Advisory Committee
Meeting #11
November 11, 2009

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

Citizens Speak. No one was present.

Minutes. Upon a motion made by Ms. Macdonald and seconded by Ms. Donnelly, the minutes of the meetings on October 28 and November 4, 2009 were unanimously approved.

Schools Capital Presentation. The Committee was joined by School Committee Chair Illissa Povich, Vice Chair Suzi Newman, members Suzy Littlefield, KC Kato, and Steve Burtt, Superintendent Bella Wong, Assistant Superintendent Carol Gregory, Business Manager Ruth Berdell Quinn, Assistant Business Manager Liam Huley, Director of Facilities John Moran, and Technology Director Lynn Moore-Benson.

Ms. Kato reviewed the process used in developing the FY11 capital budget. She reviewed the Educational Capital Budget totaling $695,210 which was voted on November 10th. Some major items include replacement technology items totaling $501,626; new technology items totaling $63,405; and furniture/furnishings totaling $43,314. She noted a Federal Stimulus funding application has been submitted for the purchase of new copiers which total approximately $40,000.
Ms. Kato reviewed items voted for deferral including $80,000 for a ropes course. The infrastructure capital budget includes a reduction of $30,000 in the scope of the elementary schools master plan update, which will now focus on the older modulars at Hardy, Hunnewell and Upham. A more extensive study of the infrastructure is deferred pending further analysis of enrollment projections.

Technology capital was reviewed. Requests are based on a school-by- school inventory review. Questions were raised concerning use of private funding in the purchase of technological items such as SMARTBoards for classrooms and how this impacts the School's budget requests, and whether these gifted items are then replaced through the budget process. Ms. Wong explained that most gifts are items already on the Schools' long range budget plan. Gifts provide the opportunity to purchase or bring equipment up to standard sooner rather than later, and their replacements are then included in a future School budget. Questions were raised concerning the effectiveness of SMARTBoards in teaching/learning standards. Ms. Wong informed the group that after piloting SMARTBoards in the school system, she believes it is the single most valuable teaching tool for teachers and it definitely impacts instruction for the better, providing teachers with tools to improve the level of performance across all academic levels of students and improving the scope of achievement. She feels SMARTBoards are well used at the elementary level and in the special education programs, and strongly utilized and effective at the high school. Upon inquiry, Ms. Wong noted that there is a learning curve for those teachers who are not strong in the use of technology to adapt to the SMARTBoard, however, most teachers entering the school system now have strong technological backgrounds and are able to use the SMARTBoards with ease, and support those teachers in need of assistance.

There were questions concerning the plan for the use of equipment and furniture that is presently in the high school. Ms. Wong explained that when the high school was designed and budget was built, there was a $130 million project cap which limited the equipment items that were included in the new building's budget. As a result, most of the equipment at the old high school will transfer to the new

high school as long as it has not reached the end of its life cycle. Projectors presently located at the high school will go into a replacement pool for distribution district wide. Every usable desktop will go over to new high school, and television studio equipment with usable life will be going to the new high school.

The group discussed the personal computer versus Macintosh operating system. Ms. Wong and Ms. Moore-Benson discussed the reasons the staff believes that a Mac is a better product for schools including that it has better technological and multimedia applications, it is a more durable product, and has lower maintenance costs. The computers are purchased under State bid, which is at a lower cost than going out to bid as an individual school system, and includes free operating system upgrade packages.

Mr. Burtt reviewed the Schools Facilities Maintenance Capital Budget which has not yet been voted by the School Committee. The current recommended budget totals $307,222 which is $97,849 over guidelines. He provided a listing of items under consideration for deferral in order to achieve Advisory's guidelines, including interior lighting retrofits at several elementary schools.

Ms. Kato reviewed the educational highlights included on the Schools' five year capital plan, such as re-inclusion of the Ropes Course for a 'to be determined' amount, which may be a candidate for grant funding; $143,000 for the replacement of the Product Center copier; and a technology goal to have one mounted projector, one SMARTboard and one document camera in each classroom by FY14.

The five-year facilities capital plan includes $155,000 in FY12 for the replacement of Middle School Auditorium seats, which were removed from the most recent renovation project; a facilities project in FY12 to support enrollment growth, for which a Statement of Interest has been submitted to the MSBA. FY13 includes $402,900 for the replacement of the slate portion of the Sprague School roof. The School Committee's discussion on the five-year capital plan will continue at its meeting on December 1st.

Planning Board – Article 5. The Committee was joined by Planning Board Chair Don McCauley, member Rosemary Donohue, and Planning Director Meghan Jop to discuss the changes made to Article 5 that will be presented to Special Town Meeting. Mr. McCauley reviewed the changes, noting that several address Advisory's concerns/suggestions concerning terracing and setback requirements. A second motion will be presented to include a new definition for retaining walls.

After discussion, Ms. Macdonald moved, and Ms. Parker seconded to rescind the Advisory Committee's original vote on Article 5. **The vote was 12 in favor; 0 opposed.**

Ms. Donnelly moved and Ms. MacMahon seconded recommending favorable action on Article 5, Motion 1. **The vote was 12 in favor; 0 opposed.**
Ms. Donnelly moved and Ms. MacMahon seconded recommending favorable action on Article 5, Motion 2. **The vote was 12 in favor; 0 opposed**.

Article 11 – Glen Grove Apartments – Committee was joined by Selectman Greg Mills and Executive Director Hans Larsen to present the latest version of Article 11. Mr. Larsen distributed the revised motion. Mr. Page's write up of the article was also distributed. Mr. Mills provided a brief background of the issue noting that the Glen Grove apartments represent a substantial share of the Town's affordable housing quota. He indicated that the Selectmen, the Housing Authority, and the Housing Development Corporation unanimously agree that the Selectmen should waive its Right of First Refusal with certain conditions which are listed in the motion as specifically as possible without

derailing negotiations. The conditions include the preservation of the project's low income affordability for a period of 60 years; continued renewal of Section 8 or equivalent for 60 years following the sale; proper management and maintenance of apartments at a level that meets community standards; continue local preference in tenant selection; and preservation of the Town's right of first refusal in the event that the property is to be transferred. Mr. Larsen expects the motion will continue to be marginally revised, however, the essence of the motion will not change.

After a lengthy discussion, Advisory decided to defer action on this article pending further changes to the agreement.

Adjournment. Upon a motion made by Ms. Macdonald and seconded by Ms. Donnelly, the Committee unanimously voted to adjourn at 10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Adeline G. Doherty
Administrative Assistant