

The Board of Selectmen met jointly with the Finance Committee and School Committee on Monday, October 1, 2018 beginning at 7:00pm in the Main Meeting Room of the Town Hall . After that meeting concluded the Board of Selectmen met and the following members were present.

Mark Gallivan, Chairman
Nancy Mackenzie, Vice Chairman
James O'Neil, Clerk
David Salvatore
Ann Ragosta

Also Present:
James Johnson, Town Administrator

Mr. Gallivan explained they just finished a joint meeting with FinCom and School Committee.

Article #3, Rt1A fields

Ms. Ragosta, you gave me the contract I notice on page 9 the basic service shall include. Presentations etc. T. Mtg support. Many concerns with this project, Town mtg ½ million dollar. Looks like the cost is about 11 million dollars, no where on the warrant does it say the cost. You are asking for 1. 5 million , never can I recall has town meeting voted on a project like this, piecemeal, Town meeting voting on the entire project, I think it would be reckless to approve the 1.5 million on something the official document does not reference the cost. Mr. Gallivan you want to see the project as it evolves, they struggle with the issue what is the final cost. Found a field study was the beginning of this project if we take the 1.5 and set it aside, when the project goes forward. go out to bid the final project would not come before town meeting until we know what it is and final cost. It is hard to know what construction bids will come in at. I Like to put money aside for the project if it does or doesn't happen.

Ms. Ragosta disagrees with that she assumes that you got this number for field design from Weston and Sampson. What have they done for us. Mr. Johnson talked about voting on the Police, Fire and DPW garage without the bid. In the case of the Senior center the Fin Com said we will never raise enough money. The Fire dept. we funded the design of the station and then we had bids in hand. It is better to go to Town Meeting with the number in hand. The estimates you reference they are only estimates from Weston Sampson. They send out to a third party. Those numbers have a 20% contingency markup. It is close to 1.358 million. This is an old sheet. We are asking money to be set aside, borrowing should be 6,5 million dollars. Combination of funding. This will have funds on hand, the \$500,000 last year and 195,00 prior T. Mtg vote. It is going to be a multi tier. The funds are certified. I do not want to go with an estimate. I think the authorization will be around 6.5 million.

Ms. Ragosta in the FTM 2014 the total costs were voted on. The Superfund site remediation was an article voted separately. Looking at TM warrants and in 2015 we asked for more money for police station. When money was asked for in 2014 it was with the total costs

embedded in the Article. JJ it was in the motion not in the article. Mr. Johnson the motion specifies the dollar amount. Ms. Ragosta does not see any pressing need to appropriate money for fields. Have we had public outreach meetings. Mrs. Mackenzie noted we did start this process during the master plan. Much debate of Adams Farm, we want to put fields there, there is constant battles for field space. In 2018 field study showed lack of field space. This debate and need has been going on for 18 years. Ms. Ragosta most people do not know the cost of the fields, we should have a debate and put this off. I do not see the hurry on this. There are 25,000 residents that may want to weigh in. I think it is worth a discussion for those paying for the field.

Mr. O'Neil thinks this will give us a better number. He does not know when we are going to know anything. I think we need to go through this step. Ms. Ragosta questioned what did we pay \$500,000 for in the fall. Mr. Johnson they have figured out the topography. They have to go to planning and Zoning.

Mr. Salvatore the area that is cleared and why. Mr. Johnson explained so the area that is cleared is 3.5 acres is part of the pond dredging project and needed somewhere to put it. That is good nutrient soil for growing grass. Each batch will be tested. Mr. Johnson yes. Mr. Salvatore it amazes me that this cost is 11 million, the police station was 11 million. Mr. Salvatore are we going to be getting fees from users? Mr. Johnson, yes, I think the numbers will be increased.

Mr. Salvatore saw you sent an email to the soccer association. Mr. Gallivan explained the soccer leases from the town for a dollar. Soccer pays for the Maintenance. Mylod fields are only used for soccer. Mr. Salvatore we have an estimate of fees. Mr. Johnson told him, no not yet. Mr. Salvatore the little league fields on west Street. Board believes they own it.

Mr. Johnson explained where some of the money for this project will come from; In 2017 gift from Siemens, High Oaks funds with Walsh \$200,000. Part of the West street MOA with Cochran \$50,000. The TIF with Siemens is around \$30,000. Within the last year Craig Salvatore Friends of Fields will donate funds.

