

WEST NEWBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE

REC'D W. NEWBURY CLERK
'22 NOV 18 AM 7:26

Meeting Minutes

Date, Time, Location: Th. Sept 29, 2022, 6 PM (1910 Bldg.)

Attendees (& initials): Chris Wile (CW), Rob Phillips (RP), Walter Burmeister (WB), Dan Innis (DI), Ross Capolupo (RC), Jim Sperelakis (JS), Angus Jennings (AJ). Guests/Participants: Wendy Reed (WR), Richard Parker (RP2) – both Select Board, Chip Wallace, energy, Wayne Amaral (WA), DPW

1. Call to Order: 6:00 PM
2. Public Comment: JS thanked all FC members, esp. WB, RP, RC for preparing minutes in Sept., due to his absence (death in family).
3. Approval of Minutes: 9/13/22 Minutes, prepared by RC. Motion to approve: CW, 2nd: WB, **approved 5-0** (JS abstained, due to absence).
4. Review/Discuss remaining Articles for Fall Special Town Meeting (STM):

Article 10: To see if the Town will vote to transfer from available funds the sum of **\$16.5K** to provide matching funds upon award of a Green Communities grant in the FY23 grant round. The Select Board put forward this article. AJ mentioned that \$8.5K was already appropriated in Art. 3 of the June 27, 2020 Town Mtg, bringing the Town's total investment to \$25K. AJ/RP2 explained that the objective of the grant applic. is adding energy efficient controls to the 1910 Bldg's main boiler plant, as well as HVAC upgrades to the COA portion of the Bldg. A detailed proposal was submitted by B2Q Assoc. of Andover, MA. WB asked why wasn't the entire 1910 Bldg. upgraded at once? RP2 replied that it was bid process related, keeping the bid <\$100K to take advantage of the Green Cmty. Grant. RP2 also explained that with the rapid increase in electrical rates, from \$0.10 to \$0.33 per kwh, the payback would now be a short 4.5 yrs. RP2 also stressed that there is no guarantee that WN will be awarded the grant, but the fact that we were not awarded the grant in '21 as well as the likelihood of fewer competitive grants in FY 22/23, should work in our favor.

WA also explained that the existing equipment is obsolete and the Town would likely have to replace at some point soon.

WB asked "being >\$25K, wouldn't this be considered a capital project"? AJ responded, "good point, and that his office has been developing a robust capital planning program in Town. WB also asked if the Library (heated with expensive electric heat) will be next. WA replied, "one at a time, but the Library is very important to address soon".

Motion to approve: CW, 2nd: WB. **Approved 6-0. Sunset date: 6/30/24**
FC booklet rationale assigned to RC.

5. STM FC Booklet review:

Shared latest draft FC bklt on screen & a few rationales were discussed, i.e.,
Article 2: To see if the Town will vote to transfer from available funds the sum of \$250K to reduce the current year tax rate. Similarly to the Sept. 13 FC mtg, questions arose on the 'right' amount to have in 'Free Cash' and 'Stabilization' for a town/budget the size of West Newbury, as well as rationale for when/how it is used. Rob did the FC booklet draft write-up and sought input, which was provided. AJ mentioned that approx. \$250K was given in 'turn backs' from the previous FY, i.e., budgeted amounts not spent, e.g., FinCom revolving acct. CW commented these 'turn backs' should be 'automatically' returned to taxpayers.
Article 6: To see if the Town will vote to transfer from available funds the sum of \$15K for the purpose of upkeep and maintenance of town baseball/softball diamonds. RP mentioned that overall, it's a challenge to understand the Parks & Rec budgeting process and improvement/oversight needs to happen in future.

6. Process to engage on Town Review of Pentucket Regional Agreement:

After a brief discussion on the school budgeting process and timing, the FC decided to take this up at our planned Nov. 1, 2022 meeting.

7. Communications: Nothing to report.

8. Schedule of meeting and other important dates:

- 10/5/22: FC Booklet should be completed
- 10/17/22 at 7 PM: Joint meeting & STM prep with Select Bd & Moderator
- 10/24/2022 at 7 PM: Special Town Meeting
- 11/1/22 at 6 PM: FC mtg – review of STM & prep for '23 ATM/STM & discuss Pentucket Regional Agreement

9. Adjournment: Motion to Adjourn: CW. 2nd: DI, Approved 6-0 at 7:45 PM