

FINANCE COMMITTEE Warrant Hearing
IPSWICH TOWN HALL, ROOM C
25 Green Street
TUESDAY, October 4, 2016, 7:30 PM
Accepted 12/13/16

FINCOM Members in Attendance: Chairman Rob White, Janice Clements Skelton, Kevin Murphy, Jamie Fay, and Mike Dougherty. Walt Hartford, Michael Schaaf, and Mitch Feldman were absent, and Tammy Howe arrived at 7:58 pm.

Call to order at 7:36 pm with 5 (five) members present. The Chair announced that ICAM was recording, and Cindy Quinn, the Minutes Secretary, was present.

Others in Attendance: Robin Crosbie (Town Manager), Sarah Johnson (Finance Director), Tom Murphy (Town Moderator), Karen Kosmos (Business Manager, Whittier Vo-Tech), Maureen Lynch (Supt. Whittier Vo-Tech), Russ Bardsley (Whittier Vo-Tech Rep), Ed Rauscher (BOS), Heidi Paek (Planning Board Chair), Glenn Gibbs (Planning & Development Dir.), Ethan Parsons (Senior Planner), Jay Stanbury (Planning Board Vice Chair), Michelle Villiancourt (Open Space Comm.), Ken Swenson (AFSC), and Chris LaPointe (Director of Land Conservation for ECGB).

Abbreviations used: FINCOM Finance Committee, BOS Board of Selectmen, TM Town Manager, SC School Committee, ATM Annual Town Meeting, AFSC Athletic Field Subcommittee, DPW Dept. of Public Works, ECGB Essex County Greenbelt, MG: Massachusetts General Law, MS/HS Middle School/High School, MSBA Massachusetts School Building Authority, SOI Statement of Interest, STM Special Town Meeting,

Documents used:

- Agenda 10/04/16 and Minutes from 8/30/16 and 9/13/16
- 2016 STM Articles from R. Crosbie, 9/19/16, 45 pages
- Handout on Article 15 Housing, H. Paek

CITIZEN QUERIES: there were no citizen inquiries.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:

There was a motion to accept the minutes from 8/30/16 and 9/13/16. It was seconded, and the vote was unanimous 5-0.

WARRANT HEARING—Rob White opened the warrant hearing.

- **Article 13--Creation of a Stabilization Fund for Whittier Regional Vo-Tech**

For Article 13, Maureen Lynch (Supt. of Whittier) and Karen Kosmos (Business Manager) spoke about setting up the account for that district. It is part of the SOI to the MSBA in order to upgrade the building. Of the eleven cities and towns in their district, all but one has passed this so far. Russ Bardsley, our school representative, was also present.

The purpose of the fund is for school renovations that would be bonded under MGL. Maureen explained the Ipswich enrollment numbers. At the end of the year, Karen indicated that their

school committee could appropriate money into the stabilization fund. The school has to plan for 5 and 10 years as some equipment is beginning to fail after 50 years.

There will be a feasibility study. Offering to attend budget meetings, Maureen mentioned that most of the changes are based on student numbers, but the State recommended higher budget increases. Whittier no longer accepts Choice students as more local students are attending, and it has the 5th lowest spending for vocational schools in MA. They do not have a policy on OPEB, but their SC has approved an OPEB trust. Russ will provide Sarah Johnson with student numbers each year.

There was a motion to support Article 13. It was seconded, and the vote was unanimous (5-0).
T. Howe had just arrived and did not vote on this one.

For Article 21, Rob decided to discuss this one later in the agenda.

- **Article 15—Modifications to Housing-Related Zoning Provisions**

Zoning modifications for more in-town housing units are in Article 15, and there was a packet for this article. Heidi Paek reviewed the information on the new proposal, which would make it easier and clearer. She described the infill housing, the density bonus option for single-family subdivisions, the accessory conversion, and the process along with oversight. Glenn Gibbs says it should be easier to develop housing and obtain payments for the Affordable Housing Trust. This would increase the housing density downtown.

It was moved, and seconded, to support Article 15. The vote was 6-0.

- **Article 16—Sign Bylaw Revisions**

For Article 16 on sign bylaw changes, Jay Stanbury went through the changes, which clarify the language and reformat some of the details to make the review easier. Other changes include size of lettering, size of the signs, setbacks, and other criteria. There have been no adverse comments from the business groups or community, and Jay commented how signs are one of the greatest areas of conflict. The process will be easier.

Janice moved to approve Article 16. Tammy seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

- **Article 17—Miscellaneous Zoning Revisions**

Various zoning revisions are in the next article, and Ethan talked about the changes for Residential Mixed Use and the Table of Use regulations.

Jamie moved, and Kevin seconded, to support Article 17. The vote was 6-0.

- **Article 21—Wireless Communications Overlay District Zoning Amendment**

For Article 21, Glenn told the FinCom how approval at STM allows an application for a cell tower in that area to go to the Planning Board. Heidi reminded the group there is no application yet. There are limitations, and Cindy Quinn gave information on the poor coverage in that region of Topsfield Rd. This just opens the door for the proposed owner to apply, and the Town would work with the phone companies.

