

Finance Committee meeting minutes

March 10, 2015 Acton Town Hall, Room 204

Members present Chairman Steve Noone, Vice Chair Mike Majors, Clerk, Margaret Woolley Busse, Roland Bourdon, Mary Ann Ashton, Bob Evans, Herman Kabakoff, Bill Mullin

Members absent: Doug Tindal

Also attending Brian McMullen, Assistant Town Finance Director

Chairman Noone called the meeting to order at 7:30pm

- I. Community Preservation Committee FY16 Appropriations—Presentation by Peter Ashton
 - a. Bill—How much is in the Community Housing Fund? Peter—About \$150,000. Supports the article
 - b. Herman—which projects didn't get funded? Peter—four projects not funded. Skate Park turned down because project should be funded jointly by Boxborough. \$20,000 request for security gate at Nara; \$120,000 for restroom at NARA. \$20,000 for irrigation well at Morrison.
 - c. Mike: Is there a place to get a map of all the open space? Peter: Website has this information. Planning Department has maps with all the open space land
 - d. Margaret: Surprised that only last year and this year CPC has had to turn away projects due to funding constraints. Is there any outreach to get the best projects to fund? Peter: Yes, developed a brochure, and do individual outreach. Margaret: seems like you'd want to have it oversubscribed every year, to get the top pick of projects
 - e. **MOTION:** Roland made a motion to accept Article 23 (CPC appropriations—in draft warrant this was Article 24); Bill seconded it. MOTION approved unanimously.
- II. Review Acton Leadership Group Spreadsheet-- Brian McMullen explained that the % increase in the school budget was lowered to 6.2% because some money for FY15 was re-classified into school expenses (~ \$300k). BoS is strongly encouraging school committee to present to Town Meeting the 7% increase and not the revised 6.2%
 - a. Mary Ann recommends that whatever we say in the warrant message should be footnoted but be consistent with what will be presented in Town Meeting
 - b. Bob: do the BoS and School Committee own the budget numbers in ALG spreadsheet for FY17? Steve N. Yes. Bob, also suggests that overlay amount should be displayed in ALG summary sheet
 - c. Herman: Finds the ALG sheet quite shocking—school budget going up so much in FY17, and taxes and reserve use going way up.
- III. Warrant articles (all MOTIONS)
 - a. Article 1 (Choose Town Officers): Steve moved, Bill seconded to RECOMMEND, MOTION passed unanimously
 - b. Article 2 (Hear and Accept Reports): Steve moved, Bill seconded to RECOMMEND, MOTION passed unanimously

- c. Article 3 (Budget Transfer): Steve moved, Bob seconded to DEFER, MOTION passed unanimously
- d. Article 7 (Stabilization Fund): Bill moved, Mary Ann seconded to RECOMMEND. Bill likes the idea that we set aside money for future use; Bob: the two capital expenses this would potentially be for--North Acton Fire Station and Senior Center—nothing so far has happened with planning for those buildings, so will not support this. Margaret: Supports this idea of setting aside money for future capital projects and also making reserves a lower target for paying for operating deficits. Mary Ann has some concerns and disappointed that BoS did not take seriously the work of the Fincom subcommittee's recommendation on establishing a stabilization fund with respect to a community conversation, but she does support the article. Herman supports this but doesn't think it should be assumed that it would be used for senior center and North Acton fire station. MOTION passed with all voting in favor except Bob.
- e. Article 8 (Stabilization Fund-Sewer): Bill moved, Bob seconded to RECOMMEND. MOTION passes unanimously
- f. Article 9 (Capital Infrastructure and Equipment): Herman moved, Bill seconded to RECOMMEND. Roland: Seems like a hefty price to replace truck. Bob: what about painting town Hall? Janet Adachi—been removed. MOTION passed unanimously
- g. Articles 11-13 (Collective Bargaining Agreements—in draft warrant, these articles were 10-12): Herman moved, Roland seconded to DEFER. MOTION passed unanimously
- h. Article 14 (Septage Disposal): Bill moved, Herman seconded to RECOMMEND. MOTION passed unanimously
- i. Article 15 (Sewer Enterprise Budget): Mary Ann moved, Herman seconded to RECOMMEND. Bob: Is it appropriate that \$22,000 of people's money who use current sewers be used to fund west Acton sewer feasibility study? MOTION passed with all voting in favor except Bob.
- j. Article 16 (Transfer Station and Recycling Enterprise Budget): Bill moved, Herman seconded to RECOMMEND. MOTION passed unanimously
- k. Article 17 (Ambulance Enterprise Budget): Bob moves, Bill seconded to DEFER, since we haven't seen any details yet. MOTION passed unanimously
- l. Article 18 (Council on Aging Van Enterprise Fund) Bill moved, Herman seconded to RECOMMEND. MOTION passed unanimously
- m. Article 10 (Transportation Enterprise Fund—in draft warrant this was article 19): Bill moved, Herman seconded to RECOMMEND. Margaret: Why is this still on consent calendar? Doesn't make sense. Also don't support the Fixed Route Shuttle—no demonstrated demand for this, given current low usership of door to door services. Margaret made MOTION seconded by Herman, to amend Article 19. No vote taken on this. MOTION made to DEFER on Article 19. MOTION passed with all voting in favor except Margaret
- n. Article 19 (Self-funding programs—in draft warrant this was article 20) Mary Ann moved, Herman seconded to RECOMMEND. MOTION passed unanimously

