

## **Advisory Committee Meeting**

**February 19, 2011, 8 am**

**Kingsbury Room, Wellesley Police Station**

Jack Haley called the meeting to order at 8:10 a.m. Also present were Steve Simons, Phil Licari, Rich Page, Barbara McMahon, Maura Murphy, Laura Hockett, Catherine Johnson, Polly Smith and Dave Murphy. Absent were Derek Redgate, Caren Parker, Virginia Ferko, Jason Whittet, and Rick Hill.

Mr. Haley next asked for Citizen Speak. Cathy Taylor of 49 Wall Street spoke, saying that she believed that the tax burden of Wellesley was low relative to comparable residential communities near large urban centers.

The Committee turned its attention to the School budget. A new item of \$200k has been added to the Schools' cash capital budget to provide a report on the state of the school buildings, including an engineering assessment of the buildings, needed repairs to the modular classrooms, and the intermediate-term outlook for enrollment and the implications for redistricting and school closure. The Committee expressed a desire that the report make recommendations a part of the output of this study.

Barbara McMahon and Phil Licari reported that they were able to spend time with the School Committee and gained additional comfort around the high level budget numbers for STTI. They followed how each line item tied out to programs and school tuitions.

Advisory Committee discussed its continuing need to receive answers to questions made of the school administration. Jack Haley is drafting a letter to be sent to the School Committee and Administration.

The Committee also discussed the costs of opening the new high school and the projected costs of operating the HS in FY13 and beyond. There were additional questions on some of these ongoing cost estimates. In addition, it was agreed that the Committee would request a full roll-up of all the costs of the high school, from the School Committee, PBC and Finance (costs of borrowing).

Next the Committee turned to the DPW, and Polly Smith reviewed outstanding issues. First, she stated that most of the questions surrounding the DPW building have been answered. In regards to the RDF Sorting Facility project she said it would bring labor savings because of less handling of materials. The Kingsbury Street repaving is primarily driven by safety issues, since the street is now at or higher than the sidewalk level. The Committee did raise the possibility of pushing this project out a year, especially considering the construction work that will take place at the Middle School in the summer of 2011. Finally, the Committee discussed the Hunnewell Field restroom. There was not much support expressed for building a new one, but there was also some concern for the cost of decommissioning the facility. There was some support expressed for keeping the facility open with a minimum of expense in maintenance/repairs.

The last major topic of discussion was how to move forward with the AC report and recommendation on Article 8. The Committee believes that we continue to face a budget gap of about \$2.4 million, and we discussed different ways of making a recommendation to Annual Town Meeting on closing this gap. We discussed using Free Cash to cover the shortfall, as well as other options, such as Hans Larsen's suggestion of recommending no salary increases and no steps or lane changes. The Committee did not come to a conclusion on this issue, but there was a free sharing of ideas. One suggestion was to gain additional insight by having Naomi Stoneberg from the HR Board and/or Assistant Superintendent Salvatore Petralia address the Committee.

The Meeting was adjourned at 11:05 am

Respectfully submitted,

David L. Murphy, Advisory Member