

Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

May 13, 2025

7:30 PM

Acton Town Hall – Room 204

Present: Alex Lenz, Dr. Gang Chen, Corinne Hogseth, Christi Andersen, Jason Cole, Steve Noone, Greg Jarboe, Roland Bourdon, Dave Wellinghoff

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

WRAC PRESENTATION:

Joe Robb, Chairperson of the Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC) presented a status update of the Committee's work.

FY2025 CIP for Stormwater Improvements:

Assumption of 4.25% borrowing rate

Marianne explained the most recent May 20, 2025 bond issue and the town receiving 3.5% interest rate.

Think about deferred maintenance and the negative impact it has on everything.

Discussion ensued regarding the impact due to Ms4 regulations

Discussion ensued about the question if and to what extent does stormwater flow into the Assabet river.

Ms. Hogseth – inquired about other effects and the Commonwealth's regulations.

Discussion ensued about "generalized taxation".

More detail of maintenance cost of 5 year versus 10 year cost? Staff and equipment are mostly the cost, including personnel cost. FinCom would like personnel costs broken out from other maintenance costs.

Alissa Nicol, SB Member – appreciates the detail. Not happy about the discussion of \$175/household. Strongly suggest don't discuss that figure because we're not there yet, especially comparing to other comparable communities. Budget is \$800,000 for borrowing, but keep in mind the interest we pay on that. Yes, frustrated too about the town not putting enough money into this.

Discussed how stormwater issues are addressed.

Woodard & Curran went to town for figures, these figures tonight are under-budget. A lot of things that go into stormwater that have not been accounted for in these numbers.

Terra Friedrichs – This is a perfect example of an impact study needed. Like the idea of an Enterprise Fund because it's a better management tool, specific to the subject matter.

Will look on GFOA to find out how much should be spent on culverts.

John Petersen – Sees this project as a “need, a statement of “need”. Then, how should it be funded.

Mr. Jarboe – Come to the right place, earlier to get arms around these issues, better to reach goal.

TOWN MEETING REVIEW:

Overall, most agreed the evenings went too long.

Mr. Wellinghoff – Disheartening with attendance, about 250 attendees end of second night.
Open up vote for another vote (Article 7). A frustrating dynamic.

Ms. Hogseth – People were not treated the same way. 6A versus the leaf blower Article. Moderator allowing one but not the other. Prevailing side can request reconsideration and how do you enforce that.

New Articles not taken up after 10:00?

Mr. Cole – After midnight?

Mr. Noone - Group discussed, there is no rule, but sentiment is not to go too late. Consider don't delve into Capital as much. LWV also suggested to have all money Articles on the first night.

Mr. Bourdon – Was disappointed in the CPA presentation. In the future, lay out each project in more detail as in previous years.

Ms. Andersen – Consider don't split out the Capital projects.

Mr. Noone – More so, don't have to discuss in the detail we did. Compare the amount of time we spend on \$70m versus \$40,000.

Ms. Andersen – As we go into harder times, this may be needed though.

Mr. Noone – prefer to have a lengthier overview, then, of the town budget. Clearly, the Moderator had a set goal of what she wanted to get completed on the first night.

Mr. Cole – Concerned if capital isn't split out, everything might get voted down in the whole basket.

Ms. Andersen – overall, doesn't like the applause

Mr. Wellinghoff – Capital is over \$10m, so that is a sizeable amount that should be discussed.

Mr. Jarboe – Watching on TV, found it to be long. May want to consider about planning for a Fall Town Meeting. FinCom to work with Select Board to have an item on a ballot.

Ms. Hogseth – PR success last year with the override because the Schools go the unions to get people there. The DPW didn't have that this year.

Parents with children, that is a cop-out. Most families have 2 parents, have one parent go.

Mr. Cole – We heard the voters: Get with Select Board as soon as possible and discuss the DPW Facility.

Mr. Jarboe – DPW why voted down, why voted yes. Voted no: cost, #1 reason. Voted yes: need to provide a DPW Building that addresses facility improvements and working conditions.

People commented that the election on April 29th was close, and he is not in agreement that it was close. There is a lot of road to travel to get to 50%.

Mr. Wellinghoff – There were people who did think the dpw facility was good.

LIAISON REPORTS:

None

Mr. Sullivan requested members to please come to next meeting to discuss which meetings the members wish to be considered as Liaison.

Next Meeting – Planned for May 27, 2025, but Mr. Sullivan will canvas members to determine if meeting is needed or can be cancelled/moved.

Nominations were put on the floor:

Mr. Bourdon – Recommend Mr. Sullivan for Chair

Mr. Jarboe as Clerk

Mr. Bourdon made motion to accept the slate of Officers as presented, Mr. Noone seconded

Unanimous

Next Meeting: Planned for May 27th, but incoming Chair is not able to make it.

Therefore, next meeting June 10, 2025

Mr. Cole expressed his gratitude for 11 years of Mr. Wellinghoff's service to the Finance Committee.

Mr. Wellinghoff expressed his thank you

Mr. Wellinghoff made motion to adjourn

Mr. Bourdon seconded

Unanimous

9:14pm