



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
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Minutes 11/18/2009

Fiscal Resources Task Group - Vision 2020
Minutes of Meeting 11/18/09

Present: Gordon Jamieson (Chair), David Garbarino, Peter Lloyd-Evans, Pete Howard (Secretary), Stephen Gilligan (Town Treasurer)

SPECIAL GUEST - Treasurer Stephen Gilligan: Using handouts prepared in answer to our questions, Stephen discussed each one with a stimulating give & take.

- Water/Sewer working capital issue analysis: A one time saving might be realized by changing from 2 to 4 billings a year and shortening the grace period for bill payment.

Treasurer Gilligan did not challenge the one time saving associated with going to quarterly billings but noted the extra staff time involved in his office, IT and DPW and suggested that before proposing this course of action that the FRTG meet with him and David Good (IT) and John Bean (DPW) to discuss implementation issues further.

His overriding concern regarding going to four billings per year was processing cost. Further, the cost at the bank to process the checks would double.

During subsequent discussion Stephen agreed that the potential for the one-time savings to provide for the immediate 'financing' of the new 'radio' meter system might be an attractive cost saving measure

In the end much of the process (including the grace period issue) is governed by the Water and Sewer Supervisors (i.e. the Board of Selectmen) and if we move forward we will need to work through the BoS once we work through the issues with the parties that manage the actual process.

- Trust Funds reporting & analysis: A number of funds established by donations are controlled by the Trust Fund Commissioners and managed by the treasurer and are not visible to the town's residents on the whole. Perhaps greater transparency would be desirable.

Stephen notes there are 102 trust funds. There is internal transparency but he agreed that the public does not have regular access. He plans to list the funds in his report to the Annual Town Meeting together with the balance and a brief explanation of each.

- Town mailings and communications with residents: Can the mailings be used for purposes other than scholarship fundraising? Perhaps consider Lexington's practice of providing regular inserts within these types of town wide mailings could be adopted

Stephen stated that he is not allowed to include any material that would require additional postage. This limits the possible inclusion to a "buck slip", a single unfolded page that fits the envelope, approximately 8 x 2.5. He agrees that Dollars for Scholars does not need to be in all the mailings. He could include a buck slip if provided in time ready to mail. This information has been forwarded to the Arlington Recycling Cmte and the DPW staff with the hopes that they will insert single stream recycling information and the annual recycling calendar in the upcoming excise tax mailing (Feb)

- Online payment fee - It is less than 1st class postage. Many residents pay at the window - Concept of trial regarding fee-free payment for w/s bills and perhaps excise would require BoS review and approval (and funding) - Perhaps something to consider with ITAC and Fincom over the next several months.

- Electronic billing - Would not be widely used. Many residents are not on line.
- Vehicle registration scofflaws - Police would like equipment that would automate most of the license plate scanning & resident look up. Not yet in capital plan.
- Parking meter maintenance. Town now has a maintenance contract under DPW. Addition of meters on Mass Ave/Broadway in key business districts would require capital plan expenditure - Stephen to provide annual parking meter receipts asap.
- Symmes: BoS approved converting the BANs to 12 yr level debt bonds to lock in a low interest rate.

Members thanked the Treasurer for his time and candor.

SOTTA - BoS is going to think about how they want to do it. We will draft Warrant Article for BoS. Board Administrator and Town Moderator are supportive.

ANNUAL VISION 2020 SURVEY - Pete provided the latest questions based on FRTG input and several review cycles.

HEALTH INSURANCE - Gordon discussed his efforts to turn this around, so far unsuccessful.

RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS OF 5YR PLAN - Gordon to provide update

MY TAX DOLLARS - Members agreed that if Town continues to delay review that FRTG will try to interest FinCom in sponsoring.

FY10 PROJECTS OPTIONS (FROM MINUTES):

Dec Meeting – Project work

Dec/Jan Meeting (12/9) Gordon to invite the Fire Chief to discuss:

- AFD Staffing Analysis (day/night call analysis) Perhaps prepare a proposal for Fire Chief based on call data gathered several years ago to see if cost savings can be made by modifying day/night staffing

Jan/Feb

- Insurance budget format modification (to mgr and fincom)
- Assessor website (description of assessment process)
- My tax dollars FY10

March

- Wrap-up unfinished business from above.
- Initiate regionalization study - Proposed as a broad effort to collect information on possible cost savings from combining some town functions with other communities. It might include a review of existing regionalization efforts, interviews with Town leaders, study of regionalization agreements elsewhere in MA and US. Goal would be to report to 2011 Town Mtg.

NEXT MEETINGS - All scheduled for 7:30 in 2nd floor Town Hall Annex meeting room.

12/9 Wed

1/13 Wed