

Advisory Committee
February 11, 2015
Felix Juliani Meeting Room, Town Hall

Public Hearing for ATM

Andy Patten called the public hearing for the Annual Town Meeting Warrant to order at 6:49 p.m. Each article was presented individually and the public was invited to comment. Those present included Chad Harris, John Hartnett, John Hussey, Lucy Kapples, Michael Mastrianni, Frank Pinto, Ann Rappaport, Sara Raveret, Mason Smith, Scott Tarbox and Kathleen Woodward.

Mr. Patten advised those watching on Wellesley media could send their comments via the website: AdvisoryCommittee@Wellesleyma.gov.

Pam Martin and Ann Doyle spoke to Advisory of their objection to Article 36 which would establish and designate the Standish Road Neighborhood Conservation District. They feel more time should be taken before a decision is made and that all parties, especially residents of the area, should be included in the discussion.

A motion was made by Ann Rappaport to adjourn the ATM Public Hearing. The motion was seconded and approved by a show of hands. Mr. Patten adjourned the ATM Public Hearing at 7:05 p.m.

Andy Patten called the meeting of the Wellesley Advisory Committee to order at 7:06 p.m.

Citizen Speak

No one wished to speak on a non-agenda item at this time.

Town Wide Financial Plan and FY16 Budget Update

Hans Larsen, Executive Director gave the review. He was accompanied by Ellen Gibbs, Terri Tsagaris, David Murphy and Donald McCauley of the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Larsen began with a review of Town projects over the past 10 years. He announced there has been a population increase in Town as well as school enrollment. However enrollment in the elementary grades has been dropping with increases in middle and high schools. Spending has also increased by \$60,133,671 over the past years to FY16 of \$151,362,342. Debt service has increased to \$16,921,708.

OPEB and pension costs continue to be a concern, as well as increases in health insurance funding. The Town has increased funding for pensions to \$7 million a year, OPEB is funded at \$39 million, free cash has increased four-fold which has subsidized \$27 million in projects and budget shortfalls. The High School was conservatively financed and Wellesley has maintained its AAA rating. The Town is evaluating moving to a new insurance program which would eliminate some costs. Health Insurance initiatives thus far have resulted in actuarial gains.

The tax bill shows increases in the levy by 5.5%, exclusions up by 16.8%, total assessed value increased by 2.8%, tax rate rise of 3.23%, median home value growth of 2.9% and median tax bill increase of 6.3%.

The Town recognizes the guiding principles of paying the full cost of current operations, proactively addressing energy issues, protecting against material risks, preserving Town assets and planning for the long term.

Major capital projects include school renovations at Schofield and Fiske at \$19.9 million, Middle School windows at \$4.9 million, 900 Worcester at \$5.1 million, North 40 \$35 million and Tolles Parsons at \$6.9 million. Debt exclusions for the future will include North 40, Tolles Parsons and Hardy/Hunnewell/Upham and the Middle School. The peak tax bill impact of these programs was reviewed. The median tax bill is estimated for FY16 at 11,674 or an increase of 5.2%.

Reserves as of 6/30/15 are estimated at \$10,124,999 which is 7.70% of revenue.

FY16 Sources of Funds show taxes \$127,881,019; State Aid \$9,206,155; Local Revenue \$10,859,000 and Other \$3,488,393 for total of \$151,434,567. Uses of Funds are Schools \$67,114,817; FMD \$7,002,242; Other Town Departments \$27,646,277; Employee Benefits \$27,951,046; Capital and Debt Service \$21,597,960; Other \$2,714,443 for a total \$154,026,785. This recognizes a deficit of \$2,592,218. Several scenarios were discussed to possibly close this anticipated deficit including adjustments in health insurance and OPEB costs, eliminating cash capital variances and deferring the purchase of a fire command vehicle.

School Facilities ATM Articles

KC Kato of the School Committee presented the overview. She was accompanied by Dr. David Lussier, Superintendent; Judy Belliveau Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations; Matt Kelley, School Committee and Jack Morgan.

Article 16 – Appropriation for PAWS

This would authorize the appropriation of \$50,000 for a feasibility study of renovating the preschool (PAWS). Due to increasing enrollment, additional space is needed to meet the State ratio requirements of one regular student to one needs student. The feasibility study would review reconstruction, remodeling or expansion of PAWS.

Article 17 – Funding for School Security

This would authorize the appropriation of funds for design review of updating and implementing security systems throughout the School system. The requested amount will be determined by PBC in March and brought back to Advisory for review.

Article 18 – Funding for Hardy/Hunnewell/Upham Renovations

This would authorize \$50,000 additional funding to be added to amounts approved previously at the STM of December 9, 2013 for expanded study of renovations of these schools.

Approval of Minutes

Ann Rappaport made a friendly amendment to make some typographical changes to the minutes with no objections. Mason Smith made a motion to approve the minutes of February 4, 2015 as amended. The motion was seconded and the minutes approved by a show of hands.

Liaison Reports

None were presented at this time.

New Business/Old Business

The calendar was reviewed and dates assigned for various departments to make their budget presentations.

The Advisory Committee will meet in regular session at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 25, 2015 in the Juliani Room of Town Hall.

Mr. Patten adjourned the meeting at 9:51 p.m. with no objections.