

**THE MINUTES  
OF THE  
WARRANT COMMITTEE MEETING  
APRIL 23, 2003**

Chairman Widmer called the meeting to order at 7:39 PM.

Members absent: P. Curtis, L. McCormick

Also present: Town Administrator Mel Kleckner, Assistant Town Administrator Joyce Munro, Selectman Anne Marie Mahoney, Town Treasurer Susan Kendall Freiner, Assessing Administrator Robert Reardon, Fire Chief William Osterhaus, Assistant Fire Chief David Frizzell, Water Superintendent Gerard Schultz, Water Commissioner Richard Kobayashi

*Handout(s) given out tonight:*

1. *Town Meeting "Notes to Moderator" distributed by Town Accountant Hagg*
2. *Special Town Meeting April 30, 2003 "Notes to Moderator" distributed by Town Accountant Hagg*
3. *Article 20 – Animal Control Fees April 23, 2003 memo distributed by Town Administrator Kleckner*
4. *Financial packet distributed by Town Accountant Hagg*
  - a. *Capital Line Items for Release April 2003*
  - b. *FY 2003 Snow Accounts April 15, 2003 memo*
  - c. *Temporary Relocation of the Waverley Fire Station April 18, 2003 memo*
  - d. *Comparative Operating Statements for the Nine Months ending 3/31/03*
  - e. *Bulletin #1 News for Town Officials on the Minuteman Budget*
5. *Change in MGL Ch. 31, Sec. 58A April 23, 2003 memo distributed by Fire Chief Osterhaus*
6. *Update on Temporary Relocation of the Waverley Fire Station April 23, 2003 memo distributed by Fire Chief Osterhaus*
7. *Clause 41C Senior Exemption Options distributed by Assessing Administrator Reardon*
8. *Department of Revenue Division of Local Services spreadsheet for Belmont distributed by Assessing Administrator Reardon*
9. *MWRA Local Pipeline Assistance Program distributed by Water Commissioner Kobayashi*

***Acceptance of Minutes***

The Committee discussed and the minutes of the April 16, 2003 meeting.

- *Member Hofmann made a motion, Member Heigham seconded said motion, and the Committee unanimously voted to accept the minutes as amended of April 16, 2003.*

## ***Discussion of Warrants for the Annual Town Meeting & Special Town Meeting***

### **Town Meeting**

*Article 27: Adopt Age Requirement for Original Appointment to Public Safety Position*  
Fire Chief Osterhaus distributed (*Handout 5*) regarding the change in MGL Ch. 31, Sec. 58A. Approval of this Article, a Home Rule petition, will allow the Fire Department to function with a younger department.

Member Heigham thinks this is a considerable financial matter, which deserves favorable approval. Fire Chief Osterhaus noted around 180 civil service communities participate in this Act.

- *Member Heigham made a motion, Member Hofmann seconded said motion, and the Warrant Committee unanimously voted to **recommend Article 27** to Town Meeting.*

### **Special Town Meeting**

*Article 3: Appropriation of Funds to Temporarily Relocate Waverley Fire Station*  
Fire Chief Osterhaus distributed (*Handout 6*) his memo regarding an update on the temporary relocation of the Waverley Fire Station. He is still recommending the station move to a stand-alone unit at the Town Yard. His main concern is due to the safety of the firefighters and equipment. Another reason for this recommendation is, while the Light Department's cost is lower initially, it will not be in the long-term. Highway Superintendent Castanino would be able to use the additional metal shed structure for storage, which creates an additional savings as well as the trailer being sold at the end of the relocation. He mentioned the McLean site was not the best fit for the Fire Department due to serious (and costly) repairs needed before they could even relocate there. This would also be a shared facility with no security for the apparatus.

Member Oates asked how the trailer would be set up. Assistant Chief Frizzell answered it would be a singlewide house trailer with bedrooms and a bathroom.

Member Morley asked about the potential reuse of the metal shed. Assistant Chief Frizzell responded there would be at least \$100K worth of value in that metal shed once the Fire Department was finished with that site. Member Oates asked about the heating system. Assistant Chief Frizzell said exhaust tubes are coming from the Waverley Station to the metal shed in order to save costs.

Selectman Brownsberger mentioned the Board of Selectmen has voted to recommend relocation to a stand-alone trailer at the Town Yard.

Member Tillotson asked about the timing of everything. Assistant Chief Frizzell answered they were at least three months before the relocation if this Article was passed at Town Meeting.

Member Schafer asked where the money was coming from for this project. Selectman Brownsberger answered the Board of Selectmen is in favor of using the Kendall insurance proceeds. Member Schafer wants the Committee to think about what else is being considered from those Kendall proceeds. Selectman Brownsberger said it is the Board's intention to map out all the funding sources with two meetings in May (12<sup>th</sup> with the Capital Budget Committee and the 19<sup>th</sup> with the Mega Meeting). He expects the design funds for the Senior Center would also be taken out of the Kendall proceeds.

