

TOWN OF PRINCETON, MA
Princeton Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 19, 2020 – 6:00 p.m.

AC members in attendance: Wayne Adams, Rick McCowan, Bill Lawton, Judy Dino

Absent: Mary Jo Wojtusik, Helga Lyons

Guests: Karen Cruise Selectboard Chair, Sherry Patch Town Administrator, Jeffrey Arpes Tighe & Bond, Barry Fogel
Keegan Werlin Legal Representation for Town PFAs Project

Advisory Committee (AC) Agenda

- Prep for STM Public Hearing
- Updates on FY21 Budget Planning
- Request for Reserve Fund Transfer
- Liaisons reports
- Approve Minutes
- Public Hearing for STM Article – 7PM

Meeting Minutes: Meeting started at 6:10 pm; suspended 7:00 pm; resumed 8:55 pm; adjourned 9:45 pm

Public Hearing: Hearing started at 7:00 pm; closed at 8:55 pm

Discussion

Preparation for STM Public Hearing

The following topics were discussed, questions asked/answered, and materials reviewed:

- The authority of the MassDEP to mandate testing and remediation
- Review testing radiuses 3,4,5
- Financial hardship and how the state/MassDEP may help
- Update on USDA Rural Loans for water and RCAP for engineering services for well water, and their eligibility for town of Princeton, and town residents as private well owners
- PFAs project awareness and financial impact by the town's State Senator and House Representative. Whether PFAs is on the agenda of the Attorney General for manufacturer lawsuits
- When to start testing for source of the PFAs to contain wider propagation through the water table. Likely sources are town hall campus and 30 Mountain Road
- Lack of town insurance and the ability to obtain insurance; extent a homeowner insurance for private property can help in offsetting cost.
- Testing of other public water supplies such as TPS
- Incurred and projected costs behind the \$440K tally; how far will \$1M carry the town for the ongoing project
- The need to review Mutual Aid arrangements across supporting fire departments
- What if the town votes no at STM, what is town next steps .

AC meeting suspended at 7:00PM, AC Public Hearing opened at 7:00PM

After a round of AC and guest self-introductions, the STM article was read aloud.

Questions and answers were taken from town residents from 7:10PM to 8:55PM

In addition to the list of topics and discussion items listed above, the following additional topics were raised, discussed, and answered to best of everyone's knowledge:

- What is the town timeline to start source contaminant soil and water testing
- Science of PFAs as a forever molecule, how it may travel within a water table given the town is situated on top of ledge
- Town communication channels for ongoing community questions; Selectboard-public discussions during SB meetings
- A breakdown of the project costs by engineering services, legal services, water filtration systems, and bottled water
- An understanding of town obligations per MassDEP mandates and ramifications for failure to meet the mandates
- For a \$1M fund allocation, the debt schedule and taxpayer impact
- Possible courses of action town legal representation can take with MassDEP, with PFAs manufacturers, towns who provided fire-fighting support
- What may be possible through forensics and manufacturers chemical signatures
- How far back are town records for PFAs purchases
- Awareness of funds private homeowners would be eligible for loans and damages
- Merits of digging a new well for a property testing >20ppt PFAs
- Structuring project debt as front-end loaded vs equal payment
- How many years testing and bottled water may go on
- Rationale to have follow-on STM in Fall for additional funds instead of creating a project operating budget for FY21
- Recognition that MassDEP is on the tip of the iceberg for PFAs and as more towns begin their required public water testing for PFAs, that the problem can be state-wide instead of isolated areas such as around airports and firefighting training campuses.
- A show of hands was taken to reflect support/no-support for the STM article; vast majority were in favor. The few in disfavor further explained they are supportive given the additional information shared during the Hearing
- Suggestion more PFAs informational sessions be held at the Library with subject matter experts to better understand chemistry, water tables, remediation and filters, contamination plumes, etc.

AC Hearing closed at 8:55pm; AC meeting resumed at 8:55pm

Discussion

Town moderator discussed the logistics and parameters of STM for February 26th. Moderator will keep discussion narrow to the article and decline discussion requests not pertaining to the article – e.g. the science of PFAs. SB agreed to provide a brief overview of the project and why \$1M is a reasonable and conservative amount to cover projected costs to the fall of 2020 or EOY. SB indicated they would motion the STM article to be for \$1M.

AC motioned and voted to support the article with the stipulation the motion be no more than \$1M. Vote 4-Y,0-N, 0-A . Further discussion raised questions for AC chair to pursue from town treasurer and TA. Is the borrowed amount meant to be debt-excluded; what is the likely term of the debt (5 yr, 10 yr, 20 yr); would the debt be structured to be front-end loaded or equal payment.

Updates on FY21 Budget Planning

No updates

Request for Reserve Fund Transfer

AC reviewed the financial information for FY20 Cemetery Maintenance and voted 4-Y,0-N,0-A to transfer from the Town Reserve Fund \$8000 to account 01-491-5240 to offset the account deficit due to 2019 mowing services. AC also voted guidance that the planned new contract have a maximum mowing service to not exceed the sum of the FY21 Operating Expense plus \$8K; AC voted 4-Y,0-N,0-A.

Liaisons Reports

None provided

Meeting Minutes

February 12th minutes were being further amended with AC member feedback. Vote deferred to 2/26 AC meeting pending posting of revised minutes.

Other Topics

AC members made aware of the option of remote meeting participation, per the new town policy, effective immediately.

The next AC meetings are:

- Tuesday, February 25th, 7PM, joint meeting with Selectboard for WRSD FY21 Budget presentation
- Wednesday, February 26th, 6:15pm , AC meeting before STM at 7PM

The AC Meeting was adjourned at 9:45 pm

Minutes recorded by Wayne Adams, AC Chairman

Referenced Materials:

Special Town Meeting (STM) Warrant Article for February 26, 2020, as posted on Town of Princeton website

PFA's project documents

- Running costs and projections tally from TA, \$440K total
- 10 year loan schedule for \$1M from Treasurer, quote from Hilltop Securities
- Tax impact calculation for \$1M loan with DLS calculator from AC Chair
- DEP Notice of Responsibility, 11/25/2019, from TA
- Town aerial map with PFA's testing radius for 1,2,3,4,5 from Tighe & Bond Jeffrey Arpes

Reserve Fund Transfer for Cemetery Commission and supporting documentation, from TA and Commission