

TMMA Minutes, October 08, 2003

Location: Town Hall

Attendance:

TMMA Officers: Hank Manz, Wendy Manz, Ingrid Klimoff

Precinct Officers:

1. John Bartenstein, Jon Cole
- 2.
3. Darwin Adams,
4. Stacey Cannon, Ellen McDonald
5. Olga Guttag
6. Norm Cohen, David Kaufman
7. Margaret Counts-Klebe, Marsha Baker,
8. Larry Belvin
- 9.

Also in attendance were Deborah Brown (7), Paul Hamburger(5), George Burnell(7), Candy McLaughlin (town management).

1. Meeting was called to order at 7:33PM by chair, Hank Manz.
2. Minutes of Sept. 10 and June 11 were amended and approved.
3. Web site update. Hank Manz had met with Rick White (and Wendy Manz) on Wed. afternoon, 10-08, to discuss website, and possible link to TMMA email list. More formal report will be given later, after Hank talks with John Bartenstein. Rick is concerned about content being “close to the line”, concerning context. Some discussion about problems with sending out too much information to citizens, i.e., “appearance of problem” may cause problems.

Rick White wants to help us with TMMA agenda, making it easier for us to get town employees to come to meetings and talk with us.
Olga Guttag wondered if reports from goal setting meeting could be put on town website.

Ellen McDonald said that there was very little publicity of TMMA listing.

5. Wendy Manz asked if TMMA would be willing to help with voter education efforts, that spun out of June 03 override failure. Efforts would be non-partisan in nature. Would TMMA help League of Women Voters with this effort?

Some discussion on this topic: Olga wanted to find committee reports, and facts online, and easily.

. Marsha Baker loved the concept; how to do it well?

Norman Cohen talked about how he recently went to Selectmen’s meeting and, during first 10 minutes for public input, asked the Selectmen to respond better and more

promptly to misinformation. (For example, letter to editor citing how Woburn increased its bond rating recently. How many people know that Lexington's bond rating is AAA, and has been for about 25 years???? Evidently this rating, and this length of time, is very unusual and remarkable.)

Motion was made and passed (with 1 opposed), to support efforts of TMMA re: voter education effort, with certain individuals to investigate and report back to board at next meeting.

6. Candy McLaughlin from town manager's office came and spoke about Lexington 2020. Candy gave us copy of letter, to be signed by Rick White and Hank Manz. Letter, plus postcards, informing town meeting members of precinct 2020 meetings, will be mailed to all town meeting members. Candy asked for suggestion.

Olga requested that letters be emailed, to save money.
Clerk suggested using precinct clerks, to help distribute post cards.

Wording of letter was slightly changed, then committee voted to approve Chairman's signing of letter.

7. Appropriation Committee Presentation. Deborah Brown, Chair, spoke about 04 budget deficit of \$1,300,000.00, (from \$710K snow and ice removal, and \$605K decrease in state aid).

Also, it appears that the town is \$400K short on revenue from F'03, a fiscal shortfall. (((Did I get this right????)))

On Monday evening (Oct.6), the Selectmen voted to hold a Special Town Meeting, to be held Monday, Nov.17, 8PM at Clarke Middle School. The purpose is to address the deficit.

Q. Why do towns not properly budget for snow and ice?

A. Because by law, towns do not have to budget for it. Therefore, it is one easy way to borrow money.

To close deficit, what do we do? Cut services?

Lay-off town employees? Increase fees? Will Selectmen opt for early retirement initiative (deadline 11-01-03) for town employees?

Will the Selectmen, and the Retirement Board, choose to take a "pension holiday" i.e., defer payments into pension plan for 2 years?

We are waiting for assessors' numbers on new growth, (which may help.)

Rick White's suggestions are, to offset \$710K: \$112K from stabilization fund, \$65K by postponing Harrington gymnasium floor to next year, \$64K DPW restructuring of jobs, \$20K building envelope reduction (Cary Hall), \$220 decrease in NESWC tipping fees, \$230 from NESWC stabilization fund.

F'05 unofficial estimates:

\$8.9 increase in town operating expenses

\$7.4 increase in salaries

7.8 increase in budget.

Revenues 3%increase

Estimated Gap: \$7,000,000

8. Capital Expenditure Committee, George Burnell, chair talked about need to look at operating costs along with capital costs. Some serious work is not being addressed.

Also, we need to better maintain our facilities.

Town employees have unions to advocate for them. No one advocates for capital.

9. Next meeting: a. update on voter ed. proposal

b. Cary Library update

Meeting was adjourned at 9:10pm by chair.

Respectfully submitted,
Ingrid H.Klimoff, Clerk