

**Town Of Bedford
Finance Committee
March 17, 2016, 7:30PM
Selectmen's Meeting Room**

Members Present:

Ben Thomas, Paul Mortenson, David Powell, Elizabeth McClung, Richard Bowen, Stephen Steele, Karen Dunn, Stephen Carluccio, Thomas Busa.

Absent: None

Quorum: Yes

Others Present:

Finance Director: Victor Garofalo, Town Manager: Richard Reed. Conservation Commission: Steven Hagan, John Willson, Joe Guardino. Admin: Elizabeth Bagdonas. Selectmen: William Moonan, Margot Fleischman, Caroline Fedele. School Committee: Ann Guay. Moderator: Cathy Cordes. Untitled: Erica Liu.

Proceedings:

Meeting called to order at 7:34 by Stephen Steele, Committee Chairman.

Motion: Movement by David Powell to approve meeting minutes of March 10, 2016, as amended.

Motion approved

8:0:1

Agenda Item A: Conservation Commission- Article 7 ATM

Chair of the Conservation Commission, Steven Hagan presents regarding process improvements.

- Mr. Hagan overviews recent process improvements within ConCom, noting that the PowerPoint slides he reviews will also be shown at ATM.
- Certain forms such as *Notice of Intent* documents have been made available on the town website. Digitizing these forms has lead to less foot traffic and decreased workload within the department. An outlined *Order of Conditions* document will soon be available online as well.
- A previously developed tree cutting policy will be moved into the bylaws. Mr. Hagan notes that many citizens are not aware of tree cutting laws in the state of MA. This policy has proved to be helpful in educating citizens beforehand, thus avoiding retroactive measures.
- Fixed-time starts have been detracted from agenda items. Mr. Hagan reasons that this change allows meetings to run more efficiently since the committee is no longer constrained to begin topics at a preset time.

Mr. Hagan introduces John Wilson, who discusses the proposed by-law changes of Article 7.

- Mr. Wilson informs that the existing bylaw was last revised in 1995, and that ConCom has been interested in revising the *Wetlands Protection* bylaw since 2014. Mr. Wilson notes that the proposal has been “thoroughly vetted” by town counsel.
- Former bylaw structure poorly aligned with the current processes. The goal was to create a replacement bylaw that was equally protective but more clear and user-friendly.
- ConCom chose to adopt the MACC model as a framework for the revision. Mr. Wilson describes the MACC model as easier to understand and apply; it is widely used in MA.
- Mr. Wilson states that virtually all the substantive language of the bylaw has been kept, the difference is that it is now arranged according to the MACC model. He claims no substantive protections have been reduced or increased.
- ConCom introduced five key additions to the proposal. These additions are noted as: Increased detail in language governing Determinations of Applicability [54.10(b)], Simplified administrative alternative to public hearing for “routine applications” [54.10(c)], Incorporation of the ConCom Tree Policy [54.10(e)], Clarification of owner’s rights concerning property accessed by commission agents [54.14(b)] and Provision for graduated penalty amounts charged for noncompliance with ConCom orders [54.14(e)].

The board comments and receives clarification.

- It is mentioned that section 54.14(e), bylaw addition #5 is not included for reference on the PowerPoint presentation. This is noted as an oversight and Mr. Wilson plans to include the section prior to presenting at town meeting.
- It is clarified that under the proposal, if ConCom were to seek a fee structure change, this change could be enacted on a committee level rather than a town meeting level.
- Mr. Carluccio mentions concern that some of the outlined changes have the power to be viewed as substantive; specifically noting the alternation of taking the power to change fees away from the town voter. He questions whether or not such changes will be made clear to the town voters.
- It is determined that comparison documents will be made available to the public at town meeting. It is mentioned that the changes were meant to be accessed through the town website but, it is unclear why this has not occurred. It is recommended that ConCom provide 150-200 copies of comparison material for the voters at the ATM.
- Mr. Powell notes that reorganization and relabeling of a regulation to a bylaw or vice versa could be considered as a substantial change. Furthermore, he considers the

italicized explanation within the town warrant to be misleading. Other materials, such as the *Fate of Language* document were seen as incomplete. He approximates that the bylaw has the potential to directly impact 20-30% of Bedford's property owners.

- A concern is mentioned regarding a lack of educational outreach and potential for misunderstanding among citizens. The inference that the bylaw has not substantially changed is held to be inaccurate by some FinCom members.

Agenda Item B: Expanded Local Transit Pilot Program- Article 21 ATM
Selectwoman, Margot Fleischman presents clarifications regarding the Expanded Local Transit Pilot Program.

- Community interest concerning increased town transportation has been discovered by a National Citizens survey as well as through Healthy Bedford outreach.
- Mrs. Fleischman states that the BLT cannot accommodate every trip, and has been forced to turn potential riders away. The overburdened BLT is seen as a progressing issue since Bedford's senior population is increasing (Based on 2010 census, by the year 2020, 30% of residents will be aged 60 or higher.)
- Mrs. Fleischman provides a synopsis-review of the program, as formerly presented for the benefit of the board. Benefits of using a contracted service include the ability for increased dispatch and data collection, a main goal of the program.
- It is confirmed that transportation services such as Uber are increasingly available in the suburbs. However, drawbacks to these services may include a lack of handicap accessible vehicles (it is noted that the UberX service is beginning to address this.) It is also mentioned that parents may not feel comfortable sending their children on an Uber.

