

**West Newbury Finance Committee
Minutes of the Meeting
Monday, March 14, 2016**

Chairman Codair called the Finance Committee to order at 7:15 p.m. in the second floor hearing room of the 1910 Building with Mr. Winch, Mr. Phillips, and Ms. Grammer present. Mr. Bertino was also present. Mr. Gary Bill represented the Department of Public Works (DPW) and contributed to several of the discussions.

There being no public comment, the Committee considered its agenda.

Budget Review

Chairman Codair welcomed representatives from the following departments:

- Conservation Preservation Committee
- West Newbury Housing Authority

Community Preservation Committee

***Representatives – Mr. Rick Bridges, Chairman, Ms. Mary Harada, Vice Chairman,
Mr. Bob Janes, and Ms. Jean Nelson, Administrative Assistant***

Article \$11,000.00 Digital Imaging of Town Records

Discussion

Ms. Nelson remarked digital imaging has been utilized in other communities. West Newbury stores its records in a climate-controlled room in the basement of the 1910 building. In addition to paper records, recordings of town meetings have been stored there since 2009.

Mr. Phillips asked Ms. Nelson for the current balance on the CPC account. Ms. Nelson stated the current balance is over \$1.7 million. The balance following the Annual Town Meeting will be dependent on how many of the Articles are approved.

Looking at the CPC balance spreadsheet, Chairman Codair questioned if the notion of TMP on the budget report Budget Reserve meant that it was “temporary.” Ms. Nelson reported receipts are established in the budget from the left of the sheet. Funds are presumed to be collected but CPC will not know if funds have been collected until the end of the fiscal year.

Mr. Winch asked Ms. Nelson if it were necessary to keep hard copies of all transactions. Ms. Nelson replied everything is now digital. She suggested Mr. McCarron asked for transactions to be digital for purposes of search ability. Mr. Janes added that hard copies of certain items such as marriage, birth, and death records are also kept.

West Newbury Housing Authority

Representatives – Mr. Albert Knowles, Jr. and Ms. Mary Harada

Annex Roof

Mr. Knowles stated the DHPC oversaw an extensive roof repair (\$26,000.00) on the Annex building last fall. He explained the steps involved in leading to a new roof are Design, Engineering, and Out-to-Bid. Mr. Knowles is hopeful the roof will be completed this summer.

Historic Preservation of the Carr Post

Mr. Bertino stated the first phase in the preservation of the Carr Post is stabilization. He reported the DPW has worked on the building. Ms. Grammer asked if West Newbury is carrying the cost of the Carr Post. Mr. Bertino replied the town was covering expenses. He expanded by saying if there were no tenants, insurance costs would run \$3,500.00 monthly. Mr. Janes added the Massachusetts Historical Society will soon vote on the status of the Carr Post's eligibility to be placed on the National Register. Once listed, the building would be entitled to receive grant money. Chairman Codair requested FinCom be informed about the outcome. Ms. Nelson remarked both Mr. Janes and Mr. Kemper will attend the meeting.

Special Town Meeting

Article 13 — \$15,000.00 G.A.R. Memorial Library

Restoration and Improvements to enhance Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Representatives – Ms. Alexandra Guralnick and Ms. Amy Custance

An artist's rendition depicting an aerial view of the proposed improvements was distributed. The walkway renovation would improve the current walkway and replace lifting bricks. An ADA access ramp will lead to the transition area. Chairman Codair asked if bids have been received. Trustee Guralnick replied three had been received.

Special Article 14 — \$25,000.00 Preservation of Action Cove Playground Facility Phase 1

Representatives – Mr. Rick Bridges, Chairman CPC

Ms. Mary Harada, CPC

Mr. Thomas Flaherty, CPC and Park and Recreations

Chairman Bridges introduced Mr. Flaherty who presented a brief background of the facility. The playground was built in 1990, as a Community Project, in a week's time frame. Approximately ten years ago some repairs were made. One to two years ago, the volunteers asked the Selectmen if the Parks and Recreation Department would manage the playground. A local carpenter evaluated the Action Cove Facility and presented an estimate of \$75,000.00 to complete repairs. The group developed a three-year plan for the wood facility. During the first phase (year one), staining and board replacement would be completed.

Chairman Codair inquired where initial funds came from. Mr. Flaherty was unfamiliar with that portion of the history. Ms. Grammer asked if anyone in the room was aware of the answer to Chairman Codair's question. Mr. Knowles provided the early development of Action Cove. He stated the original structure was built through fund-raising and volunteer efforts. Mr. Bill corroborated the fact Action Cove Park was constructed by volunteers and private donations. He reported the groundkeeper's maintenance workshop is on the playground property. He expressed a concern about insurance claims. To date, damaged boards have been replaced/covered with composite material. Approximately, eight to ten years ago, a report to the Selectmen suggested the structure to be torn down. At that time, the DPW was requested to replace the original pea stone with fabric and approved wood chips. Chairman Codair asked Mr. Bill's thoughts regarding \$75,000.00 estimate to repair Action Cove. Mr. Bill cited two recent examples of playground construction. He stated both the replacement of a playground at the Bresnahan School in Newburyport and another in Georgetown were completed at a cost of \$160,000.00 each. He believes, realistically, the cost may be over \$200,000.00. Mr. Flaherty responded, in his opinion, the park was worth preserving. He also stated he was unaware of any complaints of users receiving splinters.