Member Stratford said there is the question of wanting to make the roof and other elements of the Waverley Fire Station fit in order to make the building available for sale. The other two fire stations are also in need for repair. Selectman Brownsberger answered this is an "emergency" issue and the other stations, while in serious need for repair, would be discussed with the other FY04 Capital Budget pool of funds.

Member Brusch answered the specific issues of the Harvard Lawn generator and the façade of the Belmont Center station would be funded as part of an emergency fund in FY03. Member Oates asked the cost of those issues. Assistant Chief Frizzell answered the generator was \$8K and the façade work was around \$3K.

Member Flewelling asked for a rough estimate of the Kendall proceeds remaining in the fund. Selectman Brownsberger answered around \$4 - \$5 million.

Member Oates realizes everyone wants to use the Kendall insurance money. She wonders how much the Town should have, as reserves, to maintain their AAA bond rating. Treasurer Freiner answered the Town has enough cash reserves. She believes the Kendall proceeds are closer to \$4 million.

- *Member Heigham made a motion, Member Hofmann seconded said motion, and Chairman Widmer and Members Brownsberger, Brusch, Callanan, Flewelling, Heigham, Hobbs, Hofmann, Kobus, Stratford, Morley, Oates, Tillotson, and White voted to **recommend Special Town Meeting Article 3 with the discussed changes** to Town Meeting.*
- *Member Schafer **abstained** from said action.*

### **Town Meeting**

#### *Article 30: Broaden Eligibility for Senior Tax Exemption and Increase Exemption Amount*

Assessing Administrator Reardon distributed *Handouts 7 and 8*. This exemption would allow income allowances to be changed. The Legislature passed a local option legislation that allows the Town to adopt any one of these articles in Handout 7. He then reviewed the current laws and allowable adjustments under the State legislation.

Member Shafer clarified with Assessing Administrator Reardon that we are changing everything but the age requirement. Assessing Administrator Reardon added that

Belmont also requires a tax return copy or a statement saying the person does not file a tax return, which is more strict than other communities.

- *Member Hofmann made a motion, Member Heigham seconded said motion, and the Warrant Committee unanimously voted to **recommend Article 30** to Town Meeting.*

*Article 20: Amendment to Public Safety and Property By-Law – Enact Increasing Fines*  
Town Administrator Kleckner said this Article is independent of the dog kennel bylaw. It is proposed these fees be increased whether or not the dog kennel bylaw passes. He reviewed the memo (*Handout 3*) with the Committee. Town Administrator Kleckner does not know off-hand the number of violations that have occurred in the past year.

Member Callanan clarified with Town Administrator Kleckner the Board of Health has jurisdiction of animal control.

- *Member Hofmann made a motion, Member Heigham seconded said motion, and the Warrant Committee unanimously voted to **recommend Article 20** to Town Meeting.*

### **Special Town Meeting**

*Article 5: Transfer Funds from Prior Year Capital Budget Projects to FY 2003 Reserve Fund*

Town Administrator Kleckner said this Article is done periodically. Special appropriations to the Capital Budget do not automatically revert to the General Fund; they must be reverted through a Town Meeting Article. He referred to the listing (*Handout 4a*) of specific unencumbered balances totaling \$94,770.47.

Member Hobbs pointed out an error in the Special Town Meeting “Notes to Moderator” motion (*Handout 2*).

Chairman Widmer clarified with Town Administrator Kleckner that it has been at least five years since this clean up has been done.

Member Bruschi is concerned with the \$17K in the motion for the Playground Improvements as well as the Council On Aging vehicle account of \$12K.

Chairman Widmer asked if the Capital Budget Committee has reviewed this listing yet. Member Stratford answered that they have not. The Capital Budget Committee is meeting Monday night and plans to discuss this Article.

**This Warrant Committee will take a vote at 7:00 PM Wednesday, April 30<sup>th</sup> on this Article once the Capital Budget Committee’s recommendation is made.**

### **Town Meeting**

*Article 19: Authorization to Participate in MWRA Local Pipeline Assistance Program*  
Water Commissioner Kobayashi said this Article’s purpose is to finance the replacement of water mains in MWRA communities (*Handout 9*). The original thinking was that the

Town could do this without increasing the cash outlay. The Town could, by participating in this program, use some of the loan funds to continue the pipeline replacement program, and use some of the annual capital money (freed up by the loan program funds), to complete the meter replacement program. This would also enable the Water Department to design up to six projects ahead of time that could be used as needed with Community Development's project schedule. Mr. Kobayashi asked, "Does the Warrant Article commit the Town to this program for the full amount that the Town is eligible for? The answer is no." The Town is authorized to execute the agreements with the MWRA, which enable participation with this loan program. Actual draw down of money would require future Town Meeting appropriation and the approval/authorizations of other Town Officials. There are still procedural steps to still go through once this Article is passed.