Mr. Salvatore questioned what is the estimate for maintenance of these fields? Mr. Johnson stated it is about \$40,000 a year. It is amazing the number. Why do we have two roads? Mr. Johnson it will help with the traffic. What strikes me most, the Senior center we went around with that. 11 million dollars is a lot of money. Going to be groups of organized sports. Talked about how poorly our current fields are taken care of. JO does not feel this is a rush. We keep saying 11 million. Mr. Johnson feels it will be around 9 million project. 1.5 is being asked for from free cash. Mrs. Mackenzie thinks Walpole likes it outdoor space, recreation space, when I look at the fields, it is not just the youth sports, it is children, grandparents, parents. We definitely made the purchase of the fields with this in mind

MOTION moved by Mr. Gallivan to recommend Favorable Action on Article #3 , seconded by Nancy Mackenzie 3-2-0 (Ms. Ragosta and Mr. Salvatore opposed)

Article 14 Fingerprinting

Ms. Ragosta reading this and considering the weight of someone's civil liberties, I am leaning in favor of not fingerprinting. What do you see the benefit of this. What is the proactive benefit. Chief Carmichael under the federal, there criminal side of it and entered into the FBI database. Not based on convictions, civil, licensing, employment purposes, the way we have been doing background checks fall short of doing the fingerprint checks. More recently we are asking for photo copy of their ID. The problem we run into know is the authenticity of Licenses, we arrested someone and we ran the License and came back valid, when we fingerprinted them they were not the person on the license. The issue of aking sure the people coming into the community say who they are and reach the suitability of who we want in town. Concern out of state door to door solicitors. We have a group that comes in from Chicago. We check them most of them have criminal records. Many times they do not have a license. It is just a matter of safety and security of the town so we can verify who they are. We just want to make sure they are who they say they are and if we are going to issue a license they meet the suitability Ms. Ragosta would you be running the fingerprints against the criminal database. Would there ever be a time when they are in the criminal. Are you going to do the reverse once we have the fingerprints, are they know in the criminal database. If there is a hit on it we will get a report. If he has flase names had an arrest, if nothing comes back. Chief Carmichael no it will go in the civil database. I agree with you on the Hawking and Peddling, these other industries and jobs, triple I is a very good system. I am not a big fan of this. Is there anyway to limit this. I do not like the idea of someone you has a business in town being fingerprinted . Chief Carmichael anyone that has taken property in I would like to get that. Ice cream there is statutory requirements, they must be fingerprinted. Mr. Gallivan noted he is a mentor for the robotics team, we get fingerprinted, I am in favor of it. I think it is a good thing to go through the process. Mr. Salvatore how much does it cost to submit this fingerprinting. I did an internal policy. I put \$100, you can decide \$25, \$50. Mr. Salvatore wanted to know if the department has to pay? Chief Carmichael no. Mr. Salvatore questioned is there an additional cost? I like that. Urber and Taxi drivers. The manger of liquor licenses. The Board signed off some where not from the United States. One individual had an OUI.

Mr. Salvatore the civil side files with the civil side of the database. It goes to state police. If there is a hit on the criminal side they will get a hit. Do you fingerprint for gun licenses. Yes.

Mr. O'Neil thinks it is very sensible, and is in support.

MOTION moved by Mrs. Mackenzie to support Article 14, seconded by Mr. Gallivan,
VOTED 5-0-0

Article 15, Animal Control

What is in the motion is not in the articles. This just transfers the oversight of the ACO to police. Ms. Ragosta I am happy to see it was changed back to the first language. I do not see a problem, it would be great to have a desk at the police station. I do not think there is any need for the Board to give up the oversight of the ACO from Jim. I just don't think we

need to do that, we implemented the guidelines for ACO for animal care. I do not see why the Board would give up that authority. Mr. Salvatore would this person have any claim to be part of the union. Mr. Johnson no, not at this time. Mr. Salvatore does the Chief have oversight of any non union employees. Mr. Johnson yes. Ms. Ragosta the other problem I have with this, if we decide not to employee with a full time ACO, but shared with another town. Mr. Johnson we would specify the oversight in an agreement. Mr. Salvatore why know? Mr. Johnson over the last 2 years there have been multiple dog issues where officers have responded and there were questions as to whether the officer could issue a ticket. It is under the Board of Selectmen, it is a public safety function. Mrs. Mackenzie when John retired we went through two other ACO and they did not last. John came back. If you hit a dear , I didn't call the dog officer, I called the police station. I think it makes sense. Mr. Gallivan thinks it makes sense.

