patti Quigley - yes
Tom Cunningham – yes
Jake Erhard – yes
Jeff Levitan - yes
Doug Smith – yes
Susan Clapham - yes
Al Ferrer - yes
Wendy Paul – yes
Pete Pedersen - yes
Madison Riley – yes
Shawn Baker – yes

Advisory voted 14 to 0 in support of the Board of Health’s FY23 budget.

NRC FY23 Budget

Shawn Baker made and Al Ferrer seconded a motion for support for the FY23 Natural Resources Commission operating budget, including benefits, which will result in a 15% (\$41,764) increase over FY22.

Discussion

- A comment was made that Advisory did not receive an answer on why the extra person is necessary. It was felt that this position should be with CAC to direct the education and have the position tied to the Executive Director. Concern was expressed about this position.
- Uncertainty was expressed about supporting this budget for the additional resource because it is not defined.
- Support was expressed for the additional staffing as there is a clear definition of extra work added to NRC. It is a small group of people trying to do a lot of work.
- Support for NRC’s budget was expressed and a comment was made that this is currently a half time person and this budget is making it a full-time position working on education issues and land encroachment. All of this is under NRC jurisdiction and not the CAC. It is hard to hire part time positions in this environment.

Roll Call Vote

Jennifer Fallon – yes

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John Lanza – no
Corinne Monahan - yes
Patti Quigley - yes
Tom Cunningham – yes
Jake Erhard – yes
Jeff Levitan - yes
Doug Smith – no
Susan Clapham - yes
Al Ferrer - yes
Wendy Paul – yes
Pete Pedersen - yes
Madison Riley – no
Shawn Baker – yes

Advisory voted 11 to 3 in support of NRC’s FY23 budget.

Article 8, Motion 3

Shawn Baker made and Doug Smith seconded a motion for favorable action on Warrant Article 8, Motion 3, as proposed by the Select Board, that the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$2,627,036 from Free Cash, as certified on July 1, 2021, to reduce the tax rate.

Roll Call Vote

Jennifer Fallon – yes
John Lanza – yes
Corinne Monahan - yes
Patti Quigley - yes
Tom Cunningham – yes
Jake Erhard – yes
Jeff Levitan - yes
Doug Smith – yes
Susan Clapham - yes
Al Ferrer - yes
Wendy Paul – yes
Pete Pedersen - yes
Madison Riley – yes
Shawn Baker – yes

Advisory recommends favorable action on Article 8, Motion 3, 14 to 0.

Article 8, Motion 2

Shawn Baker made and Jenn Fallon seconded a motion for favorable action on Warrant Article 8, Motion 2, as proposed by the Select Board, that the Town vote to appropriate \$191,900,649 to the Town Boards and officials for the purposes outlined in the 2021 Omnibus Budget.

Shawn Baker made and Madison Riley seconded a motion to table the vote on Article 8, Motion 2 to take a supportive/unsupportive vote on the School’s FY23 budget.

Roll Call Vote

Jennifer Fallon – yes
John Lanza – yes
Corinne Monahan - yes
Patti Quigley - yes
Tom Cunningham – yes

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Jake Erhard – yes
Jeff Levitan - no
Doug Smith – yes
Susan Clapham - yes
Al Ferrer - yes
Wendy Paul – yes
Pete Pedersen - yes
Madison Riley – yes
Shawn Baker – yes

Advisory voted 13 to 1 to table the vote on Article 8, Motion 2.

Discussion

There was a discussion about whether the Advisory handbook allows for a supportive/unsupportive vote for budgets reflecting an increase in FTEs. The School FY23 budget has a net increase of 5.49 FTEs. The Chair indicated that the current Advisory handbook does not include FTEs as a trigger for supportive/unsupportive voting and therefore Advisory should not take this vote.

Shawn Baker made and Jenn Fallon seconded a motion to take Article 8, Motion 2 off the table and continue discussions and vote on Article 8, Motion 2.