- o. Article 20 (Town Board Support—Acton Boxborough Cultural Council—in draft warrant this was Article 21) Mary Ann moved, Herman seconded. MOTION passed unanimously
 - p. Article 21 (Non-binding resolution Senior Tax Relief—in draft warrant this was Article 22) Bob moved, Bill seconded to RECOMMEND. MOTION passed unanimously
 - q. Article 22 (Non-binding resolution Pay as you Throw/SMART—in draft warrant this was Article 23): Margaret moved, Bill seconded to RECOMMEND. Roland is against this, will increase cost for transfer station users. Herman—definitely against it—increase cost on seniors, still unresolved issues re: what to do with large non-recyclables that are trash. Believes that the execution will be a nightmare. Mike: Agree with Herman. Program in theory makes sense, but seems premature, and economics have not been well-researched. Not ready for primetime. Like to see it started as a small test program first. Mary Ann supports this, and did hear from Corey’s presentation that things can be done to make it cheaper for seniors. Bill—in talking with others about this, these others feel like more benign things could be done to encourage recycling instead of this more radical one. But does support this. Bob: Lots of communities do this so it’s not an unproven system. Don’t believe any communities have had disaster befallen them when implemented. MOTION passes with Steve, Mary Ann, Margaret, Bill, Bob voting to recommend, and Roland, Mike, Herman voting against it.
 - r. Articles 24-25 (Cemetery Facilities—in draft warrant, these were Articles 25-26) Bill moved, Herman seconded that we DEFER. MOTION passes unanimously
 - s. Article 26 (Authorize Land Swap—Harris Street; in draft warrant this was Article 26) Bill moved ,Herman seconded to RECOMMEND. Bill thinks it’s a very effective solution to purchase this property through the land swap, and then repurpose old articles (as housed in Articles 24-25) to pay for it. MOTION passes unanimously.
 - t. Article 28, in draft warrant (Land Acquisition) THIS ARTICLE WAS REMOVED FROM FINAL WARRANT
 - u. Article 29, in draft warrant Land Acquisition Maple Street THIS ARTICLE WAS REMOVED FROM FINAL WARRANT
 - v. Article 27 (Amend Zoning Map—in draft warrant this was Article 30) Margaret moved and Roland seconded to RECOMMEND. MOTION passes unanimously
 - w. Article 28 (Amend Town Bylaws—Police details—in draft warrant this was Article 31) Herman moved and Roland seconded to RECOMMEND. MOTION passed with all voting in favor except abstention from Bill
 - x. Article 29 (Amend Kennel License Fee Structure—in draft warrant, this was Article 32): Herman moved, Bill seconded. Roland explained that this is to keep our law in line with state law. MOTION passed unanimously
 - y. Article 30 (Accept Brabrook Road—in draft warrant, this was Article 33): Bill moved, Herman seconded. MOTION passed unanimously
 - z. Article 31: (Accept sidewalk easements, Great Road—in draft warrant, this was Article 34): Bill moved, Mary Ann seconded to RECOMMEND. MOTION passed unanimously
- IV. Finance Committee Business Brian McMullen gave an update on Middlesex Retirement—still lack of clarity

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- a. Defer approval of minutes
- b. Herman: From BOS Town Manager's review got a 4.2 out of 5
- c. Meeting adjourned at 9:44pm