Warrant Article 3  
Capital Subcommittee  
October 29, 2019

The Capital Subcommittee held a public hearing on Article 3 on October 15th from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm in Room 103. Attending were Subcommittee members Amy Hummel, John Doggett, Harry Friedman, Pam Lodish, and Carla Benka; Deputy Town Administrator Melissa Goff, DPW Commissioner Andy Pappastergion, Transportation Administrator Todd Kirrane, and Council on Aging Director Ruthann Dobek; Town Meeting members Faith Michaels (Precinct 5), Neil Wishinsky (Precinct 5), Neil Gordon (Precinct 1), Olivia Fischer Fox (Precinct 5), Hugh Mattison (Precinct 5), Wendy Machmuller (Precinct 5), and Dan Saltzman (Precinct 6); and approximately 35 members of the public.

Background  
Article 3 requires Town Meeting to consider and vote on 1) amending the FY 20 budget to reflect the receipt of higher than projected State Aid and the receipt of marijuana-related revenue in accordance with the Host Community Agreement; 2) appropriating Transportation Network Company (TNC) or “ride-share” revenue; and 3) adjusting the debt service budget to reflect the cost of the Bond Anticipation Note issued for the Oak Street properties adjacent to the Baldwin School Playground.

State Aid:  In accordance with a May 21, 2019 agreement between the Town Administrator and former Superintendent Andrew Bott, $15,000 of the additional $76,789 in State Aid will be allocated to DPW to cover the costs of composting activities in the public schools. The remaining sum will be divided in accordance with the Town/School Partnership. Select Board staff has recommended that the Town’s share, equaling $30,895, be allocated to the Fire Department’s FY 20 budget, which has reallocated some of its funds to cover expenses related to the judgment of an ongoing court case. The remaining $30,895 will be available to the School Department.

Community Impact Funds: Select Board staff has recommended that Community Impact Funds, part of the Host Community Agreement, be allocated to the Department of Public Works as well as to the Health and Police Departments. Funds would also allocated to the “Benefits” line item to provide health care benefits for new full-time employees.
The proposed allocation of $867,660 includes:

- $379,944 for the Police Department to cover overtime for enforcement and inspections. That total breaks down to 240 hours for an inspectional lieutenant and 1300 hours for patrol officers; two additional personnel working 37.5 hours per week for the remainder of the year in parking enforcement; three additional officers for a bike unit, with each officer working 40 hours per week; and uniforms and supplies.
- $134,738 for DPW. These dollars would fund dedicated litter personnel; overtime for park enforcement (12 additional hours per week with an initial focus on Emerson Garden, Boylston Street Playground, Brookline Avenue Playground, and the Muddy River); a Big Belly trash unit; signage and supplies; and a vehicle for additional personnel.
- $221,048 for the Health Department to fund a Substance Abuse position (formerly in the School Department budget); part-time substance abuse counselors; a Community Health specialist; an Environmental Health Policy Analyst; and program supplies.
- $131,930 to cover benefits for the new full-time positions.

_TNC (Ride Share) Funds:_ The Transportation Board has recommended that of the $234,757 in TNC funds received by the town, $77,000 be used to support three of the transportation programs for elders of the Council on Aging (COA): “TRIPPS” – Transportation, Resources, Information, Planning and Partnership for Seniors; “H.E.L.P” - the COA’s Medical Transportation and Escort Program; and subsidies for the COA’s On-demand Ride-Share Program. Of the remaining amount, the Transportation Board recommends $40,000 be allocated for public bus stop benches (each bench costs approximately $2500); and $117,757 be directed towards the Olmsted Bridle Path Restoration Study and Concept Design. It is hoped that the rest of the funds needed for this $200,000 project will be included in the State Transportation bill.

_Debt Service:_ Town Meeting voted to purchase the Oak Street townhouses in December 2018 and a Bond Anticipation Note was secured to acquire the properties. With the defeat of the debt exclusion ballot in May 2019, an alternative source of funds is now needed to cover the debt interest. Contingency plans built into the debt service budget in the event that the ballot question was defeated allow for servicing the debt on the townhouses’ purchase without negatively impacting other areas of the budget. Select Board staff recommends that Item 34b (“Funded debt-Interest”) of Article 9 in the May 2019 Annual Town Meeting Warrant be reduced by $140,217.
The following chart summarizes the recommendations of the Select Board staff for the allocation of additional State aid and Community Impact Funds as well as for debt service for purchase of the Oak Street properties.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM #</th>
<th>ORIGINAL BUDGET</th>
<th>PROPOSED CHANGE</th>
<th>AMENDED BUDGET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. Police Department</td>
<td>$16,936,644</td>
<td>$379,944</td>
<td>$17,316,588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Fire Department</td>
<td>$15,703,922</td>
<td>$30,895</td>
<td>$15,734,817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Public Works</td>
<td>$15,674,679</td>
<td>$149,738</td>
<td>$15,824,417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Health and Human Services</td>
<td>$1,236,042</td>
<td>$221,048</td>
<td>$1,457,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Schools</td>
<td>$117,354,211</td>
<td>$30,895</td>
<td>$117,385,106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 b. Group Health</td>
<td>$31,518,881</td>
<td>$131,930</td>
<td>$31,650,811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 b. Funded Debt - Interest</td>
<td>$6,856,426</td>
<td>-$140,217</td>
<td>$6,716,209</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion**