MOTION moved by Mrs. Mackenzie to support article 15, seconded by Mr. Gallivan
VOTED 3-2-0 (Mr. Salvatore and Ms. Ragosta, opposed)

Article 9

Capital Equipment \$967,200 of that \$95,000 from ambulance fund . Ms. Ragosta in spring 2018 we spent almost 2 million dollars, these have never been on the capital budget plan. We are looking at items that were scheduled for 2020. Jim told me when I asked why we are purchasing capital in the Fall. I am confident after looking at older warrants. Why are they being purchased in the fall. We are not going to be appropriating capital budget items in the Spring. Mrs. Mackenzie didn't we have an issue with not having enough equipment. Mr. Johnson we have done capital in the past. This would take care of capital budget for the next year. Change the cycle, allow us to get a head start on the purchase of the vehicles, they are back ordered for a long time. Don Anderson tried to replace windows but couldn't get. If this is approved you will not see this again until next fall. Ms. Ragosta, I think this can wait until the Spring.

Mr. Salvatore how much did we spend on capital in Spring? Ms. Ragosta 1.2 million. Mr. Salvatore for the 2020 budget you will not do capital budget in the Spring. Mr. Johnson explained that this will allow us to get ahead of building issues.

MOTION moved by Mrs. Mackenzie, to recommend Favorable action on Article 9, seconded by Mr. Gallivan, VOTED 4-1-0 (Ms. Ragosta opposed)

Article 8, Capital infrastructure

Mr. Johnson this is to address the building needs. Ms. Ragosta talk about the turf replacement of \$50,000 and we are doing the additional as we will not appropriate for capital in the Spring. Playground equipment and high risk tree removal. The town utilizes a 5 year plan, specifically that it will be updated every year, we have evolved the 5th year you update not add something in the last week. Mrs. Mackenzie, that is misleading. We have been pushing the turf longer than most towns do, we need to put more money into that. The building dept. It is not in the 5year plan, we should not let that space sit vacant. You are

continuing to take time to profess all of these are facts. Ms. Ragosta it is not a fact. The capital requests are not large capital. It is not the practice of this town to purchase large items in the fall. Mrs. Mackenzie many meetings you keep telling us that we are not doing things the right way. Don Anderson says that it is not the right time. Mr. Gallivan I understand you do not like the change. Ms. Ragosta I feel we are double spending. Spring town meeting free cash voted on at STM would have been under the FY2018 budget. But the operational budget is for FY2019, the money we are talking about now is for FY2019. There was no discussion amongst this board in this change in policy. Setting aside is the calendar, is worth having in the spring than in the fall. I can't believe there has been this policy change without discussion with this board.

Jim O'Neil what is more important is are we taking care of the things we should be taking care of. We had the discussion on OPEB. Nice to have a plan.

MOTION moved by Mrs. Mackenzie to recommend favorable action on Article 8, seconded by Mr. Gallivan VOTED (4-1-0) Ms. Ragosta opposed

Article # 5 Stabilization Fund

Mr. Johnson this is just a 3.9 million currently.

MOTION moved by Mrs. Mackenzie, to recommend Favorable Action on Article5, seconded by Mr. Gallivan, VOTED 5-0-0

Mr. Johnson explained this is a rainy day fund. Majority to get in 2/3 to get it out. Mr. Salvatore, does the state require a certain amount. Mr. Johnson they like to see 15%. Jim would like to see 10%.

Article #19, Swimming at Jarvis Pond

There was a consensus to try it for one weekend. They will try it for an experiment for one weekend. Mr. Salvatore would it be a celebration or just open the pond. Mr. Johnson the way this article is written it is non-binding. Mr. Gallivan do we want to vote on this tonight. Ms. Ragosta is there any issue allowing it to go forward. Mrs. Mackenzie we can refer back to petitioners. Mr. Salvatore, weekdays the pools are open and they are busy. On the weekends the pool is open and not very busy.

The cost of keeping this open is costly. I think it is too much. Mr. Gallivan, refer back to committee.

There was a question about referring back to committee should be refer back to petitioners.

MOTION moved by Mrs. Mackenzie to refer back to the petitioners, with the stipulation that there is support for the one weekend use of the pond, seconded by Mr. Gallivan, VOTED 5-0-0

Article #20, Abutter notification

Mr. Johnson explained that Bill was in the office and said he was going to withdraw it. He has not given me anything formal. It was because of a project on Stone street. Mr. Salvatore feels it is the obligation of the abutter to keep up with that.