Roll Call Vote

Jennifer Fallon – yes
John Lanza – yes
Corinne Monahan – yes
Patti Quigley - yes
Tom Cunningham – yes
Jake Erhard – yes
Jeff Levitan - yes
Doug Smith – yes
Susan Clapham - yes
Al Ferrer - yes
Wendy Paul – yes
Pete Pedersen - yes
Madison Riley – yes
Shawn Baker – yes

Advisory voted 14 to 0 to take Article 8, Motion 2 off the table and resume discussion and voting.

Discussion

Supportive Comments

- Support for the omnibus and school budget was expressed. The definition of academic excellence was questioned. It was further stated that the majority of the budget increase has to do with salaries which is determined by teacher negotiation. If we want good education then we must have good well-paid teachers. This year the school budget came in at the Select Board's guideline and the schools are able to make some important moves. They are concerned about the students' anxiety and math skills. They are adding adjustment counselors and increasing the level of math instructional support by hiring math professionals with a higher level of training. Building assistants at the elementary level are essential to provide extra support for students. The hiring of permanent substitutes is saving money and will provide staff who know the students and will help keep learning on target and be a valuable part of the school community. Enrollment is what it is and we are going down a school next year. It was felt that the School Committee and staff are trying to put into place a system for a world class education. It was felt that the schools

work hard and try to be transparent. The increase in FTEs is to support the emotional needs and math needs of students.

- Although support for the omnibus budget was expressed it was felt that the school budget should be split out of Article 8 and voted on independently. It was further expressed that we don't want to turn down the omnibus budget just because of the schools and jeopardize the teachers. But concern was expressed about the level of communication from School Committee and that they need to be more proactive and upfront things that are happening.
- Support was expressed for the school budget which is within guideline and the schools are using the opportunity to address strategic needs. Support for the permanent substitutes was expressed to provide continuity for learning. It was felt that the schools made a good faith effort to meet the students where they are now after all the disruptions.
- A comment was made that the school budget is within guideline and the work to bring it forward is from the ground up. It was felt that the budget reflects what is needed in these buildings and for the students. The schools are providing some additional stability after two years of unstable times. The permanent substitutes are providing more stability and will be employees of the district and not people coming in and out of the schools. Adjustment counselors will be looking at needs of the students. It was felt that we need opportunities to have supports in the building which is what is being proposed in the school budget. This is for paraprofessionals and building supports are being put in place. At the high school students and staff look for an extra hand from these paraprofessionals. This doesn't currently exist at the elementary level.
- Support of school budget was expressed and the schools came in within guidelines as they were asked to do. The schools' investment in math at the elementary level is important. It was felt that the full-time substitutes are also very important. The schools' core values are looking at DE&I, 21st century learning, trauma support, and social and emotional learning. It was felt that students taking a test and getting a grade does not necessarily mean they are getting an education. It was felt that students need to be able to survive in the world and communicate with people. Concern was expressed that it had been hoped that the School Committee could sit back and re-evaluate what is being done with the swing space as things might have changed. It was felt that money could be saved by redistricting early.
- Additional support and appreciation were expressed that schools came within budget guideline because in years past the schools were over guideline. The permanent substitutes are supported. It was felt that students need adjustment counselors. It was felt that school budget is not an issue in the omnibus budget.
- Speak to facts – schools did provide per pupil spending. Students are learning real world skills. The information is available. Schools are listening will be implementing an exit survey. Let's focus on facts and not get caught up in emotional information. Schools working to provide a good education and answer all the questions from Advisory.
- It was acknowledged that it is difficult to understand the school's complicated budget but the school committee has made an effort to answer the questions Advisory has had and they provided per pupil spending. It was further stated that the students are learning real world skills. It was felt that the schools are listening as evidenced by the fact that they are implementing an exit survey for students leaving the district. The schools are working hard to provide a good education and provide answers to questions.
- A comment was made that we are pricing young people out of Wellesley with the high cost of real estate which may have impact on schools. We are not an affordable town for many people. We anticipated the declining enrollment and we are taking a school offline as a response to that.

