

**Advisory Committee Meeting
Juliani Room, Wellesley Town Hall
Wednesday, March 6, 2019, 7:00 p.m.**

Those present from the Advisory Committee included Jane Andrews, Todd Cook, Rose Mary Donahue, Mary Gard, Bill Maynard, Paul Merry, Dave Murphy, Lina Musayev, Betsy Roberti, Mary Scanlon, Tom Skelly and Andrea Ward.

Tom Skelly called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

7:00 p.m. Citizen Speak

There was no one present for Citizen Speak.

7:00 p.m. Permanent Building Committee (PBC) and Board of Library Trustees re: ATM Warrant Article 18 (Main Library Interior Renovation Design Funds)

Jamie Jurgenson, Director, Wellesley Free Library (WFL); Marla Robinson, Chair, Board of Library Trustees; Suzy Littlefield, PBC; and Steve Gagosian, Design and Construction Manager, Facilities Management Department (FMD), presented. Board of Library Trustees Ann Howley, Ann-Mara Lanza, Ann Rappaport and Diane Savage were also present.

- The Main Library Interior Renovation project was reviewed
- The mission and vision of WFL determines the future of the Library
- The Strategic Plan was completed at the end of the last fiscal year
- Surveys, observation studies, focus groups and usage data were undertaken to determine exactly what residents want at Library, how they are using the Library now and how it will be used in the future
- Automated Materials Handler (AMH) is under construction; hope is that it will be up and running in May
- The plans for Library design, which will re-utilize and modernize Library space, were reviewed
 - Simons Park overlook – sitting area overlooking Town Hall with larger seating areas
 - Children’s Room will include interactive play spaces, more color
 - Lobby with enhanced browsing to create a “bookstore model”
 - Current media room will become a commons area, as this is currently an underutilized room; new meeting room and new conference room in that space, as well
 - Expanding number of study rooms and meeting rooms
 - Upgraded technology infrastructure
 - 6,500 square feet of under-utilized space will be recommissioned

A question was asked how frequently the meeting rooms are booked now: Around 90%; at capacity.

A question was asked about the decision to put the study rooms on the outside of the building (window side) versus in the interior: This made sense with the way the space is now along the hallway; the study rooms will not block the light entering from the windows because the study room walls will be glass; in addition, that is on the parking lot side of the building; there will still be eight study tables over by Simons Park.

A question was asked whether stacks will be removed to gain more space: A couple of stacks will be removed to create more space.

A question was asked about the media content and whether DVDs can be made available online: WFL streams what it legally can in terms of copyright; Hoopla is also offered. There was a copyright discussion about downloadable books and ripping DVDs; books are different because the downloadable copies are made available through the publisher and vendor.

A question was asked whether there really is a demand for the browsing area on the first floor and if there are other libraries where this is popular: Based on a four-month observation study, the highest percentage of browsing happens in the new area downstairs; other libraries are moving to this model (e.g., Lexington). Comments were made by Advisory members concurring that they use the browsing area.

A question was asked if the furniture will have wheels: The new furniture will be flexible furniture; not replacing all the furniture in the Library, however.

A question was asked whether technology will be prioritized over books in the Children's room: No; iPads will be moved to the back of the room in the Children's area so that patrons can see the books and the play areas first; no reduction in print materials for children. Although the Library does not prioritize internet over literature, the patrons do; upstairs, will be weeding some things out that are not being checked out; the Library is meeting the needs of the patrons.

- The details of the design budget were presented and reviewed
 - Total request is \$268,376
 - FF&E is higher than might otherwise be seen; furniture a significant aspect of this project
 - There is a \$50,000 savings by having FMD serve as the Owner's Project Manager (OPM)
- The timeline was presented and discussed
 - Construction in an occupied building would be lengthy and expensive, as well as unattractive to bidders, so PBC/Library Trustees have decided that the Main Library will be closed during the construction period
 - Anticipate that the project would be presented to STM in the fall of 2020, Library would move out in April, and project would run from May-August 2021
 - There will be two years to prepare patrons for the closure of the Main Library through social media and the Townsman

A question was asked if the other libraries (branches) will be used during the construction period: Yes, and it remains to be seen whether the Wakelin Room can also be used; this needs to be worked out with FMD.

There was a question as to what expenses the Trustees anticipated would qualify as eligible for private fundraising/gifts: The Library Foundation is very committed to fundraising for this project and they have a track record of being very successful; looking for a contribution in line with what was provided for original Main Library construction. A follow-up question was asked as to whether there are limits to what the Foundation's money can be used for: Yes, but FF&E is eligible.

A question was asked about the differences between this proposal and the one that came before ATM last year: No major differences in the actual project, but the plans have been refined and costs lowered; there is a great deal of support for this proposal; Board of Selectmen (BOS) voted 5 – 0 in support.

A comment was made that one question that came up last year at ATM was related to fundraising and that it would be good to have as many specifics as possible about fundraising this year: The Library Foundation is a separate legal entity; the WFL and Library Trustees do not control the Foundation, but work with them; Foundation is committed to the Town and to the Library; as of now, targeting Oct. 2020 STM for commitment of the private funds; Library will come to STM with a certain amount of money committed to the project; fundraising campaign will start after the ATM vote for design funds.

A comment was made expressing appreciation for all the work that has been done to refine original plan and to identify savings and costs and what will work best for the Town.

