

**Advisory Committee
Meeting #22
Wednesday, February 3, 2010**

Peter Cory, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM. Those present included Judi Donnelly, Virginia Ferko, Jack Haley, Rick Hill, Kathy Macdonald (7:50 PM), Barbara McMahon, Maura Murphy, Rich Page, Caren Parker, Derek Redgate, Steve Simons, Steve Sykes, and Marc Taylor. Absent: Jason Whittet.

Citizens Speak. No one was present.

Minutes. Upon a motion made by Mr. Sykes and seconded by Mr. Simons, the minutes of the Advisory Committee meeting of January 27, 2010 were approved as written 12-0, with one abstention. Upon a motion made by Mr. Sykes and seconded by Mr. Simons, the minutes of the Advisory Committee meeting of January 30, 2010 were approved as written 12-0, with one abstention.

Town-Wide Financial Plan (TWFP): Executive Director Hans Larsen, Board of Selectmen Chair Barbara Searle. Mr. Larsen reviewed the updated TWFP as well as supporting information (e.g., financial trends and override history, reserve detail, changes in the median tax bill). Wellesley is the most override-heavy town in the Commonwealth in terms of absolute dollars and near the top in increases as a percentage of the levy limit.

The Board of Selectmen and the Selectmen's office staff will work with all Town boards and departments on updates to the TWFP. Mr. Larsen acknowledged that this process has not worked well in the past and improvements are needed, especially in the "buy in" to the process from Town departments. Ms. Ferko asked if the TWFP would be discussed at the 2010 Annual Town Meeting. Ms Searle said that they had not thought about that yet as they are just starting to think about how to really use the TWFP as a planning tool.

Facilities Maintenance FY11 Operating Budget: School Committee Chair Ilissa Povich, Selectmen Chair Barbara Searle, Facilities Maintenance Director John Moran.

Ms. Povich presented the proposed FY11 operating budget for the Facilities Maintenance Department, which is responsible for protecting and maintaining 11 school buildings and 6 municipal buildings. Personal services include increases for an additional 1.0 FTE in Administration (\$58k) and 0.2 FTE in Town custodians (for the library on Sundays). In addition, there is a reduction in custodian overtime and a shift in some of Deputy Director Chris Ketchen's salary back to the Selectmen's budget. The increase in Expenses is due primarily to the cost of hand sanitizers (\$10k), an increase in service contracts (e.g., HVAC, electrical, sprinklers) and an increase in cleaning products.

Advisory members asked several questions including if the Town has done a real needs-based analysis for its buildings. A detailed inventory has been completed for the school buildings but one has not been done yet for other Town buildings. Mr. Larsen did point out that many Town buildings are in relatively better shape than the school buildings as they are newer or have been renovated more recently. Mr. Moran has recommended that the Town hire someone to look at the buildings' infrastructure, including mechanical and electrical systems ("behind the walls").

Another member asked if it would be possible to adjust the benchmarking data presented for the age profile of the buildings in Wellesley? Mr. Larsen did not think so but did mention again that the school buildings and systems are aged, while other buildings are not as much so.

There was some discussion around the proposal to fund the Facilities Maintenance budget in the future from freed up debt service inside the levy, which would be approved each year by Town Meeting as part of the budget process. Also, the Facilities Maintenance department recommends setting up a revolving fund to smooth out the funding since spending may not be even each year.

Board of Selectmen FY11 Operating Budget: Board of Selectmen Chair Barbara Searle reviewed the proposed FY11 Board of Selectmen Operating Budget. Departments above guideline include Central Administration, Facilities Maintenance, the Council on Aging and the Historical Commission. In addition, there is a request for a Sustainability Coordinator, which would be a part-time, non-benefit position, split between the MLP and the Board of Selectmen. The budget includes a 1.4% decrease in debt service inside the levy limit, a 7.5% increase in Group benefits (mostly health insurance) and a continued ramp-up in the Pension contribution.

Mr. Cory asked if the Public Safety benchmarking had been completed. The Police survey was just published and the Fire survey will be completed in approximately a week. Mr. Larsen indicated that there were no significant take-away from the Police survey and nothing really stood out other than differences that you would expect in staffing in a town like Wellesley versus Ashland.

Liaison Reports: Mr. Haley indicated that the Middle School School Building Committee will bring a motion to the 2010 Annual Town Meeting to request a transfer of funds for design costs.

FY11 Budget Discussion: The Selectmen requested the Advisory Committee's assistance in developing a reasonable number for the School budget. One option proposed by Mr. Larsen, Ms. Strother and the Board of Selectmen is to give Schools an additional \$750,000 to help with cuts in the Schools budget request as well as eliminating the gap in the School budget. Mr. Cory believes that the Board of Selectmen should not give this extra money to the Schools without some assurance from the School Committee that they are going to make cuts on their end as well. He thought that roughly \$500,000 to the ST&T budget would balance that budget, with perhaps \$250,000 remaining for General Education/non-ST&T. A motion was made by Mr. Haley and seconded by Ms. McMahan to take a straw vote as to whether Advisory is comfortable raising the guideline for the School budget by \$750,000. The straw vote indicated unanimous approval of the motion. A second motion was made by Mr. Haley and seconded by Ms. McMahan for a straw vote that the \$750,000 would be subject to: no other new source of funds becoming available (if they do, they become an offset), its primary use is to be to meet the gap in ST&T, the remainder may be used for general education, and the School must present a total budget equal to \$54.9 million. The straw vote indicated approval 10-2, with 1 abstention.

Adjournment. Upon a motion made by Mr. Simons and seconded by Mr. Page, the Committee unanimously voted to adjourn at 10:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith B Donnelly
Secretary