Unsupportive Comments

- One member is voting against the omnibus budget because of the acceleration of the school budget in the last 5 or 6 years despite declining enrollment and it was felt that this puts a tax burden on the town.

- A member expressed concern with omnibus budget because of the school budget. Concern was expressed about the increase in FTEs in the face of declining enrollment. It was felt that there is a challenge in leading and it is not teachers that are increasing but it is an increase in professional support. It was further asked if these needs could be withheld until we are in a better place. It was felt that the schools are moving variable costs to fixed costs. No support for the omnibus budget was expressed to send message to the schools about the concern with their budget. It was further stated that school budget increases in past years have been significant increases for several years. It was felt that these things should be better addressed in the face of enrollment decline.
- A comment was made regarding the Planning budget process and that the budgeting process that town engaged in this year was disturbing. As it was believed that an independent board should not have its budget dictated and that this is usually conversation with the board.
- Several members felt the school budget did not make sense with a decline in enrollment and that things need to be fixed in the schools.
- It was felt that the school budget should be a separate vote because it is such a large component of the town budget. The omnibus budget is not supported to send a message with respect to the schools.
- Several members expressed concerns over declining enrollment.
- A question was asked as to what steps and programs the schools are taking to address Covid impacts? An additional question was asked as to what is good education in Wellesley. It was felt that the concerns of parents are not being addressed. It was felt there isn't clarity.
- A comment was made that while the challenges the schools face are appreciated the schools should take into account what happens in the schools and be more thoughtful about spending. Justification for increasing the school budget even if it is within school budget was not seen. It was felt the whole picture should be looked at and determine how to make the schools better.
- It was felt that decreasing enrollment is a reflection on education.

Roll Call Vote

Jennifer Fallon – yes
John Lanza – no
Corinne Monahan - yes
Patti Quigley - yes
Tom Cunningham – no
Jake Erhard – no
Jeff Levitan - no
Doug Smith – yes
Susan Clapham - yes
Al Ferrer - no
Wendy Paul – yes
Pete Pedersen - yes
Madison Riley – yes
Shawn Baker – yes

Advisory recommends favorable action on Article 8, Motion 2, 9 to 5.

Article 44

Shawn Baker made and Doug Smith seconded a motion for favorable action on Warrant Article 44, a Citizen's Petition that the Town advises the Wellesley School Committee and the Superintendent of the Wellesley Public Schools that Academic Excellence shall take priority over all other programs, policies, and initiatives and take actions in that regard as set forth in the Warrant and the Motion.

Discussion:

Supportive Comments

- It was felt that although there are issues with Article 44, it is supported and the School Committee was encouraged to support it.
- Support for the article was expressed based on the number of emails received and the people speaking at Citizen Speak. It was felt that this committee is a way to get communications going more effectively between parents and the school committee. There are a number of parents who are unhappy and they don't feel they are being heard.
- It was felt that this is not a black and white issue and that academic excellence and teaching the whole student are not mutually exclusive. It was felt that more oversight is a good thing. It was felt that the schools are not hearing the parents. It was felt that there needs to be additional oversight to help with the conversation.