MOTION moved by Mrs. Mackenzie to recommend No Action on Article 20, seconded by Mr. Gallivan, VOTED 5-0-0

Article #18, Tax levy

Ann stepped down from the desk and went to the podium. She informed the Board she made the presentation to the Finance Com. Bob Damish is here behind me in case I miss an important point. As you might know on behalf of the 200 or more taxpayers who signed the petitions to take 25% percent of they FY2018 free cash and put it to the next years tax levy. It is a legal and appropriate way to achieve this goal. The town has been adopted the practice of going with 2 ½ percent. It has been the policy to spend down free cash. Since 2008-2018 the average tax bill has increased almost 2,500, over a 10 year period. If we continue on this in 2026 using the average of increases to having the average tax bill \$10,330 that is not that exact number but it shows us the path we are on. Walpole ranking in the Commonwealth compared to the other towns and we range Number 60. Per capita income is 75%. The ability of our residents to pay their tax bill is decreasing year over year. With respect to excess levy capacity. There are 247 municipalities have a higher excess levy. A large number of cities and towns do not tax to the 2 1/2percent. A lot of long time residents are hurting, they can't afford to live here. The bottom line is shown in the numbers. Walpole has the money to reduce the tax burden; we have more than enough free cash. We are only asking for 25%. That will leave 75% , the path we are on in the increase of taxes is unsustainable to taxpayers. We should be doing a just and reasonable tax. I am passionate. I have people keep asking me why do their taxes keep going up. They are concerned about living here if they retire and cannot afford to live here anymore.

Mr. Salvatore questioned free cash. What about the reserve fund kick back. Mr. Johnson that came back from Finance committee. That is the money the departments turned back. Mr. Salvatore noticed every year the town has been aggressive getting rewards and credits. Mr. Johnson the credits we pursue through MIIA, the rewards credits come up with a bill each year. It has gone down to 3% now. This is police fire casualty coverage. We take advantage of training. Health ins. we budget for what we have in February plus 20 people. Mr. Salvatore questioned the extra funding increase in Health Insurance. Talked about current debt. Mr. Salvatore do you get credit for lower interest. Mr. Johnson yes. Mr. Salvatore there are several items listed as part of the free cash. Permits and insurance, for each of those items, the cash coming to the town. The town has been under predicted. The average is \$200,000 underestimated revenue. For RMV excise tax under predicated \$638,000. For permits that is more volatile. These were underestimated. It is important to have money left over. We see that revenues are consistently under predicated. That under estimation of revenue comes out to 1.25 million dollars. We should not have this large amount of free cash to spend in the fall. What happens because it is money that sounds like it is unanticipated, we are constantly getting this money every year from the taxpayers. Two things, one when we have 6.3 million dollars, we

should not be going on a buying spree. Hold the line on spending that money. We should look at that money. Pay down debt, aggressively hit the worst debt. We should turn money back to the taxpayers, the other way is to not spend it and allocate free cash to the budget. I am in favor of this for this small amount. Certain taxpayers would get more back than other taxpayers. It should go back in the same way if you pay more you get more back. I am in favor of this article for this 1.6million. I think it should be a bigger number. Take some of that free cash and pay down the debt. Whatever we can do to give support to the taxpayer.

Jim O'Neil I object to a few of the characterization of your use of the term buying spree, and buying without scrutiny. I object to those comments, we have department heads, capital budget, Finance Committee each one of these take their accountabilities strongly and they do a really good job. I am committed to fiscal responsibility. I can't agree that we are buying things without scrutiny. Just to be on record that I do not agree with those characterizations.

Mr. O'Neil We had a similar article in front of us last town meeting and there was a discussion about how to give money back. How does it this work and affect the tax levy and what does it mean for subsequent years. Mr. Johnson using round numbers, the increase to the budget will be about 1.5%. this fiscal year. Next year to make up for that levy will be 5.4%. If the plan going forward to keep a 1.582million out of free cash. He reviewed the percentages needed year after year. No one has clued me in. Concerned with this, what is the plan? I have talked to Ann about this. By using one-time funds you become reliant upon that the goal could be to make the town government smaller.

