

**West Newbury Finance Committee
Minutes of the Meeting
Monday, September 25, 2017**

Finance Committee Meeting

Chairman DeLena called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 6:37 p.m. in the second floor hearing room of the 1910 Building with Dr. Beaudoin, Mr. Durey, Mr. Ellis, Ms. Grammer, and Mr. McGrath in attendance.

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

Transfer request

None.

Mike Gootee, Water Department: Groundwater Protection Overlay

Water Superintendent Gootee explained that both the new bedrock well at West Newbury's existing Artichoke wellfield (which is only waiting for final designs and is ready for building—a cost of about \$500K already approved) and the new potential Dole Place well have already been approved by the State's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The new bedrock well will provide 70-80K gallons/day and will serve perhaps a third of West Newbury's needs.

The Groundwater Protection Overlay is required by the State and must be in place before drinking water can be pumped from a well.

In response to Dr. Beaudoin's query about water quality at the Dole Place well, Mr. Gootee responded that it had met State requirements and that drinking water is commonly blended to reduce levels of contaminants. Mr. Gootee also responded, in response to Mr. McGrath, that flooding should not be a problem at Dole Place because it had met State approval and water pressure rising from the well does not permit intrusion of flood water. Mr. Gootee remarked that Groveland's wells had been inundated by the Merrimack at one point without major issues. Mr. McGrath stated that what matters is what is feasible and cost-effective to construct.

FinCom/Board of Selectmen Meeting

At 7 p.m. the Committee met with the Selectmen in the first floor hearing room. The combined group reviewed Articles for Fall Town Meeting.

Mr. McGrath questioned Articles 3 (\$114K from Free Cash transferred for tax rate buydown) and 5 (\$500K from Free Cash to School Building Stabilization Fund). He preferred an "up to" \$500K amount in both Articles. Mr. McGrath expressed concern that the Town was being overtaxed because Free Cash was perennially at very high levels.

The Selectmen countered that this is an important issue that implicates Capital Improvements planning and other matters and deserves a more thorough discussion than possible for Articles at

this Fall Town Meeting. Selectman Anderson explained that the \$114K level is currently baked into the tax rate, providing stability for taxpayers. FinCom Chairman DeLena noted that the FinCom overall supported Articles 3 and 5.

It was generally agreed that the FinCom and Selectmen would meet at 7 pm on October 16 to discuss Free Cash and related issues.

While meeting with the Selectmen, FinCom *voted to*

- 1) approve Article 5, 5-1-0 (McGrath opposing), and*
- 2) approve Article 7 (Groundwater Protection Overlay), 6-0-0.*

The Selectmen voted to approve each Article, 3-0-0.

FinCom reconvened at the 2nd floor hearing room at 8 pm.

The Committee continued to

- 1) review Articles and rationales, *assigning the rationale for Article 7 to Mr. McGrath, who will also provide a "Con" rationale on Article 5*
- 2) discuss Free Cash, payment mechanisms for the upcoming school and rated issues
- 3) review and *approve the minutes for 9/18/2017, as revised, 6-0-0*

FinCom generally agreed that each member will review the Free Cash issue and submit to Chairman DeLena questions/points to be raised regarding this and related matters so that the Committee could address this at the next meeting on October 2, in preparation for the October 16 meeting with the Selectmen.

Upcoming Meeting

7:00 p.m.: Monday, October 2, 2017: To discuss and review rationales and the FinCom Booklet overall, prepare for Town Meeting, and discuss the question of Free Cash, Capital Improvements Committee, and related issues in preparation for the October 16 meeting with the Selectmen.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elisa Grammer
Secretary

Meeting materials:

- Draft Fall 2017 STM Warrant--as revised
- Fall 2017 Articles spreadsheet, updated--revised with rationales to date
- Updated draft FinCom booklet: incomplete & subject to change, but the framework is in place
- Groundwater overlay materials, including

- Article request
- Existing* groundwater bylaw excerpts, showing restrictions when adding Zone 2
- Proposed groundwater map
- Ltrs explaining groundwater expansion
- Draft minutes 9/18
- Anderson spreadsheet re: school proposal