

**THE MINUTES
OF THE
WARRANT COMMITTEE MEETING
MAY 28, 2003**

Chairman Widmer called the meeting to order at 7:34 PM.

Members absent: P. Morley, J. Heigham, and D. Kobus

Also present: Town Accountant Barbara Hagg, School Director of Finance and Administration Dr. Gerry Missal, Town Treasurer Susan Kendall Freiner, and Council on Aging Chair Barbara Miranda

Handout(s) given out tonight:

1. *Reserve Fund Transfer memo dated May 28, 2003 memo from Kevin Looney*
2. *Local Government Covenant memo dated May 5, 2003 from Town Administrator Kleckner*

Acceptance of Minutes

The Committee discussed and the minutes of the May 21, 2003 meeting.

- *Member Hofmann made a motion, Member Hobbs seconded said motion, and the Committee unanimously voted to accept the minutes as amended of May 21, 2003.*

FY04 Budget Discussion

Chairman Widmer updated the Committee on the intended schedule of discussions over the next few Warrant Committee meetings.

Chairman Widmer recommended we divide the discussion in two parts: raising those items we would like to see potentially restored either in your Subcommittee or not and having a preliminary discussion as to where we would start finding that money for any revenue increases. Since there are too many variables, we cannot make a final decision on these numbers tonight. Chairman Widmer will meet with Town Administrator Kleckner on Friday to review with him the results of tonight's discussion.

Chairman Widmer opened up the discussion to the Warrant Committee. Member Bruschi asked how much the Light Department participation for the Technology support would be. Selectman Brownsberger mentioned there would be about a \$50K increase in the Light Department's payment in lieu of taxes plus possible cost sharing to help cover the \$100K for the technology increase. He did mention Town Administrator Kleckner,

Assistant Town Administrator Munro, and Light Department General Manager Timothy McCarthy are working on a proposal to bring to the Board of Selectmen.

Member Brusch recommends we allocate the \$25K in Senior Citizen Programs from the Recreation budget and put \$18K of that into the COA budget.

- *Member Brush made a motion, Member McCormick seconded said motion and it was unanimously voted to recommend moving \$25K from the Recreation Budget Senior Citizen Programs and put \$18K of that money into the Council on Aging Programs Budget.*

Member Hofmann mentioned his concern about lowering the FY04 Snow Budget. Selectman Brownsberger said there is some estimated savings from the Public Works consolidation. Member Hofmann is not sure that would result in savings since the plows would need to be bought for the consolidated Town vehicles being used for snow removal. Vice Chairman White pointed out in account 1-6112 (page 35 of 69 on the "4/9/2003 FY04 Budget with Health chgs April 2003" spreadsheet) is only about \$2K difference. Member Schafer is comfortable with putting restored money into the Reserve Fund instead of putting it directly into the Snow Removal account. Member Hofmann would rather see it in the Snow Removal account.

Member Brusch asked Town Accountant Hagg what the State law is regarding the Budgeting. She said if you want to raise any deficits from the prior year in the recap, then you must budget at least what was budgeted in prior year. She pointed out that if you add the Snow accounts together, there is enough being raised for FY04. Chairman Widmer said he will verify it with Town Administrator Kleckner, but it appears the money has been almost fully restored for the Snow Removal accounts.

Vice Chairman White proposed the Youth Commission position be brought back to the lower level full-time level position instead of FY04's budgeted amount for a part-time staff person. Chairman Widmer thinks a lower level full-time position makes sense.

Chairman Widmer mentioned the Technology position discussed last week is important to fund in FY04. He asked if that was the sentiment of the Committee. Member McCormick said he has some reservations on that topic. He thinks it is very difficult to create a position in these tough fiscal times. How much efficiency are we going to get with this position? He acknowledged Town Administrator Kleckner recommends this position, but he would like more backups regarding the efficiencies with having this position and what this position would do.

Selectman Brownsberger reviewed the Information Technology Advisory Committee's (ITAC) earlier presentation to the Board of Selectmen. He thinks the Technology position lends itself to a commitment to long-term improvement now and possible savings later. He was impressed with ITAC seeing an under use of technology, and the only way to correct this is to put a person in to help solve the problem. It is worth getting a copy of the report from the ITAC. Member Stratford wondered if a spokesperson from

the ITAC could come in and speak of the real losses (i.e., software, security, service) of not having this position filled FY04.

Member Brusch “totally agrees” with hiring someone for this position. She thinks the School Department has done a good job with putting technology people in place, but the Town needs this as well. Member Curtis says it is “really easy” to be inefficient in this area, and he is concerned with getting this position filled for FY04. Member Schafer said we need to be able to explain what it is that we are getting for this IT person that is better than the firefighter, police officer and school teacher whom we cannot hire. Member Hofmann thinks we need to hear what this person will do and what this person will be connected to within the Town. We need to know the whole picture, not just someone coming in to tell us we are “really uncoordinated” as a Town.