Ms. Grammer directed a question regarding insurance to Mr. Bertino. *Mr. Bertino replied he would investigate the current cost of insurance.* He further remarked if there were no claims, the insurance company would have no reason to review the policy.

Mr. Bill reported both DPW and pest control workers visit the playground regularly in order to push down nails and check for pests.

Mr. Flaherty stated the K-3 playground is particularly successful. Ms. Grammer remarked the facility is enchanting, however, there are maintenance challenges. Chairman Codair inquired if the entire structure was now made up of composite material. The reply was some of the structure is composite but other portions are comprised of wood boards.

Mr. Phillips directed a question to Mr. Bill regarding past maintenance. Mr. Bill replied there had been a previous Article and some donated funds. Mr. Phillips remarked this was prior to the creation of the CPC. Mr. Bill affirmed that was the case.

Chairman Codair asked if the CPC voted to approve \$75,000.00 rehabilitation of Action Cove. The vote was 4-0-0.

***Article 21 — \$90,000.00 from Community Housing Reserve Fund
\$30,000.00 from Free Cash***

Emergency Generator to provide electric power during outages for the 1910 Building, the fourteen elderly Housing Units of the Housing Authority, and the Town Annex.

Mr. Knowles reported the \$150,000, 125Kw generator would provide power to support both electricity and the boilers in the 1910 Building, the Elderly Housing Units, and the Housing Authority. This aspect is especially important in the Elderly Housing Units where power chairs and oxygen are in use. Mr. Knowles continued by stating an extended loss of power would result in the units being uninhabitable. Additionally, with the installation of the generator, the Annex could serve as a town-wide emergency shelter. Ms. Grammer inquired if there any other options such as purchasing a smaller generator to power just the Housing Units or the Annex. Mr. Knowles replied the Housing Authority decided on one large unit which allows for the maintenance of one generator. He further stated the purchase of one generator would be half the cost of redoing the circuitry connecting all three systems.

Ms. Grammer also asked about the annual maintenance cost of the generator. Mr. Bill replied the annual maintenance involves oil and filter changes. The total cost be approximately \$1,000.00 per year. Chairman Codair inquired who would be responsible for the maintenance of the unit. Ms. Grammer asked if the Town's expenditure for a generator for Town buildings was on the Town Capital Improvement list. Mr. Bill stated the Housing Authority would own and maintain the generator. He also noted that this is not on the Capital Improvement list. Chairman Bridges replied it was proposed at the last minute.

Mr. Knowles said in some cases of rehabilitation, such as window and door replacement the Housing Authority would work through the DHCD. Ms. Grammer asked if the Housing Authority has approached the town's Capital Improvement Committee. He replied not at this time.

Ms. Grammer questioned what was in place for emergency energy. Mr. Bill responded there is a small generator with the ability to power emergency lights. It was installed when the Police

Department was housed in the basement of the 1910 Building. Mr. Bill continued by stating an earlier request for the CPA-approved generator for the three buildings was turned down. The CPC became involved due the historical value of the 1910 Building. The current generator powers the lights but not the boiler. In cold weather, this would present a problem with burst pipes in the building which is designed with water baseboard heating and also contains a sprinkler system.

Chairman Codair asked if there is an evacuation plan in place. Ms. Harada replied there was no plan in place. Ms. Grammer inquired if the Housing Authority had met with the Emergency Management team. Ms. Harada stated if there was no generator, the residents in the Elderly Housing Apartments have no money to pay for temporary relocation. She continued saying the Housing Authority has no capacity to save money for improvements. There are some state funds but the state has its own difficulties. Prior to the availability of CPC funds, it took 2½ years to rehabilitate a destroyed kitchen unit at the Bachelor Street 6-unit housing project.

Ms. Nelson stated CPC-approved the \$90,000.00 to fund the new generator. Mr. Knowles added the addition of a Natural Gas line to the Annex would be necessary but information regarding a diesel generator was forwarded to CPC. Ms. Grammer inquired of Mr. Bill how long would the generator be able to run on one tank of diesel fuel. Mr. Bill replies one tank of diesel fuel would run the generator for approximately two days. Chairman Codair asked if it were possible to toggle the generator to work between buildings. Mr. Bill responded it was possible but the ability would add to the cost. Mr. Phillips asked about the price difference between a natural gas and a diesel generator. Mr. Knowles replied both types of generator were roughly the same price.. He further stated half the cost of the installation is in the circuitry. Mr. Bill reported Public Safety prefers diesel because it is self-contained.

