

**Advisory Committee Meeting  
Zoom Video Conference  
January 18, 2023, 6:30 p.m.**

Those present from Advisory Committee included Shawn Baker, Doug Smith, Madison Riley, Rani Elwy, Gail Sullivan, Bill Schauffler, Pete Pedersen, Al Ferrer, Jenn Fallon, Christina Dougherty, Wendy Paul, Susan Clapham, Neal Goins, and Andrea Ward.

Chair Shawn Baker called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Vice Chair Doug Smith took roll call of Advisory members in attendance.

**Citizen Speak**

There was no one present for Citizen Speak.

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force (DEI)**

Amy Frigulietti, Assistant Executive Director; Meghan Jop, Executive Director; Tom Ulfelder, Select Board (SB); Donna Stoddard, DEI Task Force; Paul Merry, DEI Task Force; Je'Lesia Jones, DEI Task Force; Stephanie Hawkinson, Public Information Officer, DEI Task Force; Lina Musayev, DEI Task Force; Linda Chow, School Committee, DEI Task Force; Ann Mara Lanza, SB, DEI Task Force; Glenn Kim, DEI Task Force; Lise Olney, Chair, SB, DEI Task Force, were present.

**Questions**

- From a vision position, where does DEI fit into the town government structure?
  - DEI task force reports to the Executive Director. We will be working collaboratively with all town departments to ensure support for this work. The DEI task force will provide oversight as we collect data and get a better understanding of where we are as a community.
- Are there plans to have someone specifically in charge of DEI?
  - We have a committee within the DEI task force looking at this. We have benchmarked similar communities to Wellesley to see which organizational structures are used and the challenges they encountered. There is no model community. Each community does what works for them depending on their government structure. We are pulling from other communities as to what might work for Wellesley. Once the audit is done, the subcommittee will make recommendations which will include feedback from departments and residents.
- A suggestion was made to add a “B” onto DEI for “belonging,” since we have invested a lot to increase diversity and to make sure we include different groups. In absence of creating “belonging,” DEI efforts have not worked in other institutions. The task force was encouraged to add “belonging” to its mission.
  - We have learned along the way that simply offering DEI training does not work. We really need to understand what is going on first.
- Socioeconomic status is not mentioned in the vision statement. How is the audit addressing socioeconomic diversity due to high cost of housing, as it is expensive to live in Wellesley?
  - Wellesley has residents of more limited means who live in public and senior housing. In addition, there are other members of the community with more modest incomes who live and work in Wellesley. It is assumed the audit will have questions about socioeconomic status. Socioeconomic status does have an impact on how people are treated here.

- A comment was made that the audit will help gather data. But this is only the start. Have you thought about benchmarks and goals beyond gathering data and what we need to keep gathering data to make progress?
  - It depends on what the baseline data is, and this will determine short- and long-term goals and help set metrics. We won't know until we have the data. There is still work to be done in this area.
- The cost of the equity audit was questioned and whether the \$100,000 is enough. Concerns were expressed about being able to achieve the stated goals with this money. Both Newton and Brookline invested more than is being requested in Wellesley, but they are larger communities.
  - We feel it is enough to complete the broad audit with both the internal and external components of surveys and focus groups. We believe this amount will be sufficient to produce the baseline data.
- Support was expressed for the DEI work. When do you anticipate starting the work if the money is approved? Do you wait until the new fiscal year or is there pre-work that can be done?
  - If the funds are approved by Town Meeting, we would commence July 1. In the interim we can prepare the RFP so we can be ready to go July 1. We have a good idea of where to put out the RFP.
- How will the younger residents be included, as the kids have some great insights?
  - We spoke with the consultants about incorporating college students. However, we want to understand what work the schools have already done so that we are not duplicating efforts. "Belonging" for youth extends beyond schools. We'd like to coordinate and collaborate with the schools. The schools have completed an inventory of all DEI initiatives that they have taken over the years.
- How is the consultant being paid? Did we appropriate money for her and, if so, which budget is she being paid from?
  - The SB authorized an appropriation for \$15,000, but then we later received a grant of \$50,000 to do DEI work which covered 3 sessions.
- Will the article have two (2) motions – one for the adoption of the resolution and one for the money for the audit?
  - We have not decided. We are considering two (2) motions. But we don't want to pass a resolution that we can't make operational. We need the funding to back this.
- Is the \$100,000 too much? Are we spending a lot of money unnecessarily, as there have been many audits that have been done? A suggestion was made that the need for this should be clarified for Town Meeting.
  - Members were encouraged to watch a student presentation called "Wake Up, Wellesley." There are racial issues that occur regularly in town. There are people of color who don't want to shop or drive through Wellesley. From this perspective, \$100,000 is the best investment to make to begin to address DEI needs. This needs to be a community mission to make it successful. The schools have done a lot of work and we are not intending to duplicate the work of the schools. We want to understand Wellesley through the equity audit so we can create a road map for Wellesley to move forward. The task force is a diverse group. Our town comprises many subcommunities; many are hard to reach and don't engage in town activities. The audit is important because it will be a serious effort to reach out and try to learn from as many subgroups in town as we can. The audit will be a first step in developing a plan for whatever actions we deem most effective to achieving the mission. We need to hear from as many parts of the town as we can. The schools have been at the forefront of this work in the town, but their focus is on the schools. The focus of this work is on the entire community.
- The task force was encouraged to emphasize this at Town Meeting.
- Could the audit uncover information that would fine-tune the resolution?