Mr. O'Neil how do we articulate that to everyone so they understand. Ann I know you had a different view. We need to understand what the implications of this would be. We might not be able to do what we need to do. Not going to be able to do some things. We have only seen one side of the equation and not presenting a full picture. Ann Ragosta, Mr. Fisher and I have completely different views. This is the same if you bought something every year and the cost of that car goes up 2 1/5% each year. I am going to give you a rebate. Why would I say no to that. Even though I new the next year I bought my car the price would be the same absent the rebate. Talked about reducing the tax levy. If the town is reducing the tax. Mr. O'Neil I think you are confusing buyer and seller here. Mr. O'Neil you are embedding a structural change in the entire management process. Ms. Ragosta the levy limit goes up regardless. Every year it goes up. I am talking about the levy limit. Mr. Salvatore the levy that we will address in November for tax year ending 2019, the money that is funding the budget for 2019. Ms. Ragosta I have to give some pushback we are not asking to alter the levy limit. The levy limits what it is. That is what the budget will be based on the levy limit for 2019. The amount coming from taxpayer would be reduced by 1.6 million because it will come from free cash. Mr. O'Neil, which builds in the structural deficit that I am referring to.

Mr. Johnson levy limit for this year, say the new growth will be 2 1/2 % 1,705,000.00 let me use round numbers. Ann is talking about 1.5 million so I am taking 1.5 million dollars putting into the budget so levy limit instead of being 1.7 million will be \$205,000.00. That builds a budget using one time funds for this year, that sets us back for capital or free cash, that million is gone and we will never get it back. Next year the levy limit will have to be increased. I have to add in another 1.5 million. She is correct that 240 towns do not go to

the levy limit. Maybe a debt override was past and they did not need to go to 2 ½. Ms. Ragosta there is a difference between the Tax levy and the Tax limit. That piece of the structure does not change. While the levy limit will continue to go up as normal. After one year your concern is that if we have to tax to the levy limit. They got a reduction in one year, then if free cash is not used and then in the following year it would go up. With respect to the overlay, in the overlay isn't it used to pay for the taxpayers that get a reduction? You set it aside in free cash. Mr. Johnson new growth comes in at million dollars. Ms. Ragosta there might be a potential of sticker shock that is not necessarily going to happen if there is free cash to use for the tax levy. So you are reducing the tax increase because we have over collected revenue. Jim does a great job with the budget. The Taxpayers should be rewarded, it should not be that we have it we should spend it. When we talk about scrutiny in the capital budget, the process is not followed by Capital budget, it is used as guidance. I disagree we are not talking about altering the structure of the tax levy limit.

Jim O'Neil the article I think we are building in a structural deficit. It is important that people understand that. That is not what we should be doing. We may or may not have it, meaning if we raise taxpayers. Do you agree if we decrease the levy you are building a deficit into the levy. Ms. Ragosta does not agree. We need to get into an authoritative view of this. In year one you get back \$100 and then next year it is back in your taxes. We need someone who can explain this at Town Meeting.

Mr. Salvatore if we were able to set the tax levy by 2%. Mr. Gallivan stated the levy limit goes up automatically 2 ½ % What the real basic thing here is that instead of spending it on items. If you only increase by 2%. We need something laid out on a piece of paper with someone who is an authoritative. Can we change the tax rate. Mr. Johnson, I don't like this, the way to do this is at the beginning for the budget season. Mr., Gallivan is against this article. I think free cash is needed. We have been underestimating on excise tax. But his concern is that the next year it could be less.

Mr. Salvatore I agree we are underestimating. Mr. Gallivan I think it is good to set aside money for the possibility of the need for schools. I think we are falling behind on roads. The biggest reason I like our budget process and necessary to have free cash. I agree where Jim O'Neil is going. I am against this article.

Mrs. Mackenzie when the receipts go up, motel hotel meals tax, that free cash is being spent, and if they are spending then we should be reinvesting in the town, Part of our job is investing in Walpole's future, and to give that money back does not make sense. We haven't spent money on the ponds. Talked about the water table increasing due to some of the ponds. I think this is backwards, I think the capital budget process and finance committee process, town meeting gets to decide what these be projects are. It is the way of investing in Walpole in the future

MOTION moved by Mr. Gallivan to recommend No action seconded by Mrs. Mackenzie
VOTED 3-1-1 (Mr. Salvatore opposed, Ms. Ragosta abstained)

MOTION moved by Mr. Gallivan to adjourn at 11:15PM seconded by Mrs. Mackenzie
VOTED 5-0-0