

MINUTES OF MEETING OF WAREHAM FINANCE COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: March 13, 2024

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M.

II. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Norma Scogin, Chair
Matt Rose
Gerald Stefanski
Joseph Smith
Dominic Cammarano
Julie Moran (via Zoom)

Members Absent: Heidi Churchill

III. FINANCE COMMITTEE MATTERS

A. Presentation & discussion of Special Town Meeting article re: real property revaluation – Jacqui Nichols, Director of Assessment.

Ms. Nichols explained the intent of the article is to see if the Town will transfer from the overlay surplus or available funds a sum of money necessary to complete a State mandated revaluation of all real estate & personal property in Town. She discussed the State mandate & the revaluation to be done every five years. The process for the revaluation was put out to bid w/ an RFP process for each separate entity (real estate & personal property). The cost is estimated at \$140,000. The Board of Assessors has voted to release the funds from the overlay surplus. This is a contracted amount based on the RFP contract.

Ms. Nichols discussed the history of the mandate which used to be every three years, but changed to five years due to interim adjustments. The revaluation will be based on 2023 values.

Brief discussion ensued re: personal property tax low-cost bills vs. cost to generate the actual bill. Ms. Nichols will look into this matter.

B. Presentation & discussion of Annual Town Meeting & Special Town Meeting articles re: Wareham Water Pollution Control Facility – Bernie Pigeon, Chair of Sewer Commission

- i. WPCF Enterprise Fund**
- ii. \$400,000 for aeration blowers & vehicles**

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Mr. Pigeon explained the intent of the Special Town Meeting Warrant article seeking \$400,000 from the Enterprise Fund for two aeration blowers & three one-ton pick-up trucks and two cranes. He explained the condition of the existing aeration blowers that need to be replaced & their purpose. He noted \$36,000 is being spent per month for rental blowers. A new blower costs approx. \$105,000. The new trucks will replace existing vehicles.

Mr. Pigeon stated more staff members are being recruited. He also noted new asphalt & fencing will be replaced in the near future at the plant. He discussed improvements at the plant by Mr. Kraihanzel.

Brief discussion ensued re: funding this article through retained earnings (money being returned to retained earnings from a project not done).

Brief discussion ensued re: installing a plow package on new trucks. Mr. Pigeon stated there isn't a reason to have plows on the trucks at the plant.

Mr. Pigeon briefly discussed the Annual Town Meeting Warrant article dealing w/ the WPCF Enterprise Fund.

C. Presentation & discussion of Annual Town Meeting Article 13 re: number of licensed marijuana retailers – Jaakko Rinta, Citizen Petitioner.

Mr. Rinta discussed the intent of the article seeks to increase the number of licensed marijuana retailers from three to four. He noted his experience in the marijuana business & being a cannabis specialist. Cannabis jobs are sprouting up in other towns. He discussed benefits/positive impacts to the Town for adding the additional license along w/ host community agreements.

Ms. Scogin noted this is a Citizens Petition article.

Brief discussion ensued re: need for an additional license, trends showing cannabis retail going down & how the Cannabis Control Commission regulates the number of licenses issued to municipalities & if the Town can increase said facilities. Brief discussion ensued re: zoning processes that may need to be addressed if this article passes.

Brief discussion ensued re: declining revenues to the Town from cannabis retail & if adding another would decrease revenues more from existing retailers. Mr. Rinta feels adding another license would increase job opportunities & more variety. Mr. Cammarano doesn't feel the Town will benefit if this article passes.

Brief discussion ensued re: the illicit market vs. legal market.

D. Approval of meeting minutes: February 28, 2024.

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There were no corrections, thus the minutes of February 28, 2024 are automatically approved.

E. Update on Town Meeting Warrants & anticipated schedule for consideration by the Finance Committee.

Ms. Scogin stated the Annual Town Meeting Warrant has closed. The Special Town Meeting Warrant will close on March 25, 2024. The FinCom has a draft Special Town Meeting Warrant copy, but not the final.

There was discussion re starting the next meeting at 6:00 P.M. to deal w/ the amount of articles to be discussed. A different venue may be needed for the next meeting. Ms. Scogin noted a preliminary schedule going forward for meetings.

F. Liaison Reports (if any)

Mr. Smith spoke re: the School Committee presentation of their budget.

Mr. Smith will be running Candidates Night for the Town & has been asked by the Wareham Fire/Water Dept. to run their Candidates Night.

Mr. Stefanski stated the Capital Planning Committee will meet tomorrow.

Mr. Rose feels the outcome of the sewer moratorium will start to "feel the hurt" shortly. There are several entities that are on the list to connect to sewer, but there is no capacity.

IV. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Unanticipated Items)

V. NEXT MEETING DATE & TIME

The next Finance Committee meeting will be held on March 27, 2024, Room 27, Wareham Town Hall, 6:30 P.M.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Mr. Smith moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:21 P.M. Mr. Cammarano seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

- Ms. Moran - Yes
- Mr. Cammarano - Yes
- Mr. Smith - Yes
- Mr. Stefanski - Yes
- Mr. Rose - Yes
- Ms. Scogin - Yes

VOTE: Unanimous (6-0-0)
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Referenced Documents

- Annual Town Meeting Warrant articles
- Special Town Meeting Draft Warrant articles

Date signed: ~~March~~ April 3, 2024

Attest: 
Norma Scogin, Chair
WAREHAM FINANCE COMMITTEE

Date copy submitted to Wareham Town Clerk: April 10, 2024