- We see the resolution as general enough.
- The resolution is aspirational in goals and the equity audit represents action behind the resolution. The resolution is broad enough; it is a strong statement to which we can keep ourselves accountable.
- What are the products that will be issued? A report?
  - We will receive a report which will include an evaluation of services, barrier to access, and a community climate assessment.
- Is there a survey of the socioeconomic breakdown of people in town? Will subcommunities in town be identified by race?
  - We have that information from the census. The audit is a tool to direct us for the future.
- Are you interfacing with religious groups and college DEI offices?
  - Yes. A member of the Mass Bay Community College community is part of the task force; another task force member is from Babson and has access to the Babson diversity coordinator to get data. We also hope to receive some funding from Babson. We work closely with Wellesley College. A member of the task force is focused on community outreach and how to identify institutions within the community. Religious communities in town have been out front with programs to address the DEI challenges.
- Is the RFP for the actual conducting of the survey or does the consultant's firm conduct the surveys?
  - The consultant does not do equity audits. We have spoken with one firm that has done audits in Massachusetts.
- Would we want to do the audit and then craft the mission and vision statement after the audit?
  - The resolution is what we are taking to Town Meeting; it is a goal and the reason we want to do all this work. We want Wellesley to commit to the vision for the future. Vision and mission are for the task force to determine and will evolve. We want information from an equity audit; the new vision and mission will be influenced by what we learn from the audit.
- Were there significant learnings from the Massachusetts Municipal coalition?
  - The task force used the guide from MAPC. We found it very helpful to talk with different municipalities who are doing this work and what has worked and not worked. Members on the task force have attended webinars. We are following the work and sharing with the task force.
- A recent WGBH article was referenced and how important it is to learn from other towns.
  - At some point the outgrowth of the committee and audit could be a DEI officer. But what we have learned is that whether we have a DEI committee or a DEI officer or hybrid, they need broad community support to be successful. We are trying to get community buy-in; to have a variety of stakeholders contribute and have a voice.
  - A comment was made that it is clear from attending webinars and listening to DEI professionals in other towns, there is need for support from the leaders in the town and the community. The audit will broaden the community's awareness of the DEI efforts. The audit is important as it will help build support for what ultimately the task force wants to recommend. The audit will be important in examining the systemic challenges within the community.
- A comment was made that it is very impressive to see the number of people involved in this.

**Department of Public Works (DPW) and Board of Public Works (BPW) Presentation**

David Cohen, Director, DPW; Jeff Azano-Brown, DPW Assistant Director; Dave Hickey, DPW Town Engineer; Scott Bender, Chair, BPW; Jeff Wechsler, BPW, were present. BPW called the BPW meeting to order at the Advisory meeting.

DPW FY24 budgets were reviewed and an update to the 2023 ATM Warrant articles and PFAS was provided.

