

MINUTES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MARCH 25, 2008

Meeting called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairman Wilson with Mr. Holdcraft and Ms. Lund in attendance. This meeting was called to allow the committee to vote if necessary are any issues that might come up at the joint meeting with the Selectmen for the purpose of reviewing the articles for the upcoming Annual Town Meeting.

ARTICLE REVIEW

Loader – Highway Department – Mr. Chaffee advised the Selectmen that he is looking for \$25,000 from the town meeting article and is planning to take the remaining \$125,000 from Chapter 90 funds. The \$25,000 is for snow plow attachments. He is looking to replace the John Deere 544 C which is 27 years old, has a trade in value of approximately \$10,000, needs a minimum of \$5,000 to repair the bucket and the purchase of the equipment from Chapter 90 funds will not affect the work that will be done on the drainage on Rice Corner Road (200') or the work under the CDBG program (Common Street area).

He further stated that the department needs two loaders for productivity as one loader is used on the job site while the other one remains at the staging area for loading sand and gravel; one loader is used to load the sand trucks and the other is used to plow snow over the river; the use of two machines extends the life of both machines and he estimates the rental cost for a comparable loader to be \$5,000 a month + freight if the machine is available.

He feels that there is too much money invested in the Dresser loader to replace it and the trade in value is less.

He advised that the hiring of a machine and operator would cost about \$130 per hour and machines are not always available. He further stated that these expenses could not come out of Chapter 90 funds whereas the purchase of a loader could and if you hire the work out, then prevailing wage rates fall into play.

When asked to look into the purchase of used equipment he stated that there is no used equipment out there. However, after a brief discussion, Mr. Chaffee was directed to provide specifications to the Selectmen so that estimates can be obtained by the Administrative Assistant.

The question of using Chapter 90 funds was discussed in length. Mr. Chaffee stated that there is sufficient money in these accounts to cover the work that needs to be done on Rice Corner Road. The STRAP funds of \$500,000 have not as yet been secured by the Town. Ms. Lund asked for the current list of roads that need work. It was the consensus of the committee to request this information from the Selectmen.

The Selectmen voted to put the article on the warrant and that it read as follows: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer or borrow a sum of money to purchase a new loader with attachments and to dispose of the 1982 John Deere Loader, or take any action relative thereto. The full amount of \$155,000 will be considered. The article should read “raise and appropriate, transfer or borrow”.

Chapter 90 Funds – This is a routine article and the dollar amount was not known at this time. Selectmen voted to put the article on the warrant. Duplicate article removed.

Highway Construction, Reconstruction and Improvement of Town Roads, Bridges and Sidewalks – This is a routine article and the Selectmen voted to put it on the warrant. (\$30,000) Duplicate article removed. Article should read to raise and appropriate, transfer or borrow a sum of money.

Heat Tape Highway Garage – Mr. Chaffee advised that this article was no longer necessary.

STRAP Grant – It was noted that this article was approved at last year’s ATM.

CURB CUT BY LAW – Ms. Lund stated that the letter from the Attorney General made mention of the fact that a building permit comes under the jurisdiction of the Building Inspector and that a town cannot withhold it only the Building Inspector can in accordance with State Building Code reason. She further stated that the Attorney General made mentioned of funds received by a town unless covered under a special law has to go into the general fund and cannot be used by the Highway Department.

The Selectmen voted to put this article on but to check with Town Counsel and to advise Town Counsel of the Attorney General’s decision. If it is wrong and proper wording can be obtained, it will be amended and if not, it will be passed over.

Snow and Ice By Law – The Chief of Police has recommended that this law remain on the books as is as it will assist them in keeping the roadways safe for the Highway Department to perform their job without hazards or obstructions. Selectmen voted not to put it on the warrant.

Emergency Squad Articles – The Selectmen moved to place the routine Emergency Squad on the warrant: Municipal Diesel Fuel (\$1,700), Expenses (Ms. Lund advised that the correct figure is \$31,450 and not the \$30,200 listed) and the Wages (\$111,000 – Ms. Lund stated that the current Advisory Committee figure differs from this but the figure that will be used will be determined at a later date.) These are routine articles and are funded through Ambulance Billing Receipts.

The Selectmen voted to put an article to transfer funds to fund the new ambulance account on the warrant (\$15,000 – Chief Martell stated that this figure may change. This figure was previously given to the Advisory Committee and they have not been informed of the change.)

Fire Station Repairs – The Selectmen voted to place this article on the warrant (\$7,500) Chief Martell stated that the brickwork (\$5,000) needed to be done but he did not have a problem with putting off the painting (\$2,500) until a later date. Ms. Lund questioned whether or not the billing receipts could be used to repair the building as the ambulance is housed in the building. Chief Martel will look into this and report back to the Selectmen and the Advisory Committee will be advised of the findings.

Fleet Stabilization Account – Selectmen voted to put this article on the warrant with a dollar amount to be determined later. There is currently \$75,000 in the account and could be used to purchase vehicles at the annual town meeting.

Routine Articles – The Selectmen moved to put the routine articles on the warrant so that they could be voted in a block.

Cemetery Preservation Fund Interest – The Selectmen voted to put this article on the warrant but advised that the Accountant does not feel that this should be done. This article transfers the interest earned on the fund into the Cemetery Funds. It is her opinion that there are other departments that have these same types of funds and they do not get the interest.

Town Hall Improvement Account – Selectmen voted to put it on the warrant. There is no dollar amount at this time and the Account currently has a balance \$56,292.35 with the Exterior Renovations Account having a balance of \$5,800. If not needed, it can be passed over.

