

Monday, December 15, 2008

This special meeting of the Board of Selectmen was held this evening in the Peg Arnold Room at the Wellesley Free Library. In attendance were: Gregory B. Mills, Chair, Barbara D. Searle, Vice Chair, Owen H. Dugan, Secretary, Harriet S. Warshaw and Katherine L. Babson, Jr. Also in attendance were Hans Larsen, Christopher Ketchen, and Terrence J. Connolly. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

Messrs. Larsen, Ketchen and Connolly provided a midyear update regarding the Board's FY09 workplan. The Board discussed the status of various initiatives and agreed to the following:

- Further Board discussion is required with regard to:
 - Potential fundraising activities related to High School and Senior Center – Ms. Babson and Ms. Warshaw to discuss with Rusty Kellogg, Advisory Chair
 - Public transportation (discussion with School Committee scheduled for December 29, 2008)
 - Affordable housing – to follow completion of LDS Study commissioned by the WHDC
- To schedule a full Inter-Board meeting (subsequently scheduled for January 15, 2009) to cover the following topics:
 - FY10 budget update
 - Town-wide Facilities Maintenance
 - Energy Services Company (ESCO) proposal
 - MUNIS Permitting module
 - GOV Q/A
- To further discussions with Maura O'Brien, Chamber of Commerce after the New Year regarding potential parking initiatives

At 6:45 the Board adjourned temporarily.

At 7:00 the Board reconvened in the Juliani Meeting Room, Town Hall. In attendance were: Gregory B. Mills, Chair, Barbara D. Searle, Vice Chair, Owen H. Dugan, Secretary, Harriet S. Warshaw and Katherine L. Babson, Jr. Also in attendance were Hans Larsen, Executive Director, Christopher Ketchen, Senior Deputy Director, Terrence J. Connolly, Deputy Director and Albert S. Robinson, Town Counsel.

The following warrants were executed #23 in the amount of \$1,275,810.70.

1. Retirement System Financial Update

Chairman Mills introduced Mr. David Kornwitz, Chairman of the Wellesley Retirement Board. Mr. Kornwitz reported that the asset values as of October 31, 2008 were approximately \$100.5 million. He estimated that the actuarial liabilities of the retirement fund on January 1, 2009 will be approximately \$140 million while total assets will be about \$100 million. The result would be that the fund will no longer be fully funded, as has been Wellesley's experience since 1997. He presented funding alternatives including employing a five year smoothing techniques for investment gains and losses with an 80%/120% corridor. He reported that the Retirement Board is reviewing short-term assumptions in both economic and non-economic terms. He also suggested that the Town consider a phase-in to a long-term funding level of Normal Cost plus amortization of any gains or losses. A phase-in schedule was discussed that would have the Town appropriating \$1 million in FY2010, \$2 million in FY2011 and \$3 million in FY2012.

Mr. Kornwitz pointed out that there was no required appropriation for FY2010. However, he suggested that consideration be given to an appropriation in an effort to respond to the loss of market values.

2. Citizen Speak

None.

3. Free Cash and Reserves

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Chairman Mills introduced Ms. Sheryl Strother, the Town's Finance Director. Ms. Strother reviewed draft policies regarding investments and financial reserves. Specifically, Ms. Strother spoke to the issue of financial reserves, with a recommendation of 8% minimum reserve amount. Current reserve levels (free cash and stabilization) equal approximately 12%. Ms. Babson asked for historical and peer group data around reserves.

Ms. Strother offered a financial update including positive news on the Rate Saver health insurance plans and negative assumptions around State aid, pension performance and the economy, in general. She reported that, according to early estimates, the FY2010 budget is expected to be approximately \$3 million out of balance. However, she signaled that budgets have not been submitted yet and better numbers are forthcoming. The Board thanked Ms. Strother for her update.

4. Diversity Discussion with MassBay President Carol Berotte Joseph

Chairman Mills introduced Ms. Berotte Joseph and asked Ms. Warshaw, by way of introduction, to speak to the close relationship between the Town and the Community College, which she did. Ms. Berotte Joseph spoke on the broad topic of diversity and its importance to a democratic society and a global economy. She described the "Diversity Council" that was started on the college campus and how it was a well-received program. The program focused on what she terms the "Three A's". The first "A" is for awareness – that is, an awareness of the presence of diversity. The second "A" is acceptance. The third "A" is affirmation. Ms. Warshaw thanked Ms. Berotte Joseph and asked what her impressions of Wellesley's approach to diversity. Ms. Berotte Joseph praised Wellesley for its commitment to reaching out to the Community College and to the efforts of World of Wellesley (WOW) promotes diversity awareness in the town.