Unsupportive Comments

- No support for the article was expressed as it would be hard to implement. Parents can voice their challenges and communicate to the School Committee. It was acknowledged that there is concern in a segment of the parent population. The town was encouraged to listen to try to hear this group of parents and families and to find a way to address the concerns raised.
- No support for this article was expressed but a comment was made that the School Committee should understand that there are people that do not feel they are being heard. It was felt that a lot of people coming out of Covid feel very separated. The school department has been focused on children, teachers, and the support within. It was felt that there may need to be a new conversation with parents.
- No support for article and agreement with the previous speakers was expressed. It was felt that another committee to advise School Committee is not needed. It was suggested that perhaps a subcommittee on school committee to meet with parents could be formed.
- A comment was made that the school district and School Committee are hearing the community but it was felt some of the comments have been vitriolic. It was felt that a message has been sent that people are concerned. It was felt that the focus only on academic excellence is scary. Educators want to educate and this message has been heard but we need to work together to get to next place.
- It was felt that it is important that the schools listen to parents but a committee next to the School Committee is not supported. Wellesley school system educates the whole child but this article is not a means to get there.
- The article is not supported on many levels. This is not the mechanism by which the problem will be solved.
- Although it was felt that there is a message in this Article, it is not supported because policy issues should not be imbedded into bylaws. Concerns were expressed how this is drafted and the type of bylaw it is. It is hoped that the message is received and action will be taken to be responsive.
- A comment was made that the solution is to find out if there is a problem and to hire an independent consultant. It was felt that we need to be together on this and it is not a split operation
- Concern was expressed about the article and that academic excellence would be the only priority for the schools. Public schools are to educate and meet the needs of all kids. The focus only on excellence could be detrimental to some kids. Not every kid does well.

Roll Call Vote

Jennifer Fallon – no

John Lanza – no

Corinne Monahan - no

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Patti Quigley - no
Tom Cunningham – yes
Jake Erhard – no
Jeff Levitan - yes
Doug Smith – yes
Susan Clapham - no
Al Ferrer - no
Wendy Paul – no
Pete Pedersen - no
Madison Riley – no
Shawn Baker – no

Advisory does not recommend favorable action on Article 44, 3 to 11.

Article 15

Shawn Baker made and Corinne Monahan seconded a motion for favorable action on Warrant Article 15, as proposed by the Board of Public Works, that the Town vote to appropriate \$35,991,997 to be expended under the direction of the Municipal Light Board for purposes of operating and managing the Municipal Light Plant, as set forth in the Warrant and Motion.

Roll Call Vote

Jennifer Fallon – yes
John Lanza – yes
Corinne Monahan - yes
Patti Quigley - yes
Tom Cunningham – yes
Jake Erhard – yes
Jeff Levitan - yes
Doug Smith – yes
Susan Clapham - yes
Al Ferrer - yes
Wendy Paul – yes
Pete Pedersen - yes
Madison Riley – yes
Shawn Baker – yes

Advisory recommends favorable action on Article 15, 14 to 0.

An update to Article 31 was provided and there has been no comment during the public comment meetings. There is a discrete focus of the Article and it gives a mechanism if there is someone who is not permitted to use the courts. Procedures about reserving courts are not part of this at all. Other communities have similar fines.

Article 39

Shawn Baker made and Madison Riley seconded a motion for favorable action on Warrant Article 39 as proposed by the Planning Board that Town vote to amend the Zoning Bylaw by adding Section 16H. ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS as set forth in the Warrant and the Motion.

Discussion

Supportive Comments

- Support was expressed as it is important that the town work towards providing other types of housing. We are pricing a large segment of the population out of being able to live in town.

There are people who could benefit from expanding the types of housing that are available. Owner occupancy is required in one of the units.

- This is broader than Wellesley and is a statewide issue. Housing Choice legislation was passed to allow for Zoning changes like this to add more housing stock and availability to communities that need them. However, it be preferable to see a longer term than 30 days to address the long-term Airbnb rentals. Planning has worked on this for many years. Ultimately a lot of research was done in other towns. When ADUs were passed in other towns there was not a large uptick of ADUs. It was felt that ADUs will happen in a measured way.
- The Airbnb concern for a term longer than 30 days was expressed. The Wellesley Housing Production Plan speaks to maintaining the character of single-family neighborhoods and create housing diversity. Planning cites the Housing Choice legislation and feels ADUs will enhance rather than detract from single-family neighborhoods while providing ADUs housing diversity. Support for the article was expressed.
- Support was expressed and peer towns are doing this. This will help provide a more diverse population in socioeconomic status. It was further commented that we don't want to manage to extremes.
- Support was expressed as this is a good way to keep seniors in town.
- Clarification was provided that ADUs don't get a free pass on zoning laws. ADUs still need to comply with occupancy zoning, large house review, and setbacks. This is an additional use that is being put in place with a lot of controls. ADUs will help preserve the single-family character of the town and achieve housing density.
- Multiple members agreed with previous speakers and state their support for the article.