Chairman Codair stated the proposed generator is to power all three buildings but did the Housing Authority investigate the cost of a generator for just the Housing Unit and Annex. Ms. Grammer followed up by asking if a generator was purchased for the Housing Authority and the Annex, would they be able to use natural gas. Mr. Knowles replied if they proceeded in that direction it would be necessary to factor in design and engineering costs, as well as advertising for bids. Chairman Codair inquired if they could approach the state or was that not feasible. Mr. Janes reported the roofing funds from the state are three years out.

Mr. Winch directed a question to Mr. Knowles as to the average life of a generator. Mr. Knowles replied the average life is 25 years. Mr. Bill supplemented by reporting the generator at the Page School is 70 years old.

Mr. Phillips recalled the same issues existed a few years ago. Mr. Bill said the CPA approved acquisition of a new generator but the voters turned it down in part due to FinCom comments. *Ms. Nelson has a recording and will pass it on to Chairman Codair and Ms. Grammer.* Chairman Codair inquired how often the power is lost. Mr. Knowles replied, on average, a couple of times annually. The last time residents lost power for an extended period of time was during the ice storm in 2009.

Article 22 Allocation and/or Reservation of Funds from the Community Preservation Fund Annual Revenues, the amount recommended by the CPC for Community Preservation Projects, Committee Administrative Expenses, and other expenses in Fiscal Year 2017, with each item to be considered a separate appropriation...

Chairman Codair remarked there is no change to the Article. Ms. Nelson explained the rationale is a cost ratio of $\frac{2}{3}$ -town: $\frac{1}{3}$ -state. Chairman Codair requested Ms. Nelson to provide the last match amount. *Ms. Nelson stated she would provide the last match amount.*

\$6,000.00 Emergency Transfer of funds from Free Cash to Highways, Sidewalk and trees for the removal of unsafe trees.

Mr. Bill stated, hopefully, some funds may be given back at the end of the fiscal year. Chairman Codair asked for any questions. There were none. *FinCom voted to approve the transfer 4-0-0.*

***FinCom Business
Generator***

Mr. Phillips asked if the state would have to approve the generator since the town derives benefit from it. Mr. Bill stated it would still have to be approved by the state. Mr. Bill said he had submitted a request three years ago and it was turned down. Ms. Grammer inquired as to the necessity for the Housing Authority to own an emergency generator. Mr. Bill replied not all Housing Authorities have generators. Ms. Grammer remarked people, similar to herself, who own generators, would be able to house people in the event of an emergency. Mr. Bertino also brought up the fact the Housing Authority does not have the resources to maintain the generator.

Demolition Delay Bylaw

Ms. Grammer remarked the Historical Commission is meeting with the Selectmen next week on March 21, 2016. Mr. Bertino stated he assumed as much. However, the agenda has not been posted.

Capital Projects interacting with Capital Improvements Committee

Mr. Winch stated if FinCom and Capital Improvements Committee came together, the use of various funding sources could be clarified.

Schools

Mr. Bertino mentioned small items such as salaries and Whittier Regional Technical High School have not been presented. He also stated the addition of a School Resource Officer is gaining more support. Mr. Bertino continued by saying the increase of \$75,000.00 contribution to the Pentucket building stabilization for feasibility is necessary if the district wants to break ground in two years. He mentioned both Groveland and Merrimac will be contributing \$400,000.00 each.

Ms. Grammer asked if when planning the building, they will take into account the school population. Although aware the present school was built on burst pipes, she inquired as to why the district decided to build rather than remodel. Mr. Bertino replied the situation leads to a tear down and a rebuild. Chairman Codair inquired as to where we draw the line when FinCom is not participating in the decision. When Ms. Codair asked about West Newbury's ability to leave Whittier if budget issues were highly problematic. Mr. Bertino replied it would take an act of legislation to separate.

Mr. Bertino said FinCom will be able to review in the next few weeks when the numbers come in.

Miscellaneous

Ms. Grammer directed a question to Mr. Bertino. She asked if the addition of a new School Resource Officer would tip the town over the edge with regards to the penalties Affordable Care Act. Mr. Bertino replied, currently, there are 43 employees receiving Health Care benefits. He said the town would be in compliance with up to 50 employees but could not go over that amount.

Upcoming Schedule

The next meeting of the Finance Committee is scheduled for Monday, March 21, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. If the Historical Commission is meeting with the Selectmen, FinCom will attend the Selectmen's Meeting prior to FinCom.

The Committee meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elisa J. Grammer
Recording Secretary