

Westhampton Finance Committee Meeting Minutes  
February 23, 2016

Meeting opened at 7:00 pm

Present: Thomas Cleary (Interim Chair), Jackie Brodeur, Mary Cleary, Maryanne Duggan, Aniko Giordano, Joe Pipczynski, Chevy Seney, Celeste Whiting, and Ed Zawacki.

Also Present: Andrea Belanger, Maureen Dempsey, and Lynn Gingras (Library Trustees and Director); David Blakesley and Tom Martin (Board of Health, Highway, and Transfer Station), Cheryl Provost (Town Administrative Assistant), and Steve Gagne.

Minutes from February 2, 2016 were amended to indicate that Tom Cleary “agreed to step in as **Interim** Chair.” Also, that “**Tom Cleary** was going to ask Joe about the unused ALS Interceptor fees and how they can be allocated.”

Motion to accept amended minutes of February 2, 2016, approved 7-0-0

Review of Correspondence: Tom shared an invitation to review the *The Beacon* from the Massachusetts Municipal Association.

Old Business

Aniko inquired about the High School Budget Meeting that had been scheduled for February 9<sup>th</sup>. When did this meeting actually occur? Cheryl P. said that it is possible to sign up to receive agendas and that this information should be on the Town website. Celeste added that the High School is coming to visit Fin Com [March 8<sup>th</sup>?].

Select Board (S.B.) needs to reschedule its meeting with Fin Com. Tentative new date is March 7<sup>th</sup> at 6:30.

Cheryl P. explained that the Town solicits bids for fuel oil through the newspaper. The Town has a “prepay” contract.

Tom C. clarified that the unused ALS Interceptor fees are available. He referenced Bob Miller [doing something?] at last year’s Town Meeting.

Regarding combining EMS and Fire budgets, Tom C. confirmed that the S.B. did not [can not?] approve the combination of these two line items. Combining line items would need approval at Town Meeting. Celeste queried whether it was the role of S.B. to combine the lines. Maryanne

reiterated the Fire Chief's perspective that the Fire and EMS actually function as combined departments. Joe P. said that "we as a Committee need to have clarity." The Committee needs to be able to "follow the cost of the ambulance separate from the Fire Budget." Mary C. added that the Town votes "line-by-line." Transfer and Highway. EMS and Fire. She said that there would need to be an article for the change presented at Town Meeting. Maryanne said that she would "talk to Chris (Fire Chief)" about resubmitting his budgets separately.

Chevy asked if town insurance would cover the cost of repair for the repeater that was struck by lightning. Cheryl P. confirmed that the cost would not be covered by town insurance.

### New Business

Tom C. defined the structure for the evening's presentations; ~15 minutes for presentations from each department, then open for questions.

Maureen D. (Chair Library Trustees) explained that in order to be certified, the materials expense for the library must be 20% of the Town appropriation. She said that expense for C/W Mars would actually be higher without a State grant. The electricity line has dropped due to photovoltaic returns. The Library solar renewable energy credits for FY16 were \$10,287. Although the current FY17 budget says "0" for equipment, there will possibly be computer upgrades in the future.

Tom C. asked, "Could electricity go down to zero?" Maureen responded that expenses are currently "only \$180." He inquired about the possible future expense (broad estimate) for equipment. Lynn G. predicted a "phase-in" of one or two computers. Tom C. asked what percentage of the town is using the library. Maureen reported that 970 cards were issued. She was not sure how many of those cards were active users of the library. Through C/W Mars the Library actually lends more books than it borrows.

Joe P. asked for clarification on the requirements for Library certification. The presenters responded that the library needs to be open a certain number of hours and that there is a "formula" that relates to Town appropriations for materials. Mary C. observed that funding for the library needs to increase in order to increase the state aid. Tom C. summarized. "You're asking for \$89,544?" Celeste added "less the \$6,000" for in-kind volunteer work, really. Chevy is concerned about how "level funding" will impact state aid. Maureen said that the Library budget was prepared "taking the Town financial situation into account."

