

TOWN OF PRINCETON, MA  
Princeton Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
February 5, 2020 – 6:00 p.m.

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**AC members in attendance:** Wayne Adams, Helga Lyons, Rick McCowan, Bill Lawton, Judy Dino?

**Absent:** Mary Jo Wojtusik

**Advisory Committee (AC) Agenda**

- Prep for STM Public Hearing
- Updates on FY21 Budget Planning
- AC Annual Report
- Continue the Review of Draft Town Financial Budget Policy
- Committee Liaison Reports
- Approve Minutes

**Meeting Minutes:** Meeting started at 6:05 p.m.

**Discussion**

**Preparation for STM Public Hearing**

A warrant for STM has been drafted without any specific amounts to be raised and appropriated and will be posted. Thus far, only one invoice from Tighe & Bond in the amount of \$18,393.63 has been received. The amount covers initial engineering services and testing of nine wells. A total amount to be appropriated has not been determined. At this point, general figures known are ~\$100K to remediate the water at the Town Hall complex, ~\$40K for the testing of each radius (so far four radiuses have to be tested), POET systems for each household with PFAS >20 ppt at a cost of \$10K for a large system (installed if PFAS >200 ppt) and \$3K for a small system (installed if PFAS is <200 ppt). The total number of systems needed is not known at this time. The town will also incur legal costs, costs for on-going testing of the POET systems with additional remediation as needed as well as replacement of filters and ongoing supply of water to all households with PFAS <20 ppt. Thus far, the DEP has offered to pay for Phase II water testing at an amount of ~\$9K leaving the town with covering the remaining expenses.

The focus continues to be the determination of the extent of the issue and remediation before any soil testing and/or determination of the source of PFAS will be made.

Wayne will attempt an initial estimate of PFAS related expenses for discussion with SB/TA in determining a final amount which will need to be published one week prior to the STM.

Concern was voiced regarding the uncertainty of total expenses and the potential impact on town finances. Financial resources to address this issue are limited. In addition, the threshold of 20 ppt has

yet to become a regulation in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the new threshold will create a problem for many communities due to the common occurrence of PFAS in water supplies.

### **Updates on FY21 Budget Planning**

We received notice from the WRSD that the school budget for the Town of Princeton is proposed to go up by 4.8%. The overall budget is up 4.48% due to higher salaries (up 4.94% to include full staffing of kindergarten and new staff to support emotional health of students), benefits expenses (up 8.23%) and transportation expenses (up 4.66%). These increases are partially offset by lower expenses for special education (down 11.32%), and debt service (down 3.26%). It is not known if these figures are adjusted for recent increases in Chapter 70 and 71 funding. In order to better understand the Princeton school budget, it was decided to invite Bob Ember (Princeton school committee member) to the next AC meeting to get some clarification.

AC expressed concern at the level of increase, which would be difficult to support given that the Town is incurring some considerable expenses in connection with PFAS remediation.

An initial budget for debt service was received. The FY21 debt service to include a new amount of \$24K for interest expenses re: Bagg Hall renovations (previously approved at ATM), will bring the total annual debt service to \$591.9K or 5.7% of the total town budget. The funding of PFAS remediation estimated at \$117.5K for FY21 (if approved) would bring total debt service to \$709.5K or 6.8% of the FY21 budget.

In FY22 the PFAS debt (if approved) and \$144K due for the Bagg Hall project would bring total debt service to \$814K or 7.65% of total budget. This will leave no room for any additional projects funded with debt assuming a general goal of keeping debt service within 7% of the total budget. Additional potential debt items for FY22 are \$119K for the library clock tower and \$380K for the public safety building which would bring FY22 total debt service to \$1.3MM or 12% of the annual town budget. These preliminary figures are all subject to change.

### **Draft AC Annual Report**

Wayne drafted the AC Annual Report. AC discussed the report and had no changes. It was noted that changes can be submitted until February 29, 2020.

### **Draft Town Financial Budget Policy**

The goal is to discuss the Draft Financial Policy with SB/TA in March 2020 after STM. The budget calendar and Capital Request Forms need to be finalized. The proposed policy suggests a more elaborate Town Warrant to include a discussion of the budget. Wayne will forward to AC various samples from other towns for review.

### **Committee Liaison Reports**

- **Library:** Judy Dino reported that Mary Barroll, current Library Director, will be retiring in April 2020
- **Union Negotiations:** Rick McCowan reported that union negotiations for the police department have commenced. He also reported that a meeting of an informal Public Safety Building

committee has been scheduled for February 11, 2020 to discuss the architect proposals for the Public Safety Building.

- **Road Advisory:** Bill Lawton reported that the Road Advisory Committee met on January 16. A decision was made re: color of rotary (Maroon), bids for the completion of the bridge will go out, a light complaint and expanded grant opportunities were discussed. It was reported that Ben Metcalf attended a training session for grant applications related to the Complete Street program.
- **EAC:** An initial meeting took place with TA, Health Department, an EAC representative and the MassDEP Assistance Coordinator to discuss waste management in Princeton. A tentative plan is to form a committee, which would develop a questionnaire to go to the citizens of the town. The results would be evaluated as the basis for a potential new municipal waste disposal program. Wayne suggested that a new waste disposal plan should include a dumpster for an annual Earth Day event.

**Approval of AC Meeting Minutes of 1/28/20:** 5Y/0N/0A (upon amendment)

The next AC meeting was scheduled for 2/12/2020. The following AC meetings will be prior to a public hearing re: PFAS remediation funding scheduled for 2/19 and a Special Town Meeting re: PFAS remediation funding scheduled for 2/25/20

The AC Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Helga Lyons, Secretary