FinCom poses questions. Determinations are as follows,

- It is determined that the grant sought by the pilot program is not renewable. Mrs. Fleischman notes that there are other grants that will be researched for the following year.
- Mrs. Fleischman outlines success criteria for the pilot program. Success will be determined by obtaining 50% of the BLT ridership amount within the first year, 75% of ridership within the second year (which is 3750 riders), continuing an upward trend (without robbing riders from the current BLT system.) This is later defined as 2,500 incremental riders brought on by the Pilot program, a combined 7,500 riders between the Pilot Program and BLT system.
- Mrs. Fleischman acknowledges the merging of the pilot program with the BLT as a "justifiable plan," provided that the success criteria are met and demand is present. She infers that a staff member, the Healthy Bedford Coordinator will consider the determination of a program merger. The intention is for the program to span over two

years. Consideration regarding program renewal, cancellation or merging will be determined at the end of that time period.

- The point is raised that vouchers may be more cost effective to the town. Concern is noted regarding the costly fare structure and the potential for the program to be abused by subsidized trips for secondary ridership (i.e. middle school crowd, able-bodied adults) rather than the elderly and disabled.

Agenda Item C: Town Meeting Warrant Article Recommendations
Agenda order reorganized.

Town warrant article 16: Easement acquisitions for Middlesex turnpike and Great Road/Mudge Way intersection. Located on Warrant pg. 55

- Town Manager, Richard Reed explains that in 2003 the ATM voted to take all land and easements necessary along Middlesex Turnpike and Crosby Drive. Temporary easements were employed, with a lifespan of three years; those that spanned from Middlesex Turnpike to town line are now expired.
- Permanent utility and temporary easements will be needed. The twelve affected property owners will be asked to donate the necessary easements. However, funds will need to be set aside for non-donators. Based on 2003 values, it is estimated that in the worst-case scenario \$91-92,000 will be needed. An appraiser will readjust this amount.
- Mr. Reed states that the town does have a source of funding which will not affect the tax levy: an old appropriation from the 2003 easement account, as well as interest accrual on damage funds. The necessary balance amounts could be re-appropriated into this article.

Town warrant article 22: Supplement Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2016 and Articles of the 2015 Annual Town Meeting

- A collective bargaining unit has been settled with the police supervisors. The union and selectmen recently voted to ratify the agreement. The three-year agreement was commenced July 1, 2015, and spans until June 30, 2018. The agreement calls for a total 6.25% wage increase over 3 years, which is within the amount set aside by selectmen.

Article recommendations are made.

Motion: Stephen Steele moves for the recommendation of warrant article 7.

Motion Denied

3:2:4

Motion: David Powell moves that no recommendation be made on warrant article 7.

Motion Approved

6:3:0

Motion: David Powell moves for the recommendation of article 8 as printed in the warrant.

Motion Denied

3:5:1

Motion: David Powell moves for the disapproval of warrant article 8 as printed in the warrant.

Motion Approved

6:2:1

Motion: Paul Mortenson moves for the recommendation of warrant article 21.

Motion approved

5:4:0

Motion: Richard Bowen moves to recommend warrant article 22, including the transfer of \$22, 825.01 from the Selectmen's Reserve account into the Policeman's Reserve account.

Motion approved

9:0:0

Agenda Item D: Model 3.1

Victor Garofalo reviews changes made to the model

- Expanded Local Transit Pilot Program- Article 21 is not currently in the model. Based on the decided approval, it will be added to "other articles", reducing the surplus in effect.
 - Model 3.1, pg. 2 shows the Middlesex Turnpike revenue funds.
 - Model 3.1, pg. 5 shows police supervisor contract funds.
 - It is determined that the debt number will be adjusted by \$50,000 for the Lane School based on the original projections. The number will be changed at special town meeting based on the final Lane School project cost.
 - Model 3.1, pg. 6 shows adjusted police salaries.
 - Model 3.1, pg. 10, shows amount for Middlesex turnpike article 16.
- Mr. Garofalo informs that \$36,000 was appropriated at the 2014 ATM for the DPW Fiber connection. That number can now be applied to the Communication Project in the Capital Article at town meeting. This will result in \$36,000 less needed for this project.

Agenda Item E: Old and New Business

- The next FinCom meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 24th.
- Mr. Thomas mentions that the Selectmen have been working with a proposed design for a bikeway extension among other topics, which are outlined in Dropbox.
- It is determined that Fridays will be the instituted deadline for the submission of new meeting/agenda item documents.

*Adjournment at 10:06 governed by Stephen Steele, Committee Chairman.
Minutes submitted by Michelle Racette, Recording Secretary.*