

Acton Town Finance Committee Meeting
October 21, 2014
Acton Public Safety Building

Attendees: Chairman Steve Noone, Vice Chair Mike Major, Clerk, Margaret Woolley Busse, Doug Tindal, Mary Ann Ashton, Herman Kabakoff, Bill Mullin, Bob Evans, Roland Bourdon
Also attending Brian McMullin, Assistant Town Finance Director

- I. Public Participation: None heard
- II. Discussion/recommendation on Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles
 - a. Presentation from Andy Magee , Chair of Open Space Committee, presenting warrant article proposal to purchase Dunn property (\$28,500 purchase price, below market value of \$33,000)
 - i. Proposing purchase out of free cash, and not out of CPA—overhead expenses too much for too small of a property
 - ii. Committee asked a few clarifying questions
 - iii. MOTION: Bill moved to recommend the warrant article and Herman seconded; VOTE: The committee voted unanimously to approve the motion
 - b. Police Chief Frank Widmayer made a presentation about Articles 6 and 7, regarding getting the police out of civil service
 - i. Civil service was supposed to take favoritism out of the process, but now it is duplicated with the unions, and adds a significant level of bureaucracy, burden, and indirect cost.
 - ii. But the bottom line to do this, we have to add benefits (significant additional cost) so the union would agree to it.
 - iii. But some of these added costs will be mitigated by the fact hiring officers not through civil service means we don't have to pay \$33k to send each new hire to the police academy; also, with fully stocked police department, may reduce reliance on overtime
 - iv. Money will come from out of the current budget, since budgeted positions haven't been filled
 - v. MOTION: Bob moved that we recommend Article 6, Doug seconded; VOTE: The committee voted unanimously to approve the motion
 - vi. MOTION: Bob moved that we recommend Article 7, Herman seconded; VOTE: the committee voted unanimously to approve the article
 - vii. Bob moved that we recommend Article 8, Herman seconded; VOTE: the the committee voted unanimously to approve the article
 - c. Nursing Services articles
 - i. Article 1 (citizen's petition)
 - ii. MOTION: Bill moves that we NOT recommend this article, Doug Tindal seconded; VOTE: all voted for it except Mary Ann
 - iii. Article 2
 1. Bill will support this motion largely because he feels this is a decision to be made by the BoS and not the Finance Committee. Gratitude and sentimentality can be good reasons to retain the

Nursing Service

2. Doug and Mary Ann asked clarifying questions about the finances—but we think the nursing service would cost roughly \$400K, this year.
3. HMS report said need to have a mix with 75% Medicare reimbursement, and at least 30 people in the census
4. MOTION: Doug moved to NOT to recommend this article, Herman seconded; VOTE: motion carries 6 to 3 (Bill, Bob, and Mary Ann voting against)

iv. Article 3

1. MOTION: Herman moved that we not recommend this one because we need to study the Health Navigator program, Bob seconded; all in favor except Bill abstained

v. Article 4

1. MOTION: Herman moved that we recommend this article and Roland seconded it
2. All voted in favor except Bill

vi. Article 5

1. MOTION: Roland moved that we not recommend this article and Roland seconded All voted in favor except Bill

- d. Article 9-17 MOTION Herman moved that we defer voting on these articles, Bill seconded it, unanimous vote
 - e. Article 18-19 MOTION Herman moved that we defer voting on these articles, Bill seconded it, unanimous vote
- III. Discussion of Three Board Meeting
- a. Mary Ann seeking input from Fincom re: some assumptions for the 5 year long range plan regarding revenues (tax increase going forward and reserve use going forward) and expenses. Mary Ann proposed that the committee use the same assumptions for expenses as what it had used in the prior fiscal year, unless there is a better proposal.
 - b. Bill brought up the point that as things stand, reserve use would have to come primarily from municipal reserves as the regional E&D is insufficient to provide for 2/3 of expected reserve use (it can't really be split as normally agreed upon—2/3 reserves from school and 1/3 reserves of municipal)
- IV. Discussion of Draft Point of View
- a. Bill detailed the main points in the Point of View document
 - b. MOTION: Bill moves that we adopt the Draft Point of View document, Herman seconded, unanimous vote
 - c. Margaret agreed to create a summary of this and disseminate it to the press, posting the full document on the town website
- V. Discussion of Senior Tax Relief Motion
- a. MOTION: Bob moves that the Finance Committee recommends the Town appropriate \$200,000 to be expended by the Board of Assessors to provide abatements of local property taxes in FY 16 limited to:

1) senior citizens who have lived in the Town of Acton for at least Ten **(10)continuous years on January 1, 2014 and**

2) who have filed and received circuit breaker (Mass. Tax Form CB) refunds for calendar 2014 and

3) **who paid Acton property taxes in calendar 2014 that exceeded 10** percent of their 2014 income, as defined by the state's circuit breaker form (CB), by more than \$1,030.

- b. Bill is uncomfortable supporting the motion because there is potentially no upper limit of who could receive this benefit
- c. Brian McMullen clarified that this does not have to be approved by town meeting, just through budgeting process
- d. Someone (?) seconded the MOTION made by Bob, all supported it except Bill.

Documents used: Draft long range potential plan, minutes from 9/9/14, 9/16/14, Draft Town Warrant, Finance Committee Schedule, Draft agenda three board meeting, draft language of Senior Tax Relief Motion, Update of Global Cash Flow from Brian McMullen