Tom Martin spoke about the Board of Health and the Foothills Health District, the regional health group through which the towns of Goshen, Westhampton, Whately, and Williamsburg share a health agent. Westhampton's share of this service is \$16,506.09, using a population-based formula. Tom C. interjected, "is this a mandatory cost?" Tom M. responded, "Yes, but we could exit in three years." Maryanne asked, "What do we get for the \$16,000?" Dave B.

explained that we get “restaurant inspections and perc tests for septic.” Tom M. added that revenues for inspections and percs go into the general fund and average about \$9,000. Aniko asked if it was “fair to say that the cost was ~\$16,000 less variable revenues of ~\$9,000.” She also asked if the Town needed three health agents. Tom M. responded, “The Select Board thinks we do.” He explained that the health agents are now appointed by the S.B. and that they meet monthly to grant variances. Tom M. recommended that the Town “stay in Foothills” because “a small town can’t attract its own qualified health agent.”

Tom M. then spoke about the Hilltown Resource Management [Group?]. Eleven towns are in this group to share costs. The \$5445 increase in administrative costs **used to be** subsidized by state grants which is why these costs **used to be** level funded (for ~8-9 years). That grant money has “dried up.” Tom M. explained that returns on recycling have shrunk as commodity prices have dropped. Mary asked about a grant for \$3,000, in a separate account, to be used for equipment. Tom M. said that that money could be used for a compactor, containers, signs, or fencing, for example. Dave B. is recommending that the Town “save it” for the future. Another \$3,000 **may** be available next year. Tom C. inquired about stickers. About 400 are issued per year. Tom M. described the benefits of using/having a local transfer station: public benefit, handling hazardous waste, and reusing materials through the swap shop. Regarding the Transfer Station, Joe P. asked why the Hauling and Tipping line had decreased. Dave B. explained that we were getting “more weight per load (6-7 tons).” Tom M. added that we recycle about “33-38%.” He also explained that the state encourages “pay to throw”, a sticker per bag, which actually results in people throwing away less. Both Dave B. and Tom M. agree that single stream recycling will help to control future costs. Dave B. says it was a good decision for the “savings in hauling.”

Joe P. then asked who was doing the Landfill Monitoring. StanTec monitors the capped town landfill for gas, tests nearby water wells, tests effluent, and completes the paperwork required by the DEP. According to Tom M. the leachate from the landfill is getting cleaner. Tom M. also, thought that perhaps the landfill monitoring contract should be put “out to bid again.” Maryanne asked how long the landfill has been capped. Dave B. recalled since 1999? Tom M. said that the Town could apply for a “minimal package” in a few years, but that we must continue monitoring the landfill.

Dave B. answered questions about the Highway budget which is level funded for FY17. Tom C. asked if fuel is contracted. According to Dave, the current contract is a savings at \$2.94 for diesel and \$2.~~ for gas. There is a future highway project planned for relining the culvert on Northwest Road. Dave has been talking with our Representative (Peter Kocot?) about releasing grant money (Chapter 90) needed for this project. Tom C. asked whether an override would be needed for this project. Dave’s response was most likely “yes”, for capital debt [exclusion?]. Conversation shifted to capital planning for vehicle replacement. Dave said the bucket loader is

due to be replaced this year, but “we can get by.” We’ll be paying for repairs instead. Dave is “waiting until current town debt goes away” to ask for a dump truck and a loader to be replaced.

Mary C. requested a copy of the debt schedule from Joe B. (town accountant). Tom C. will e-mail Joe B. Celeste contributed that the fire truck will not be on the schedule until next year.

Aniko will ask Joe B. for a current statement of accounts.

There will be no meeting next Tuesday (3/1) because of town elections

Next Meeting: March 8<sup>th</sup>

Topic: Elementary and High School Budgets

Members are encouraged to attend the meeting that is tentatively scheduled with the Select Board on Monday March 7<sup>th</sup> at 6:30.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:40

Respectfully submitted by,  
Chevy Seney