Unsupportive Comments

- It was felt that this bylaw change is overly broad and doesn't have protections for neighborhoods. A concern was expressed about multiple college students moving in and making the ADUs a party house. It was felt the bylaw needs occupancy requirements or limits on the number of bedrooms. Concern was expressed about on-street parking. It was felt that what Needham did is good with controls. It was felt that there are no limitations to prevent Wellesley from becoming a community of two-family homes.

Roll Call Vote

Jennifer Fallon – yes
John Lanza – yes
Corinne Monahan - yes
Patti Quigley - yes
Tom Cunningham – no
Jake Erhard –
Jeff Levitan - no
Doug Smith – yes
Susan Clapham - yes
Al Ferrer - yes
Wendy Paul – yes
Pete Pedersen - yes
Madison Riley – yes
Shawn Baker – yes

Advisory recommends favorable action on Article 39, 11 to 2.

Article 7, Motion 1

Approved March 9, 2022

Shawn Baker made and Patti Quigley seconded a motion to rescind the vote on Warrant Article 7, Motion 1, as proposed by the Select Board, that the Town vote to appropriate \$400,000 for snow and ice removal costs as the amount will increase due to the recent storms.

Roll Call Vote

Jennifer Fallon – yes
John Lanza – yes
Corinne Monahan - yes
Patti Quigley - yes
Tom Cunningham – yes
Jake Erhard –
Jeff Levitan - yes
Doug Smith – yes
Susan Clapham - yes
Al Ferrer - yes
Wendy Paul – yes
Pete Pedersen - yes
Madison Riley – yes
Shawn Baker – yes

Advisory rescinded the vote on Article 7, Motion 1, 13 to 0.

Shawn Baker made and Corinne Monahan seconded a motion for favorable action on Warrant Article 7, Motion 1, as proposed by the Select Board, that the Town vote to appropriate \$700,000 for snow and ice removal costs, said sum to be taken from Free Cash, as certified as of July 1, 2021, as provided in the Warrant and the Motion.

Roll Call Vote

Jennifer Fallon – yes
John Lanza – yes
Corinne Monahan - yes
Patti Quigley - yes
Tom Cunningham – yes
Jake Erhard –
Jeff Levitan - yes
Doug Smith – yes
Susan Clapham - yes
Al Ferrer - yes
Wendy Paul – yes
Pete Pedersen - yes
Madison Riley – yes
Shawn Baker – yes

Advisory recommends favorable action on Article 7, Motion 1, 13 to 0.

Minutes Approval/Liaison Reports/Administrative Items

Coming attractions

March 9 meeting - Vote on the Consent Agenda; update on Article 13 and Article 31.

Adjourn

Tom Cunningham made and Al Ferrer seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting

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Roll Call Vote

Jennifer Fallon – yes

John Lanza – yes

Corinne Monahan - yes

Patti Quigley - yes

Tom Cunningham – yes

Jake Erhard –

Jeff Levitan - yes

Doug Smith – yes

Susan Clapham - yes

Al Ferrer - yes

Wendy Paul – yes

Pete Pedersen - yes

Madison Riley – yes

Shawn Baker – yes

Meeting was adjourned at 9:17 p.m.,13 to 0.

Documents Reviewed

- <https://wellesleyma.gov/DocumentCenter/Index/1379>