### Questions

- Is the \$8 million for the MWRA connector lower than discussed in the past?
  - A year ago, it was \$30 million. In conversations with the MWRA, we have determined that they are committed to doing everything up to the town line. Wellesley would be responsible for getting water from the town line in Weston to Wellesley's pumping stations. This is a conceptual number; however, nothing is firm, and we have no commitment from the MWRA. The MWRA may also be looking for a water sales guarantee from us. This is included in the budget in order to be ready to move on it and to have the conversation about MWRA water.
- What happens on a policy level when the state requires something, but the town doesn't do it because the cost is too high? For example, mattress and textile recycling. Mattress recycling is expensive.
  - For the first year of the mattress recycling, the state made a grant available to help offset the cost of the disposal of mattresses. The grant is no longer available, and the cost is on the town. It's a popular program, but it costs the town money to get rid of mattresses. DPW is trying to find a new vendor.
- Can we charge a fee for recycling mattresses? And do we charge fees for larger items like appliances?
  - It is possible. We charge fees for certain items like appliances. But we've talked about eliminating fees and building the costs into our budget. We don't want to see illegal dumping, e.g., mattresses dumped by the side of the road. If we charge more in fees, we will need staff to process the funds.
- Is there benchmarking of fees in other towns? It was observed that perhaps Wellesley charges lower or no fees than other towns?
- Does MWRA not have a PFAS problem with water?
  - They have non-detect levels of PFAS.
- If the PFAS levels keep creeping up, is there the potential of all wells being above threshold? What is the worst-case scenario?
  - One outcome could be to abandon all wells and buy all water from MWRA. But the recommendation for now is to maintain diverse water sources and maintain local supplies. However, it has not been determined if this is practical or affordable. We need to see the new EPA guidelines. If we decide to purchase all our water from the MWRA and something happens to their system, we will have no back-up. In the meantime, we are buying time with the interim system at Morses Pond. If we don't have to treat, it is a better option for us. We will run numbers and do the cost benefit.
- A comment was made that the worst case seems to be that once Morses Pond is taken care of, the next well needs a solution; we fix that and then the next well goes down; then we fix that, and so on. We could be walking ourselves into an expensive solution.
  - All options are expensive, and all will cost. The first step is to see the regulations in order to see what the potential treatment will look like.
- What is the timeframe for EPA?
  - We expected something before the holidays. Within next month or so we should see at least a draft, but it will be three (3) to four (4) years before adoption. This will give us time to plan.
- Will you be working with IT for the new billing for stormwater?
  - We work with both the MLP customer service group, who handles our water billing, and IT which supports that effort. It is a simple matter to add a line to the water bill.

However, it might not be as straightforward with our vendor, Munis. But we will partner with IT and customer service at Munis.

- It seemed like there were a lot of openings at DPW from HR's presentation last week.
  - We have 10 active vacancies. Some positions we tried to fill in the fall, and have put on hold to try again. Every division has vacancies. We are in the same situation as other peer communities. We are trying to broaden our reach to fill positions.
- Are you paying overtime because of this?
  - We use overtime and temps to fill the gap and we also take advantage of the availability of our retirees.
- If you had to get to the 3% guideline, what would you have to do?
  - We'd take out \$30,000 earmarked for parklets and then we'd struggle to get the rest of the way. We risk noncompliance with the EPA permit on stormwater compliance. In 2020 and 2021 we made cuts. This year we have returned to the five-year plan. For DPW, it isn't cutting things; it's deferring things. We thought this was a good time to restore the cuts and deferrals.
- With respect to the Stormwater Enterprise Fund, there is \$500,000 in fees for stormwater work from colleges that they are currently not paying.
  - We see it as a fairer and better way to reflect the services provided by the town.
- A comment was made that there are so many unknowns with PFAS and what the limits will be. It seems as if there is a progression of acceptable PFAS levels in our water and that it is a timing issue. We put in a temporary solution and thought about budgeting for a permanent solution, but we held off. We don't really know at present what we want or need from MWRA regarding cost or treatment. A suggestion was made to develop a chart of the trigger points as to when decisions need to be made.
  - We will think about this. DPW omitted the permanent treatment from this budget as we need more time to assess the details of the need before developing a permanent solution. Results from the Rosemary well recently trended down, whereas earlier they had been trending up. Once we give up local water supplies, we can never get them back.
- Are there other areas where DPW can generate income so we can offset the costs, particularly with an increase in number of residents including the increase in number of students?
  - We do think about it and have explored many areas. We have several revenue-generating businesses now and we review those fees periodically. But it is more of a breakeven situation rather than making a profit. DPW is happy to discuss if anyone has any ideas.
- How many employees does the union negotiation affect; what is the impact on the budget; and could this get settled before ATM?
  - We haven't started meeting with the union. The first meeting is scheduled on February 24. There are 65 production employees and 5 supervisory employees. Regardless of where the contract comes in, there seems to be a market correction occurring. We hope to wrap up negotiations before ATM, but we haven't seen any proposals. We have a good relationship with the union, and they have been reasonable. Every percentage on the contract that gets approved would cost an additional \$27,000.
- Is the vehicle replacement a standard timeline or is this something that could be held off to save money as vehicle replacement is a high inflationary area right now?
  - We can defer anything. Some of the vehicles are old. The risk of deferring purchases is we then end up with service disruptions. There is a year or two in turnaround for the purchase of some of these vehicles. We look at our plan every year. The FY24 vehicle replacement program is what makes the best sense.
- A suggestion was made to include the percentage of water from local sources and from MWRA on the benchmarking graph of water and sewer rates for other towns.