It was moved to recommend Article 21. There was a second, and the vote was unanimous.

- **Article 2—Legal Settlement Appropriation to School Department**

Robin Crosbie and Sarah Johnson spoke to this article. Any amount over \$20,000 has to be approved, and a portion of these funds would go to the parents for stolen musical instruments.

It was moved, and seconded, to support Article 2. The vote was 6-0.

- **Article 5—Amend School Budget (State Aid)**

This article includes reduction on the Cherry Sheet and an increase of Chapter 70 monies. SC asked that this go in the budget.

Kevin moved to recommend this, and Tammy seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

- **Article 6—School VOIP and Communications System**

This article contains the rest of the Chapter 70 money for the part of the school phone system, which Jamie questioned. Robin added that this be utilized at the HS/MS and the two elementary schools, and Janice suggested deferring the vote.

- **Article 7—Education Stabilization Fund—Whittier Regional School Reduction**

The Whittier Regional Vocational Tech reduced its assessment, and that amount is going into their education stabilization fund.

It was moved, and seconded, to support Article 7. The vote was unanimous, 6-0.

- **Article 18—Amend School Feasibility Appropriations**

On Article 18, some of the committee did not have enough information, and the SC will vote on the again Thursday. There was some discussion on the options, which may need additional funds. Robin suggested another meeting.

Jamie moved to recommend at Town Meeting, and Kevin seconded. It was a unanimous vote.

At 9 pm. there was a motion, and a second, to go into Executive Session (MGL, Subsection of the Law - Chapter 30A, Section 21) to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property and to discuss the deployment of security personnel or devices or strategies with respect thereto. The meeting will return to Open Session after the Executive Session. By roll call, the vote was 6-0.

At 10:21 pm, the FinCom returned to Open Session to continue the hearing.

- **Article 19—Add Parcels to Open Space**

Article 19 would two parcels of land to Open Space, and Robin spoke about the land, both on Essex Road. One of these, Pony Express, could be athletic fields and has hiking trails.

Kevin moved to recommend adding the parcels. Tammy seconded; the vote was unanimous.

- **Article 20—Appropriate from Open Space Bond**

There was some dialogue on Article 20 about recommending at STM and adding uses for general municipal purposes. *Jamie moved to support Article 20, and Tammy seconded.* Further discussion centered on the purposes of the purchase of Open Space, the bond language, and not opening this land for financial purposes. One reason to wait for the STM is to see the full proposal with all the details ahead of time.

Robin indicated that there are some limitations, and the land would be owned by the Town through the BOS without conservation limitations. Perhaps it could be used to store the DPW mowers. *The motion was withdrawn.*

Chris LaPointe from ECGB mentioned that his group is still working on the purchase and sale agreement and might have a report by Oct. 15th. There will be some site walks that week, and Chris would email the details. Robin will get the operating costs, and the general municipal purposes are in the article motion.

Robin remarked that the land would be divided into three pieces—one for the Town, one for MA Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, and the Essex County Green Belt.

There was a conversation on these fields and those near Doyon, parking, and restrooms.

Kevin moved, and it was seconded, to recommend at Town Meeting. The vote was 6-0.

- **Article 14—Accept Gift of 48 Turnpike**

For this land, there were numerous concerns about contamination, wetlands, and development. Some ideas of what to do with the property were discussed.

Jamie moved not to support the article, and Mike seconded. The vote was unanimous.

- **Article 1—Overlay to Stabilization Fund**

Article 1 will place more money into the Stabilization Fund, and some of the money would be used for senior tax exemptions. The reevaluation process is complete, but there may be some abatement requirements.

There was a motion to support Article 1. After the second, the vote was unanimous.

- **Articles 3,4, 8-12**

Article 3 would provide for emergency repairs at the Fire Station. *It was moved, and seconded, to support Article 3. The vote was unanimous 6-0.*

Article 4 would amend the Town budget (State Aid). *There was a motion to support the article. It was seconded, and the vote was 6-0.*

Article 8 reduces our share for Essex Tech. *Janice moved, and Tammy seconded, to support the article. The vote was unanimous.*

In Article 9, some of the surplus would fund OPEB. *It was moved, and seconded, to support this article. The vote was 6-0.*

Article 10 would add to the Capital Stabilization Fund account. *Kevin moved to support the article. Jamie seconded, and the vote was unanimous.*

For Article on amending the FY17 Capital Plan, the MS/HS chiller replacement would go out to bid. *It was moved, and seconded, to support Article 11. The vote was 6-0.*

Article 12 is for trapping green crabs year round. *It was moved to support the article. There was a second, and the vote was unanimous.*

OTHER BUSINESS

The FinCom report is due Thursday, and Rob has finished writing it. He will send it to the Committee.

It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 10:55 pm. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by

Cynthia D. Quinn, Minutes Secretary