The public hearing was very well attended by residents of Brookline Village and High Street Hill; business owners from the Village; and Town Meeting members from Precincts 1, 5 and 6. Members of the Subcommittee heard testimony regarding noise, litter, urination on public and private properties, children afraid to go to the park or playground, no parking for local restaurants, services or retail stores; idling car engines on the street at all hours, and illegal parking of Uber and Lyft drivers and NETA customers. It was noted that residents of Walnut Street are dealing with parking of staff for the 9th grade of the High School, currently housed at Old Lincoln School, parking of construction workers of the nearby road and building projects on Route 9, and Uber and Lyft drivers of NETA customers, as well as NETA customers themselves.
Other comments reflected frustration with Town officials for initial dismissal of concerns and complaints, lack of communication and consultation with neighborhoods, and fear that the large amounts of revenue generated by NETA (and future marijuana establishments) for the town coffers will dissuade officials from taking serious action. However, in the words of one resident, “no amount of money is worth the impact and toll that NETA is taking on our community.”

A number of suggestions were offered, including using impact fees to reimburse local merchants for their costs in paying for Uber and Lyft transportation; subsidizing parking for Brookline Village shopkeepers at Brookline Place and Homewood Suites; removing the cones on Route 9 to open up parking for Brookline Village shoppers and diners; commissioning an art installation for the bridge over the T tracks to provide some screening of the NETA parking lot; creating a committee of neighborhood representatives to work with Town officials and NETA representatives; and creating an administrative position charged with communicating with the neighborhoods, overseeing mitigation efforts, and reporting back to the Select Board on a regular basis.

Many members of the audience expressed support for funding additional positions in DPW and the Police Department, but one at least one member noted that these steps are designed to merely mitigate NETA’s impact on the surrounding neighborhoods and what is needed is modification of NETA’s hours of operation and business model. To that end, over 850 voters have signed a petition calling for a Special Town Meeting to specifically address these issues.

Deputy Town Administrator Melissa Goff, in response to several questions from the subcommittee, noted that community impact fee payments were required for five years; after that time, the arrangement could continue but it would be on a voluntary basis on NETA’s part. As a result, the money supporting the mitigation measures could disappear in five years and new sources of funding would have to be found or the measures modified. She also stated that these measures, developed by Town Hall staff in response to feedback from residents who had contacted the Select Board’s office, could be refined as the FY 21 budget is developed.

Regarding the allocation of TNC funds, COA director Ruthann Dobek stated that the COA views TNC dollars as a sustainable source of funds for
TRIPPS, state funds for which expired last March. With the decline of the taxicab industry caused by the growth of ride-share companies, elders who are making the transition from driving to not driving must seek other transportation options. TRIPPS provides information, resources, and support for these residents, including classes on ridesharing. TRIPPS programming has also developed a pilot Uber and Lyft “concierge” program and the COA is exploring potential partnerships with these rideshare companies. TRIPPS is seeking $47,000 to fund its 30 hours-per-week Community Transportation Specialist position.

Other requested TNC funds would support the much-needed medical transportation program for Brookline seniors and provide a subsidy for an on-demand rideshare program. Members of the public noted that these types of programs made Brookline a “Livable Community” and enable seniors to stay in Brookline and age-in-place.

There was also support expressed for the Olmsted Bridle Path project and the installation of benches for users of public transportation, pedestrians, and seniors.

Recommendation
The Capital Subcommittee unanimously recommends allocating the additional State Aid to the operating budget of the Fire Department and to the Public Schools Composting project.
It also unanimously recommends reducing the Debt Interest budget by $140,217.
By a vote of 5-0, the subcommittee recommends supporting the recommendations of the Transportation Board for the allocation of TNC funds for all programs except the installation of benches, which is recommended by a vote of 4-0-1
By a vote of 5-0, the subcommittee recommends increasing the FY 20 Police Department budget by $379,944.
By a vote of 5-0, the subcommittee recommends increasing the FY 20 DPW budget by $134,738.
By a vote of 4-1, the subcommittee increasing the FY 20 Health Department budget by $141,048.
By a vote of 4-1, the subcommittee recommends increasing the FY 20 Select Board’s budget by $80,000 to create an “ombudsperson” position to act as an interface between Town Hall and groups representing neighborhoods affected by marijuana establishments and to coordinate efforts to reduce the
impact of the operations of marijuana establishments on those neighborhoods. By a vote of 5-0, the subcommittee recommends increasing benefits by $131,930.