7:30 p.m. Discussion and Voting on ATM Warrant Articles

Article 2 (Town Wide Financial Plan (TWFP))

Andrea Ward made and Mary Scanlon seconded a motion for favorable action on Warrant Article 2, as proposed by the Board of Selectmen, to see if the Town will vote to receive the Report of the Board of Selectmen on the Town-Wide Financial Plan and Five-Year Capital Budget Program. The motion passed unanimously (11-0).

Discussion: A comment was made that there is a little difference in this year's TWFP in terms of the bifurcation of Free Cash; the typical \$2.5 million is being used, as well as an additional \$1.985 million for specific items (e.g., SPED Reserve funding, capital items). A total of almost \$4.5 million of Free Cash is being used this year. A question was asked as to what this means for the Town's Free Cash position at the end of the fiscal year, since we will be balancing this budget with \$4.5 million instead of \$2.5 million. A question was also asked as to how this will be explained at ATM. A comment was made that the Town's Financial Reserves policy calls for stabilization fund balances + Free Cash to fall within range of 8% to 12% of operating revenues. There was a discussion of what those percentages have been for past years and will be for future years. A comment was made that the reserve level is being calculated differently (more conservatively) this year than last year; last year, used FY18 end-of-year reserves against FY18 revenues; this year, using FY19 end-of-year reserves against FY20 revenues. If calculation for this year were done as it was last year, reserves percentage would be higher. A comment was made that the BOS felt reserves are high enough this year to permit additional use of some Free Cash to fund a number of things that have cropped up within Town; last year \$2.6 million of Free Cash was used and the year before, \$4.1 million of Free Cash was used.

A comment was made that Town Meeting is asked in Article 2 to accept the TWFP, not to approve it. Comments were made expressing some concern over budget deficits projected for coming years and suggesting that it may be time for restraint going forward. An additional comment was made that this is a good opportunity for thoughtful comment about what lies ahead, particularly with significant debt exclusions planned for the future.

There was a brief discussion about budget guidelines, with a 3.0% budget increase for all departments being modeled in the TWFP for future years. A comment was made that there will be push back from the Schools, as level service is 2.9%. An additional comment was made that there need to be hard conversations, earlier in the budget cycle, about the guidelines. A further comment was made that there is a meaningful difference for the Schools between 3.5% and 3.65% -- there is a long way between those two figures.

A question was asked if there are reasons other than bond ratings that we need to keep reserves high, particularly where there are other potential uses for the funds (e.g., capital projects or cutting tax rate). A further comment was made that this would be an inappropriate time to set aside concerns about bond ratings when the Town is about to engage in significant borrowing (e.g., School projects); stronger bond rating saves the Town money on borrowing.

Article 3 (Consent Agenda)

Andrea Ward made and Paul Merry seconded a motion for favorable action on Warrant Article 3, as proposed by the Board of Selectmen, to see if the Town will vote to take action on certain articles set forth in this warrant by a single vote, pursuant to a consent agenda. The Advisory Committee has recommended favorable action unanimously on each of the articles to be included in the consent agenda, and they are:

- *Article 13 Water Program*
- *Article 14 Sewer Program*
- *Article 39 Rescind or Transfer Debt*
- *Article 42 Appoint Fire Engineers*

The motion passed unanimously (11-0).

Article 18 (Main Library Renovation Design Funds)

Andrea Ward made and Bill Maynard seconded a motion for favorable action on Warrant Article 18, as proposed by the Board of Library Trustees, that the Town vote to appropriate \$268,376 (TWO HUNDRED SIXTY-EIGHT

THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED SEVENTY-SIX DOLLARS) to be expended under the direction of the Permanent Building Committee for architectural and engineering plans, specifications and other services in connection with the reconstruction, remodeling, rehabilitation and/or renovation of the Wellesley Free Library located at 530 Washington Street; and that the Treasurer, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, is authorized to borrow that sum. The motion passed, 9 to 2.

Discussion: A comment was made expressing lack of support for this project; during a time when the Town is trying to save money, the Library is beautiful and serviceable; too often we think things are expendable because we have money to spare. An additional unsupportive comment was made expressing concern about this project given all the debt exclusions the Town could potentially face.

A number of supportive comments were made, including:

- Big differences can be seen among peer towns' libraries; space will be created for adults, high school and college students to engage in collaborative work; that space is needed during afterschool hours; children's space will increase usage
- Library is a "gem"; hard to imagine that it's 15 years old; that it has held up so well is a testament to the original design
- Although financial concerns are understood and real, it is important to think about how Library usage changes over time; it attracts people from other towns and is a benefit to Wellesley residents
- Some financial help will be provided by the Library foundation
- Library Trustees heard concerns raised in prior years and cut some things out of the design; new proposal will improve Library usage
- Currently difficult to have a meeting in the Library; maximizing space is part of the transition that the Library needs to accomplish; attendance is off the charts
- Concerns expressed by some Advisory members last year about timing/process are no longer relevant; this project has been fully vetted and socialized within Town boards and throughout Town

8:00 p.m. Liaison Reports/Administrative Matters

Schools/Jane Andrews

- MSBA approved the OPM for Hardy/Upham
- As to School budget, School Committee is meeting tomorrow morning and next Tuesday

Special Town Meeting

- Tentative thinking at Town Hall is to have Special Town Meeting on May 13
- Will include various Planning matters, e.g., Wellesley Office Park 40R and Delanson Circle and Weston Road projects.

8:10 p.m. Adjourn

Lina Musayev made and Betsy Roberti seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

Items Reviewed During the Meeting

Wellesley Free Library Presentation to Advisory, Power Point, March 6, 2019