5. Tax Classification Hearing (continued)

The Board continued its Tax Classification Hearing from December 1, 2008. Chairman Mills invited Donna McCabe and Deborah Carpenter forward to address the Board. Ms. McCabe stated that her presence was to answer any questions that the Board may have. Whereas no Board members indicated a desire to raise questions, Chairman Mills opened the discussion to questions from the audience. Seeing no one coming forward, he entertained a motion.

Mr. Dugan moved and Ms. Searle seconded and the Board voted (5 – 0) to approve the adoption of a residential factor of 1.0 for purposes of determination of the fiscal 2009 tax rate.

6. Wellesley Food Pantry

Chairman Mills invited Gail Lockberg and Christine Tierney forward to share the details of the programs from the Wellesley Food Pantry. Ms. Tierney spoke to the beginnings of the Food Pantry approximately 20 years ago. It is a supplemental food program for individuals who register through Friendly Aid. They thanked those who supported the pantry in the past.

Several ideas were mentioned for collaboration between the Town and the Food Pantry and Mr. Larsen was asked to collaborate with the Food Pantry officials on these.

7. Gov QA Demonstration

Chairman Mills introduced Mr. Terrance Connolly, who made a presentation on the Gov QA software, which is designed to offer informational assistance to the public through the internet. Mr.

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Connolly walked the Board through the various features of the website including the frequently asked questions module, departmental search and other items that will be integrated into the Town's homepage.

Chairman Mills asked when the system will become operational. Mr. Connolly stated that the program was presented to department heads last week and implementation will be ongoing throughout 2009.

8. Executive Directors Report

Minutes

Dugan moved, Searle seconded and the Board voted (5 - 0) to approve the minutes of the December 8, 2008 meeting.

New Years Eve Liquor Extensions

Mr. Dugan moved, Ms. Searle seconded and the Board voted (5 - 0) to approve the request from Blue Ginger, 583 Washington Street, Wellesley Country Club, 300 Wellesley Ave. and the Italo-American Club, 75 Pleasant Street to extend their liquor service one hour to 1:00 a.m. on New Years Eve 2008.

Reappointment of Census Director

Mr. Dugan moved, Ms. Searle seconded and the Board voted (5 - 0) to reappoint Kathleen Nagle as Census Director for a one-year term to expire December 31, 2009.

Renewal of Alcohol Beverage Licenses

Mr. Dugan moved, Ms. Searle seconded and the Board voted (5 - 0) to approve the renewal of the Common Victualler Alcohol Beverage Licenses for 2009 to expire December 31, 2009 per the December 12, 2008 memo and list from the Executive Director subject to additional inquiry on how the Board determines the fees for licenses granted in the case of function rooms.

Chairman Mills raised a question about how the Board determines, in the case of Blue Ginger, the fees for licenses when function rooms are in use. Mr. Larsen agreed to provide clarification for the Board upon additional inquiry.

Board to Sign Engagement Letter – Outside Counsel

Ms. Babson moved, Ms. Warshaw seconded and the Board voted (5 - 0) to sign the engagement letter for Outside Counsel as requested by the Board of Assessors.

Mr. Larsen informed the Board that the Annual Town Report was now available in the Town Clerk's office.

9. Old Business/ New Business

- Fire Chief Search – Ms. Warshaw briefed the Board on the receipt and ongoing evaluation of candidates for the Fire Chief's position. She expected a selection of finalists in the coming months.

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- Wellesley High School Building Committee – Ms. Babson stated that following the affirmative vote on the debt exclusion there remains a monumental task ahead of the school building committee. Thursday they met with the ZBA on height restrictions. The neighborhood is in a 40-foot maximum height zone. However, the committee was assured that the height restriction will not be a barrier. She further briefed the Board on the substantial permitting process that the town is embarking upon. There will also be a working group forming on historic preservation for items of historical significance.
- 27 Washington Street – No updated information available.
- Senior Center Study – Ms. Warshaw gave the Board an update on the status of the Senior Center Study.

10. Joint Meeting with Planning Board to Appoint Full Time Member

Members of the Planning Board entered the Juliani Room to participate in a joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Dugan moved, Ms. Searle seconded and the two Boards voted (9 - 0) the election of Greg Mills as Chairman of the joint meeting to fill a vacancy on the Planning Board.

Mr. Dugan moved, Ms. Babson seconded and the Boards voted (9 - 0) to elect Chris Chan, Chairman of the Planning Board, as Secretary of the joint meeting to fill a vacancy on the Planning Board.

On a motion from Mr. Chan, seconded by Ms. Babson, the Joint meeting voted (9 - 0) to appoint Jean S. Conroy as a Full Member of the Planning Board for a term to expire March 4, 2009.

Mr. Dugan moved, Ms. Searle seconded and the Boards voted (9 - 0) to dissolve the Joint Meeting between the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board.

At 9:30 the Board was polled all aye to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing strategy for collective bargaining and litigation.