Town Hall Electrical Upgrade – Selectmen voted to put this article on the warrant. There is no dollar amount at this time but there is \$17,422.79 currently in the account. Estimates have been received for the next phase (approximately \$15,000) and if this article is not needed, it can be passed over.

350th Quaboag Plantation Anniversary – Selectmen voted to put this article on the warrant (\$5,000 this year and \$10,000 next year).

OQLA Lake Improvement – The Selectmen voted to put this article on the warrant. (\$10,000) A duplicate article was removed.

Zoning By Laws Amendments – The Selectmen voted to place the following articles on the warrant: Cluster Development, Section 8.D.3, Section 7.A. and to remove Section 7.B.5 and 7.C.

Advisory Committee By Law Amendments – It was noted that the By Law Committee did not recommend this article for the warrant. It was also noted that this article did not come from an elected board, committee, commission or petition but from an individual. Section 1 – The Selectmen voted not to put this article on the warrant. Section 3 – The Selectmen voted to put this article on the warrant but to rework it to state that

appointments shall be filled by a joint vote of the Selectmen and the Advisory committee. Whether or not to include this for all appointments or just for vacancy occurs. Mr. Heller will work on the wording and present it to the other members of the Selectmen and the Advisory Committee for joint approval of the new wording.

Dog Fund Account – The Selectmen voted to place this article on the warrant. Said article turns the monies placed in the Dog Fund over to the Animal Control Officer.

Police Cruiser – The Selectmen voted to place this article on the warrant (\$32,000). The article should read “to raise and appropriate, transfer or borrow a sum of money and further that it list the vehicle that is to be replaced.

Cemetery Preservation Fund – The Selectmen voted to put this article on the warrant with the particulars being worked out at a later date. There is no money involved as this it sets up a fund that requires taxpayers to give a certain percentage of their taxes to this fund for either open space or building renovations in the Town.

Excise Tax Relief POW’s – The Selectmen voted to place this article on the warrant.

Establish Town Building Property/Purchase/Expansion/Improvement Stabilization Account – This account was set up last year and there is no need for this article

Fund Town Building Property/Purchase/Expansion/Improvement Stabilization Account – The Selectmen voted to put this article on the warrant with a dollar amount to be determined at a later date and if there is no money, then the article can be passed over. It was noted that the Cemetery is looking for funding but a figure is not available at this time. It was also noted that the Library is looking for \$24,000. There is currently \$24,000 in this account.

Amendments Personnel By Laws – The Selectmen voted to put these articles on the warrant with a few minor changes. Mr. Heller will provide the Personnel Board with the changes for their records. The Personnel Board recommends these articles. They are: Section 3 Employee Categories; Holidays with pay, personal days with pay, vacations with pay, sick leave with pay, bereavement with pay and additions to the mandatory classifications. The grade and point value for the highway Operator positions has yet to be determined by the Personnel Board. This will be provided prior to the meeting.

Cemetery Land Expansion – The Selectmen voted not to put this article on the warrant as it can be addressed in the previous town property article.

Master Plan – The Selectmen voted to put this article on the warrant (\$15,000).

Water Department – The Selectmen voted to put this article on the warrant and it is a routine transfer from the Water Account to the Water System Improvement Account (\$10,000).

Transfer Free Cash to reduce the tax rate - The Selectmen voted to put this article on the warrant as a precaution should money be available. It can always be passed over. There is currently \$12,539 in the Free Cash Account as the Town transferred \$40,000 to the Stabilization Account at a Special Town Meeting.

Transfer Free Cash to Stabilization Account – The Selectmen voted to put this article on the warrant as a precaution should money be available. It can always be passed over.

Highway Operator – This article is covered under the Personnel By Law amendments. Selectmen voted not to put it on the warrant.

SNOW AND ICE DEFICIT REDUCTION – The Snow and Ice account has been overspent by \$50,000. The Selectmen considered placing an article on the warrant to reduce this deficit and to use the \$50,000 that was previously appropriated for engineering plans for Route 148 to cover it. The Highway grant program administrators have advised the Board that the Route 148 work would not be happening for approximately another four years. The Selectmen questioned whether or not this should go on the special town meeting warrant but voted to put it on the warrant after checking with the Town Accountant.

Medical Examination – This article amends the personnel by laws and the Personnel Board has recommended that it be placed on the warrant to clear up the confusion regarding who will have an employment physical and who will fund the expenses. The Selectmen moved to place this article on the warrant.

Library Repair and Maintenance – Ms. Lund advised that this article was presented to the Advisory Committee and the Library is looking for \$5,000 to be added to the account. The Selectmen voted to put it on the warrant if, after checking with the Library Director, they are still looking for the funding.

Library Expansion Account – Ms. Lund advised that this article was presented to the Advisory Committee and the Library is looking for \$24,000 to be added to the account. This can be included in the main Town Building, etc. fund. The Library people were in agreement with this at the time of the Advisory Committee meeting.

Mill Street – Ms. Lund advised that the Town has been paying an administrative Tier II fee to the DEP for the Mill Street site due to the fact that the Town has not complied with the clean up schedule set up by DEP. There is approximately \$25,000 in this account. The Selectmen voted to put the article on and to check to see if this fee will be assessed again this year. If not, the article can be passed over.

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Wilson declared the meeting closed at 9:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Beverly A. Lund, Secretary

Date Approved by Advisory Committee: March 26, 2008

Date Submitted to Selectmen: March 27, 2008