

**Advisory Committee
Meeting # 3
September 15, 2010**

Attending: Catherine Johnson, Maura Murphy, Jack Haley, Caren Parker, Virginia Ferko, Steve Simons, Chair, Rick Hill, Laura Hockett, Philip Licari, Richard Page.

Absent: Polly Smith, Derek Redgate, Barbara McMahon, Jason Whittet, David Murphy.

Guests: KC Kato, Chair of the School Committee, and Bella Wong, Superintendent of Schools.

Minutes. Upon a motion made by Mr. Hill and seconded by Mr. Page, the minutes of the Advisory Committee meeting of Sept 7, 2009 were unanimously approved as written.

Sources and Uses of Funds. The FY10 financials were reviewed and it was noted that closed actuals would not be available until the on-going audit is complete. Mr. Simons stated that the Selectmen are planning quarterly updates in the *Wellesley Townsman* that he believes will include some financial information as well as progress on major projects and other areas of interest to the public.

Meeting Schedules. Ms. Parker said Advisory would for now follow the Fall/Winter 2010 Meeting Schedule that lists a potential Special Town Meeting in December rather than in November, although a Special Town Meeting is still uncertain. Boards must prepare capital budgets for Advisory members by October 22. In addition, Mr. Simons requested that all boards and committees send an electronic copy of all material to Ms. Davis not less than 48 hours in advance of its presentation to Advisory and to also provide at the meeting 16 hard copies (3-hole punched) of materials to be discussed at the presentation.

Open Meeting Law. Mr. Simons spoke to the new requirements in the Open Meeting Law, noting that regulations now exclude Saturdays, Sundays and holidays from the 48-hour posting rule, which will require Advisory to post Saturday morning meetings by 5 PM on Wednesday, and reminding members that the Open Meeting Law applies to subcommittees that make “recommendations” to public bodies. There was a discussion regarding remote communications for public meetings, as the Attorney General is asking for comments by October 1st before issuing rules regarding this issue.

“Circuit Breaker Funding” and “Carryforwards”. Bella Wong and KC Kato discussed the Circuit Breaker reimbursement program, which calls for the State Department of Education to reimburse up to 75% of eligible district special ed costs that exceed a specified threshold per student, which is roughly about \$30,000 per student. Wellesley’s student special ed cost last year averaged \$70,000, the second highest in the State. The State dropped its reimbursement in FY10 to 42.5%, down from 72% in FY09. Estimates for FY11 are for around 40%. The Schools estimate that each 10% rate reduction translates into a funding loss of about \$300,000 for Wellesley. In FY10 the Schools managed the funding gap without a significant budget adjustment through the use of federal stimulus funds, and the Schools propose to “carry forward” \$750,000 in the Schools’ Circuit Breaker account to FY11 to reflect a decrease in the availability

of federal stimulus money. Currently, the Schools are planning a similar “carry forward” of money in the Circuit Breaker account in FY11 to FY12 when the Schools expects to receive no stimulus funds.

Liaison reports. Mr. Hill reported that revised plans for the DPW Operations Building call for an additional 800 sq. ft. of space and an increase in construction costs from \$200 to \$250 per sq. ft., resulting in an estimated increase in project costs from \$3.3 million to \$4.7 million. The building design is 60% complete. He also said that that the Schools have had some discussions with the DPW regarding a possible move of the Schools’ Central Administration to the new DPW building to provide a “permanent” home for Central Administration and additional space to provide additional room for Central Administration, which does not currently have space at its current location in the middle school to accommodate all of its staff. Ms. Parker said that the Fuller Brook Park Coordinating Committee is holding three public meetings as part of a public outreach program. For Recreation, Ms. Johnson said that the summer’s usage at Morses Pond almost doubled to 41,000 visits, and the additional revenues generated will be used for beach improvements.

Town-Wide Financial Plan and Advisory Guideline Budget. The current Town-Wide Finance Plan guideline increases are 1.5% for all Town all departments, except Schools, which is 2.5%. There were discussions of revenue assumptions and of so-called “priority items”. There were questions concerning the State Aid assumption in the revenues assumption and also a discussion regarding “facilities reinvestment”, including questions of what was included in this category vs. operating budgets. A discussion of individual budgets described in the Town-Wide Financial Plan began but was deferred to the next meeting because of the hour.

Adjournment. Upon a motion made by Mr. Hill and seconded by Ms. Ferko, the Committee unanimously voted to adjourn at 10:18 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 10:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Davis
Administrative Assistant

Documents Distributed: Circuit Breaker Reimbursement; Summary of Sources and Uses of Funds; Glossary of Municipal Finance Terms; Schools Transfers History; Town of Wellesley Advisory Committee Financial Orientation.