Member Stratford pointed out that Mr. Kobayashi was presenting this vote as a "toggle" (on or off) to decide whether the Town should enter the program. He asked Mr. Kobayashi if this would accelerate the water main replacement program, or would this just be funds that could be used in place of the Town's funds, so the Town's funds could be used on other Water Department projects? Chairman Widmer noted when this was originally proposed, the Water Department initially planned to accelerate the water main replacement. The Water Board since recognized there are other ways to use the freed up money.

The Water Department's main capital cost is replacing its water mains. The oldest part of the system (30%-40%) can be replaced now and be set for a hundred years. The major capital issues that would then have to be accounted for are the funds needed to complete the meter modernization program, trucks, and other capital equipment.

Vice Chairman White asked Mr. Kobayashi what he thinks are the benefits for joining this program. He answered the advantage of accelerating the program is that we increase the quality of water that people receive and we would provide a very high degree of assurance that the quality of water they receive will remain high for the distant future.

Member Schafer asked that with accelerating this program, could we manage the work? Can the Town take the disruption? Mr. Kobayashi said what we have found is that projects take on the average of four construction months, with eight construction months in the year. The oversight is a combination of Water Department staff and technical oversight by the engineering firm. Water Superintendent Schultz added that four of the Water Department (in-house) employees are now comfortable supervising these jobs even at the expanded level.

Mr. Kobayashi said the way we would proceed if the Article passes is to work with our Town engineers and officials and put together a plan for this opportunity. That plan would come back to the Board of Selectmen, the Water Commissioners and Capital Budget Committee and make its way to Town Meeting next year.

Selectman Brownsberger stated the Board of Selectmen has not taken a position on this issue.

Member Kobus is not convinced the borrowing is worth the early completion of the water main project. Member Morley said this is just opening up a window to this program; it is not agreeing to borrow as of yet. That would occur with another Town Meeting vote next year.

Member Brusch believes the Article motion authorizes the Town Treasurer to borrow with the Board of Selectmen's approval. This Article does not say what the Committee has been discussing.

Mr. Kobayashi tentatively drafted a version of what the Article should say, "The Board of Selectmen is hereby authorized to enter into a 0% loan agreement with the MWRA program and execute the agreement."

Member Hofmann suggested this be reworded before the Warrant Committee votes on this Article. Mr. Kobayashi said he would work with Town Administrator Kleckner and Treasurer Freiner to correct this Article.

*Article 10: Position Classification and Compensation Plan*

Town Administrator Kleckner would like to get some further direction from the Warrant Committee and Board of Selectmen. He is working with former Warrant Committee member Joanna Hilgenberg regarding some questions of this Article. There is confusion about when we implemented and negotiated the reclassification with the new pay plans. The union contracts include this reclassification with salary increases and step increases.

Town Administrator Kleckner clarified there are two parts to this Article: position classification (not compensation), which needs to be approved by Town Meeting, and compensation, which is negotiated with all the unions.

Member Schafer asked Town Administrator Kleckner if he could talk about how many positions were reclassified. He answered all have been reclassified since there is a whole new ranking of classifications.

Member White said if you know what the aggregate increase is, and you know the cost of living increase, and you could determine the step increases, then by backing those things out, you could come up with a net effect for one year.

Selectman Brownsberger thinks that historically we have not done enough to ask the cost impact of things. This decision was made first and foremost on a sense of equity basis. People managed it down as best as they could to lessen the economic impact. The Board of Selectmen, he included, did not ask the right things at that time. To reconstruct now the impact of this decision going back three years is not easy to do. We should be asking more of these questions, but it is too late for this one to be answered.

Selectman Brownsberger asked Town Administrator Kleckner when he actually administrated the changes of this study. He responded this is the third year of the implementation.

Member White thinks Town Administrator Kleckner should come up with a ballpark estimate for Town Meeting.

The Committee discussed how this Article would be presented at Town Meeting.

- *Member Flewelling made a motion, Member Hofmann seconded said motion, and the Warrant Committee unanimously voted to **recommend Article 10** to Town Meeting.*

### ***Other***

Chairman Widmer and Town Administrator Kleckner updated the Committee regarding the State's House Budget. Town Administrator Kleckner said the House did publish the three major portions of State Aid: Chapter 70 (\$50K more than his Recommended Budget), Lottery (\$10K less), and Additional Assistance (\$60K more). The allocations totalled \$100K better than the Town Administrator's Recommended Budget. He was encouraged by those three major categories, even though the Budget still has to go through the Senate. The Senate will produce their budget by the third week in May.

Selectman Brownsberger shared with the Committee that O'Neill Properties would like to do something completely different. They would like to build housing, and they would like the Town to zone the area back to housing. They are eager to meet with the Board of Selectmen at 4 PM on April 28, 2003 at the Town Hall Selectman's Meeting Room. The Board of Selectmen is also working on getting the Pleasant Street Project "out the door", and the State is offering the Town a June 30<sup>th</sup> advertising date.

Member Flewelling made a motion, and it voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristina E. Frizzell

Recording Clerk