

Barrington Committee on Appropriations

Meeting Minutes

April 14, 2015

Opening

The regular meeting of the Barrington Committee on Appropriations was called to order at 7:00 pm on April 14, 2015 in the Barrington Senior Center by Geoff Grove

Present

In attendance: Geoff Grove, Chair; Chad Mollica, Peter Dennehy, and Melissa Horne. Also present Peter DeAngelis, Town Manager; Kathy Raposa, Town Finance Director; June Speakman, Chairperson, Town Council; Kate Weymouth, Steve Primiano and Michael Carroll, Town Council; Steven Boyajian and Steve Martin, Housing Board of Trustees; Deborah Barchi, Library Director.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was unanimously approved as distributed.

Open Issues

Melissa Horne was appointed as the BCOA's representative to the Ad Hoc Turf Field Committee and will attend its first meeting on April 29, 2014.

The Committee began with a discussion of the municipal budget. Geoff stated that the Committee believes that the municipal budget proposed by the Town manager, which proposes \$17,578,939 in expenditures (an increase of 1.51% over 2015), is appropriate and is not recommending any changes to the budget.

Geoff noted that the proposed budget for capital improvements totals \$1,088,000 for 2016, a 14.47% increase over the 2015 capital budget of \$950,500. He stated that the Committee was recommending that the capital improvements budget be reduced by \$188,000 to \$900,000. Consistent with Peter DeAngelis' request, the Committee had not targeted any specific projects as the source of the reduction.

Geoff stated that the Committee had met with the School Superintendent, the Director of Administration and Finance, and Kate Brody, the Chairperson of the School Committee to discuss the school budget. Following that meeting, the Committee recommended that the schools' operating budget be reduced by \$400,000 and that \$50,000 from FY15 operating surplus be transferred to the capital budget. The Committee also recommended that the school capital requests be funded in the capital

budget and that \$200,000 be transferred from the school capital reserve account to capital budget. The Director of Administration and Finance had made a counter-proposal which the Committee had not yet had an opportunity to discuss.

Following some discussion regarding the merits of combining the municipal and school capital requests, Peter DeAngelis stated that he could accept and work with the Committee's recommendation.

Chad explained that there were two goals associated with the Committee's efforts on the capital budgets – strengthening the Town's bond rating from AA to AAA and making the budget process more transparent. Steve Primiano inquired how the Committee's actions would improve the bond rating. Chad explained that the budget can't be built to strengthen the reserve; the hope is that operating efficiencies can be found so that there is money left to be contributed to the reserve at the end of the year. Peter DeAngelis commented that it is difficult to add to the reserve when there is a difficult year as we had due to the tough winter this year. Michael Carroll asked for details on the school capital budget. Geoff stated that the schools were looking at \$325,000 for technology, which the Committee addressed by recommending that \$275,000 from the school capital reserve and \$50,000 from the FY15 operating surplus be moved to the capital budget. Michael Carroll inquired whether technology was properly considered a capital item, with Chad noting that what constitutes a capital item in the public sector is not necessarily the same as in the private sector. Chad also noted that this is the first time the schools have itemized their capital requests, which represents a movement toward more transparent capital expenditures by the schools than had previously occurred.

Chad inquired about how the Committee could be expected to have a budget prepared to send to the State on April 29, 2015 if the budget meeting doesn't take place until May. Kathy Raposa explained that the process allows changes based on the budget meeting. Peter DeAngelis agreed to send the Committee a form that will permit the Committee submission to be in the proper format.

Steve Boyajian and Steve Martin presented a request by the Housing Board of Trustees for a transfer of \$750,000 from the general fund to the housing trust fund to fund the pursuit of recommendations made in the study on capturing existing affordable housing. A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the town's need to achieve affordable housing goals and the strategies and costs associated with doing so. Chad moved to deny the request to transfer \$750,000 from the general fund to the housing trust fund and instead add \$250,000 to the capital fund to fund a pilot project of 1-3 houses. The

motion failed for lack of a second. Chad moved to endorse allocating \$350,000 from the general fund to the housing trust fund to fund a pilot project of 1-3 houses. Melissa seconded the motion for purposes of discussion. Following discussion, a vote was taken and motion did not carry. Geoff moved to endorse the proposal as requested by the Housing Board of Trustees. Peter Dennehy seconded the motion. Following discussion, the motion was withdrawn so that the motion can be voted on by the full committee.

Deborah Barchi, Director of the Barrington Public Library, presented a request for the Committee's endorsement of a \$1.2 million bond to be used to renovate the second floor of the library. Ms. Barchi explained that the funding plan for the renovation mirrors the plan utilized to renovate the first floor of the library 10 years ago. The plan will be funded by three revenue streams: Approximately \$1 million in philanthropic gifts solicited by the Friends of the Barrington Public Library's fundraising committee, \$600,000 in grants from various foundations, and the proceeds of the \$1.2 million bond. It is anticipated that, once the project is completed, approved and an audit is completed, the town will be reimbursed for the bond's principal and interest over the course of 20 years through the Public Library Construction Reimbursement Program administered by the Rhode Island Office of Library and Information Services. Melissa moved that the Committee endorse the request for a bond for library renovations. Peter Dennehy seconded the motion, which passed on a unanimous vote.

Agenda for Next Meeting

The next meeting will be conducted with the School Committee to discuss its counter-proposal regarding the school budget.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm by Geoff Grove. The next meeting will be at 7:00 pm on April 16, 2015, in the School Committee Room.

Minutes submitted by: Melissa Horne

Approved by: Geoff Grove