Treasurer Freiner fully supports this position. She cited some examples within her department regarding a need for this position. She is looking at this person to be able to maximize what we do have.

Member Flewelling asked if this is something the Light Department could help with. Selectman Brownsberger said there is certainly a possibility the Light Department could assist the Town with funding.

Member Tillotson agrees with Member McCormick. We have a system in Town that does not have the “verbal history” recorded, the security is not as tight as it should be, the R & D is not being looked at, and no one is looking out for the Town long-term with technology. The cost for this position could be maintained and measured periodically. He would like the position looked at as well.

Member Brusch is concerned that if the Light Department were paying for this position, then they would be likely to want to give that person direction. Town Accountant Hagg mentioned the responsibility would fall under the Board of Selectmen’s Office. Member Stratford recalls the School IT Director would have some direction over this person.

Dr. Missal said the School IT Department is currently handling the network management. Member Hofmann would like an IT Department instead of segmenting it across School, Town, and Light Departments. Selectman Brownsberger said there is a constant pendulum of whether they should be centralized or decentralized. Vice Chairman White said, those of you who are skeptical of this position should really make sure you read the ITAC report. He would also like someone from ITAC to come to next week’s meeting.

Dr. Missal agrees with Selectman Brownsberger regarding the pendulum of IT centralization.

Member Hofmann said the Public Works Subcommittee did not agree with the Highway reduction in the staff. Member Brusch is bothered by the Professional Services reduction in a few departments. She is fine the idea of with putting the restoration in the Reserve Fund instead of directly back into the Department’s budget. She also has a problem with

Contractual Services in the Buildings and Grounds Budget (account 1-6401.6). She is also concerned about the \$6K reduction in the Library Budget (in the Director's request memo, account 1-6764). They use all of their maintenance money each year. They need it. The building is old. Member Hobbs thought account 1-6750 has remained been reinstated for all the cuts in hours. Chairman Widmer requested Committee members go back to Department Heads and discuss budget requests in order to complete their Subcommittee reports.

Member Brusch is concerned with Highway Superintendent Peter Castanino's compensation for the increased position as Public Works Director. Selectman Brownsberger said it is not in the Budget. He agrees it would be good to "tack that down."

Chairman Widmer asked if anyone could think of areas for new or additional FY04 revenue. Member Brusch answered possibly reviewing the Assessor's new growth estimate. Chairman Widmer also mentioned the State Aid figure could be increasing as well, however the State's Budget is still open ended.

Member Hofmann asked about the Minuteman assessment progress. Chairman Widmer said that is still part of the unknown. Member Schafer said there is still not a definite number from the Minuteman side either.

Chairman Widmer said that we have cut the Police cruisers from three to two. What would happen if we cut it from three to one? It would save \$25K. Member Flewelling said you could not pick a better year to do it. Member Hofmann said that is one of the Departments that really stood out when the Subcommittee reviewed the Town-owned vehicle issue. Member Brusch agrees with the cut in cruisers as well. It makes sense to cut the vehicles from the bottom, but since we do not have a method to do that, then let's start from the top. Member Tillotson added, why not cut all three for FY04. Selectman Brownsberger does not agree with cutting the Police cruisers. He is fully in favor of cutting back the number of vehicles in Town, but he would not be cutting the ones people actually take out on a day-to-day basis. However, he favors going from three to two.

Vice Chairman White said the problem we face is that the answer to our request has not been forthcoming. To him, whether we get rid of a couple of old cars or we do not repair/repaint a couple cars are small change. The real issue is how many vehicles we replace each year. He would be comfortable saying to Town Administrator Kleckner to cut one vehicle, his pick. Maybe it is the Police vehicle, maybe it is not. He thinks the Warrant Committee should choose what the level of vehicles should be as a whole.

Member McCormick asked if the Police Department has laid out why they need three cruiser replacements each year. We are already cutting the Police Department this year, and \$25K is "cheap" when you need a Police person at 2 am at your door. He added the Committee is "getting their wires crossed." He would oppose the \$25K cut. As far as he is concerned, we are spinning our wheels. Do not take those three front-line vehicles away from the front-line people that are out there every day.

Member Curtis admitted the Subcommittee did make a case for the Police Department having excess vehicles. Member Oates hopes the Warrant Committee does not focus on the issue of not replacing a Police vehicle. There are many cars that we should not have in the Town budget currently.

Vice Chairman White would like to put on the table the 911-overtime issue.