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- A comment was made that it would be helpful to see a graphic that shows how the cost impact on the enterprise fund will be more equitable with colleges, by comparing the current model (where they aren't paying now) with the proposed model in which they will pay into the fund, and what the delta will be. What does it mean for the residents in town to go from the old model to the new model? What is the rate for the average town resident?
- BPW meeting was adjourned by Jeff Wechsler.

#### **Administrative items**

- Article assignments should be complete by Friday.
- There was a discussion about scheduling some of the future meetings.
- Next week's agenda was reviewed.
- A request was made for all changes to the minutes to be submitted by noon on Wednesday, so there is time to re-post those minutes.

#### **Minutes Approval**

Gail Sullivan made, and Jenn Fallon seconded a motion to amend the draft minutes by removing the sentence "*getting to net zero means retrofitting all public buildings by 2030.*"

#### **Discussion**

- A comment was made that if that was said, even if not accurate, the minutes should reflect this.

#### **Roll Call Vote**

Jennifer Fallon – yes

Doug Smith – yes

Susan Clapham – yes

Al Ferrer - yes

Wendy Paul – no

Pete Pedersen - abstain

Madison Riley – yes

Rani Elwy - yes

Christina Dougherty - yes

Gail Sullivan – yes

David Prock -absent

William Schauffler – yes

Neal Goins – yes

Andrea Ward – no

**Draft January 11, 2023, minutes were amended, 10 to 2 with 1 abstention.**

Doug Smith made, and Madison Riley seconded a motion to approve the January 11, 2023, minutes as amended with the previous vote.

#### **Roll Call Vote**

Jennifer Fallon – yes

Doug Smith – yes

Susan Clapham – yes

Al Ferrer - yes

Wendy Paul – yes

Pete Pedersen - abstain

Madison Riley – yes

Rani Elwy - yes

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Christina Dougherty - yes  
Gail Sullivan – yes  
David Prock -absent  
William Schauffler – yes  
Neal Goins – yes  
Andrea Ward – yes

**January 11, 2023, minutes were approved, 12 to 0, with 1 abstention.**

**Liaison updates**

*PBC/Wendy Paul* – PBC held a joint meeting with the Select Board (SB) and the School Committee (SC) to discuss the new Hardy School construction budget. One-third of the bids are in and are within budget. 70% of the bids are still pending and will be received in mid-March right before Town Meeting. Those bids will determine whether the project will be requesting an appropriation at Town Meeting. It is anticipated that it will be a competitive bidding process and the environment a bit more competitive than in the past.

*Schools/Jenn Fallon* – an update of the recent SC meeting was provided and included the contract negotiations update and background of the negotiations; the DEI task force made their presentation and SC will vote next week whether to cosponsor the corresponding ATM article; policies regarding bullying were discussed; there is continued conversation about the calendar and religious and cultural holidays; budget meetings are on-going; School Committee is presenting their budget to Advisory on February 8.

*MLP/Neal Goins* – MLP is concerned that lobbying efforts by the professional organization that represents all the municipal light boards in Massachusetts (the Municipal Electric Association of Massachusetts, or MEAM) does not necessary reflect what our own Wellesley MLB supports, particularly in the area of climate change. Discussion about how to get more in alignment with MEAM.

*CPC/Andrea Ward*– an update of the recent CPC meeting was provided. CPC approved one expenditure, \$26,500, for continued erosion mitigation work at Morses Pond; CPC approved placing an article on the ATM warrant to request the state legislature to pass a special act to allow the town to use Community Preservation (CP) funds for the rehabilitation of community housing that existed prior to the enactment of the Community Preservation Act (CPA). Currently CP funds can only be used for housing created or acquired with CP funds. This need arose from the request to use CP funds to rehabilitate the community room at the Washington Street Community Center which is now being covered by another article. CPC is working with Town Counsel on the language and will present this article to Advisory on February 1.

**Adjourn**

Bill Schauffler made, and Neal Goins seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**Roll Call Vote**

Jennifer Fallon – yes  
Doug Smith – yes  
Susan Clapham - yes  
Al Ferrer - yes  
Wendy Paul – yes  
Pete Pedersen - yes  
Madison Riley – yes  
Rani Elwy - yes  
Christina Dougherty - yes  
Gail Sullivan – yes  
David Prock -absent  
William Schauffler – yes  
Neal Goins - yes  
Andrea Ward – yes

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The meeting was adjourned at 9:33 p.m., 13 to 0.

**Documents Reviewed**

<https://www.wellesleyma.gov/DocumentCenter/Index/1964>

- DE&I Task Force Phase 1 press release
- DE&I Phase 1 Final Report 12/14/22
- Wellesley DE&I Task Force Presentation to Advisory
- FY2024 DPW Overview Presentation 1/18/23