

**Advisory Committee
Meeting # 6
October 20, 2010**

Steve Simons called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Those present also included Catherine Johnson, Maura Murphy, Jack Haley, Caren Parker, Virginia Ferko, Rick Hill, Laura Hockett, Philip Licari, Richard Page, Polly Smith, Derek Redgate, Barbara McMahon, and David Murphy.

Absent: Jason Whittet.

Citizens Speak

No one spoke.

Presentation on Proposed Middle School Renovations and Warrant Article for Special Town Meeting (STM). Guest K.C Kato, School Board Chair, delivered a presentation on the proposed middle school renovations, which is Article 4 in the Warrant for the Special Town Meeting (STM). Other guests participating included Permanent Building Committee (PBC) Chair Terri Tsagaris, PBC Vice Chair Stephen Gagorian, and School Business Manager Ruth Berdell. Of the three options recommended at its September meeting, the PBC has selected “Option X”, which will create nine additional classroom spaces as a result of renovations to the middle school, including converting the two lecture halls to classroom space, and by utilizing existing classrooms more efficiently. These spaces should address the anticipated increase in student enrollment over the next five to seven years while classroom sizes equal to or close to guideline. In response to a question, Ms. Kato stated that the School Department’s teaching model does not anticipate lecture-style classes so that teaching would not be affected by the elimination of the two lecture halls. She also noted that “Option X” provided the flexibility to add additional classroom space in the future, if necessary, by retaining the fitness center.

Ms. Kato said that the estimated project cost had increased from approximately \$1 million to \$1.6 million. The increase is largely due to a cost estimate error made by the architect’s estimator when considering the cost of converting the two lecture rooms to classrooms. It also included \$25,000 for asbestos abatement \$95,000 for Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment, including classroom technology (FF&E), and adjustments to other soft costs or contingencies made by the PBC. Ms. Kato said that the SBC had considered but rejected a fourth option in which only the third floor lecture hall would be converted to classroom space and the fitness center would be also used for classrooms. This option would save approximately \$200,000 but would leave no flexibility for any increase in enrollment since the space occupied by the second floor lecture hall would be unusable without substantial renovations that would cost well in excess of the projected \$200,000 savings. The School Committee will re-vote the project at their meeting next week. Advisory members discussed the scope of the proposal and ramifications of the unexpected increase in estimated costs. Ms. McMahon was charged with reporting back to Advisory questions relating to enrollment

projections, the possible need for a lecture hall in the future, the bidding process, timing of the appropriations, and marginal costs and benefits of adding the last classroom space.

Presentation from Community Preservation Committee (CPC) on Warrant Article for STM and allocation of funds to CPC Project. Guests CPC Chair Jack Morgan and CPC Board Member Tony Parker said that the amount of CPA funds appropriated by the 2010 Annual Town Meeting turned out to be less than any bid submitted to restore the Clock Tower, and the CPC now wishes to supplement that appropriation with additional CPA funds so that work can be done. Mr. Morgan also stated that he believes that the public bidding law requires that the Clock Tower restoration be re-bid. The Clock Tower Project is Article 6 in the STM Warrant, and Mr. Morgan hopes to have a firm bid in for the upcoming STM to avoid again underestimating the cost of the project. Mr. Simons asked Mr. Morgan to confirm with Town Counsel that the project needs to be rebid and that the lowest bid from last spring cannot still be used. Mr. Morgan also gave a brief overview of possible CPC projects in the future.

Announcements, Public Hearing; Update of Meeting Schedule; Update on STM Mr. Simons reminded the Committee that a public hearing on the articles in the STM warrant would be held at 7 p.m. on October 27. Ms. Parker briefly discussed the proposed revised Advisory Meeting schedule. Mr. Simons and Ms. Parker described briefly the import of the articles in the STM Warrant, with Ms. Parker noting that Article 5 seeks an appropriation to the Council on Aging for cleaning the Community Center and also a non-tax impact appropriation for the Library for the Inter-Library Loan Program.

Liaison Reports

Ms. Murphy reported that state regulations require that the Library budget have an annual average increase of 2.5% over a rolling 3-year period to avoid the risk of decertification. Ms. Murphy said that the Library would like to discuss this issue with Advisory at a later date. Ms. Murphy said that the budget increase required by the state is a problem for many towns, and the Library will be seeking a waiver if its budget is not increased beyond guideline. Ms. Murphy also noted that the chimney at the Hills Branch Library may need to be repaired before the winter, and the Library may seek CPA funds for this work.

Ms. Johnson said that Recreation is looking into bathhouse renovation or repairs. Mr. Redgate said that the PBC received bids for installation of a floor for the Fire Station that were much higher than expected, and the project may require an additional appropriation. Ms. McMahon said that School's recently posted enrollment figures show a dip in student population.

Mr. Hill said that bids for the MLP construction project were higher than estimated, and Ms. Smith said that the DPW wanted to discuss its building project when it presents its capital budget to Advisory.

Ms. Ferko said that the Planning is reviewing procedures relating to Projects of Significant Impact. Ms. Hockett said that the Sustainable Energy Committee is looking into requesting that the Town adopted the state's Stretch Building Code. She also stated that the HR Board noted that the guidelines as stated impact the merit pay policy. Ms. Parker said that various options are being explored for a Senior Center and a proposal may be ready for the ATM. Mr. Haley said that the PBC reported that the High School building project is running \$15 million below initial cost estimates.

Review of Advisory Procedures in Preparation for STM, including Recommendations and Write-Ups.

Ms. Ferko noted that after next week's public hearing, Advisory will be free to begin voting on the Articles for the STM and stressed the importance of recording in write-ups all issues that are central to discussions as well as any opposing views.

Discussion of STM Warrant Articles

Mr. Haley said that the MLP had provided Advisory with its projections of savings or additional costs if any of the three employees considering the early retirement plan agrees to early retirement. Mr. Haley also said that Mr. Kornwith of the Retirement Board had been asked to assess the net cost of the MLP Early Retirement Plan taking into account the earlier pension payments that might have to be made. There was an extensive discussion regarding the Middle School renovation project and whether the estimated \$600,000 cost increase would have any impact on the Town's free cash reserves or any other priorities that might be funded by free cash. Advisory requested elaboration on a number of additional issues regarding the project, including the impact of the higher cost on free cash reserves or other projects; whether FF&E from the old high school could be used at the Middle School; and a proposed request to the architect to reduce its fees as a result of the errors in cost made by the architect's estimators.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Haley and seconded by Ms. Smith. The Committee voted 13-0 to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 10:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Davis
Administrative Assistant

Documents Distributed: Warrant for the Special Town Meeting; MLP Left. Vs Right Pocket Net Cash Impact; Wellesley Schools Updated Enrollment; Wellesley Middle School Advisory Meeting October 20, 2010; Sprague Clock Tower—History and 2010 Developments; Projected CPA Fund Balance; and Advisory Revised Meeting Schedule.