Chairman Widmer asked if anyone has any other issues to bring to Town Administrator Kleckner in the next day or so, please contact him.

Senior Center Discussion

Chairman Widmer said the purpose of this discussion tonight is to raise the issues regarding building the Senior Center. On the June 11th meeting, there will be an overview presentation on this issue and the Fire Department stations. He introduced COA Chair Barbara Miranda to the Committee.

Vice Chairman White said it would be helpful for him to understand the cost of several options:

- A one-story building with no option for adding,
- Building a one-story with the structural option of adding in the future,
- What does it cost to add the second story at a future point after you build the first-story with a structural basis,
- And how does that compare with adding the shell at the time you build the first story?

Member Brusch answered that a single-story building approximately 15K square feet is \$4.4 million with no basement and no option for a second-story. To put in a basement that is about a half of the area would be about another \$500K. The Buildings & Grounds Director requests a size basement for Town storage needs. The recommendation of the Permanent Building Committee would be to build the Senior Center with the possibility a second story would later be added. If a Library were to be added, more costs would be due to the better structure for the addition. The second floor shell would be \$600K, and that would not be the entire 15K square feet (only about 6K square feet) due to the elevator shaft. This would make 1½ stories and an elevator.

Ms. Miranda added thinks it is possible to stay within Senior Programs without a cathedral ceiling. The room would not be for playing basketball. If one would begin to outfit the second story for a Library, it would be another \$300K, creating about a 3K square foot area for the Library. It includes the structural changes. A total of \$5.9 million would give you 1½ story with a Library.

Member Curtis asked the size of the Waverley Square Branch. Member McCormick answered it is about 1,500 to 2,000 square feet.

Selectman Brownsberger would like to preserve an Option A and Option B for the Senior Center decision because he expects to get some additional information within the next six to 12 months. Member Brusch said the timeframe you are talking about is disturbing. The hope is that we would be initiating a schematic design in September. If the architect were being asked to do a schematic design in part to allow people to decide, then it would look different if it were going to be one story or two stories. Member Brusch added it make much more sense to build the building with the potential of more than one story because it would be cheaper in the long run instead of doing it 10 years from now.

Ms. Miranda said the COA had studied other centers and concluded that, in an ideal world, the Senior Centers that are stand-alone work best. To build a one story building means it does not serve the community in any other way. Our view is that what we would like to have design funds for a Senior Center. If we do not get the process going now, the current lease at the Our Lady's will run out before anything is even built. If the Center is decided to be built with a second story, then that is fine with the COA. If not, that is fine too. We are not a group of people in isolation. We have seven or eight intergenerational programs, computer lessons, and many other things. We are a part of the community and will continue to be so. She said there are some people in the community that have spoken with her saying that one small building does not the maximum the use of the site.

Member Curtis has a problem with an unmotivated second story. There is a motivation for the basement, but it would be asking the Town for a lot of money when no one would be using the second floor. Member Hofmann asked how this would be funded. Selectman Brownsberger said debt plus private contributions. He would like to see something in the "seven figure" range in private contributions. We need to get some sense politically what the Town would vote before we spend money on a schematic design.

Ms. Miranda added the kind of group that has high traffic (both in people and in cars) would not work well with the Senior Center. Member Callanan asked about using the additional space for teenagers. Ms. Miranda said the building of an actual gymnasium is difficult, but if it were used for small rooms or classrooms, those activities would work.

Member Callanan is concerned with the private funding. During the McLean controversy, private contributions were spoken of as well. She asked Ms. Miranda if there is any sense of large contributions expected. Member Callanan also asked about the numbers of users and possible funding. Ms. Miranda said they have sent out a letter, and 375 households have become "Friends" of the Senior Center. They are now looking for pledges. Many of the donors would want to see plans or know what it would look like. If you were contemplating one story for a Senior Center and the other story for something else, then the "Friends" would like to see their money going into the first floor. There are actual pledges of \$25K, with the possibility of another \$100K. It is just beginning. She is hopeful that it will make a real difference.

Selectman Brownsberger thinks even if the building is one story, it would still benefit other constituents.

Member Schafer asked how much the schematic design would cost and from where would the funds be taken from. Member Brusch answered about \$100K to be taken from the Kendall Insurance fund and reimbursed upon bond issuance. Member Schafer then asked how much the fire station schematic designs are expected to cost. Member Brusch answered about \$180K to \$200K also from the Kendall Insurance fund with it being reimbursed upon bond issuance.

Chairman Widmer said the Warrant Committee is expected to vote on this in two weeks. He asked Ms. Miranda to assemble a handout with numbers to give to the Committee next week.

Other

Member Hofmann made a motion, and it voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristina E. Frizzell

Recording Clerk