



VISION 2020 FISCAL RESOURCES TASK GROUP  
Meeting Minutes 7:30 PM 11/19/15  
Senior Center First Floor Conference Room

ATTENDEES: David Garbarino (Co-Chair), Brian Hasbrouck, Pete Howard (Secretary)

COMMITTEE REGULARIZATION LETTER: The group discussed the draft prepared by Pete and some of Gordon's revisions. We would retain the more formal greeting. We liked most of Gordon's 1<sup>st</sup> para. After some discussion, we accepted the rather indirect tone of the draft (Ref 1). We did not get further into the letter. We did not realize that Gordon had suggested substantial changes. In particular he would broaden the scope to include the Budget & Revenue Task Force.

EFT PAYMENTS FOR TOWN BILLS: David & Brian agreed that being charged a fee for paying this way prevents them from using this service. They asked Pete to draft a letter, including Gordon's suggestion that the Treasurer ask for a budget increment to cover the cost of paying the fee for users. This budget increment would be for a one year trial. During this time, the Treasurer would assess whether the expected more prompt payments would generate sufficient cost savings to offset the fees.

TREAT NON-PROFITS AS COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES FOR TRASH COLLECTION: After some discussion, the group decided this was undesirable. There seems to be no good reason to charge non-profits, many of whom serve a public purpose and some of which can ill afford another expense.

COMMERCIAL REASSESSMENTS: Pete to see how they compare to previous assessments on Mass Ave. Brian will investigate whether the assessment of Brigam Alta Vista has affected the assessment of Arlington 360 (Symmes).

MTG W/ NEW COMPTROLLER: The group was receptive to Gordon's suggestion. We suggest that he be given some time to settle in.

FINCOM & CPC MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL: Not discussed due to time.

NEXT MEETING: Dec 17 - Meetings monthly - 3rd Thursdays 7:30 PM – Usually in Senior Center

Ref 1 Committee Regularization Revised Draft Letter



Fiscal Resources Task Group  
November 2015

Doug Heim  
Town Council  
50 Pleasant Street  
Arlington, MA 02476

Dear Mr Heim,

One of Vision 2020's main functions is monitoring and encouraging the Town to consider the Town Goals as it operates. Our Task Group is concerned with the fiscal resources goal:

*We value Arlington's efficient delivery of public services providing for the common good. The benefits from these services and the responsibility of taxation will be equitably distributed among us. We will be known for our sound fiscal planning and for the thoughtful, open process by which realistic choices are made in our Town.*

We seek your advice on a matter related to the last sentence. There is one very important committee that does not abide by all requirements of the Open Meeting Law (OML) as we understand it - the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC). Should this committee follow the OML that most other committees follow?

Described below is the discrepancy that concerns us with a discussion of why it concerns us.

The LRPC, according to arlingtonma.gov, publishes agendas but no minutes. This committee has 11 members: 4 employees of the Town, 5 holding elected positions, and 2 holding appointed positions. The LRPC is not established in the bylaws or Town Manager Act. We believe this group is called together by the Town Manager to discuss budgetary choices based on a five-year projection of revenues and expenses. None of the members reports directly to the Town Manager. Because the agendas are published and the meetings posted, residents can attend the meetings. The discussions held by this group strongly influence subsequent actions taken by the Board of Selectmen, the School Committee, the Finance Committee and the Capital Planning Committee. The result in recent years has been that the Town's leadership is able to unanimously support the budget presented to Town Meeting. In many ways this is a good thing. But residents that disagree with some of the results have no record to refer to. Meeting minutes would allow them to appreciate the basis for those results, or whether all relevant facts were considered.

Given the broad membership and serious public purpose, it would seem that the LRPC is a public body and thus subject to the OML. But the Attorney General's guide provides an exception: *Bodies appointed by a public official solely for the purpose of advising the official on a decision that individual could make alone are not public bodies subject to the Open Meeting Law?* Does this exception apply? We believe that the purpose of this body is more for collaboration between independent agencies than to provide advice. What do you think?

Respectfully,

\_\_\_\_\_ Gordon Jamieson, Co-Chair

\_\_\_\_\_ David Garbarino, Co-Chair

Copies to  
Adam Chapdelaine, Town Manager  
Kevin Greeley, Chair Board of Selectmen