The joint meeting of the Selectboard and the Advisory Committee was called to order by Selectman Barry Nadon, Jr. at 6:08 p.m. in the lower level meeting room of the Town Hall.

Police Chief O’Donnell presented figures and specs for replacing two cruisers. The Chief said that leasing would be more expensive than purchasing. Purchase price for two cruisers is $72,807.

Barry Gillogly, Local Access Director met with the Selectboard to increase his stipend from $157 to $257 per week. By contract with Charter Communications he receives $150,000 for equipment and $18,000 in non-restricted funds. He uses the $18,000 to fund his stipend. Brad Hibbard questioned if there was any oversight of the Cable Access budget/expenditures and there appears to be none. It was suggested that the Selectboard consider establishing some form of oversight. Barry gave an overview of the improvements made to the cable system and is now developing an Education Access Channel based at the elementary school. He is looking to develop an internship training program. When asked why we cannot view events at Quaboag, he stated that he has not been successful working with Warren to accomplish this but will attempt again when Comcast is available.

John Frizzell, Board of Health was present to discuss Article 16 to install a water line on New Braintree Road. The landfill testing had indicated leakage to this area and John Frizzell said that this could not be put off. Discussion held to do an additional section of New Braintree Road with a tap-ins to be tied in later. The Board of Health would apply for a low interest loan and Town’s portion would be $38,700. John Frizzell suggested the Town adopt a Betterment Bylaw System.
6:00 p.m. Meeting recessed to the Great Hall to meet with the School. This meeting was videotaped. In attendance were the Selectboards from West Brookfield and Warren, West Brookfield Advisory Committee, Warren Finance Committee and many residents. Bret Kustigian, Superintendent of Schools and Cami Lamica, Director of Finance and Operations chaired the meeting.

Bret Kustigan said that that from 2010 through 2015 State Aid has only increased by $6,000 and that Warren and West Brookfield’s assessments have gone up as well as the annual above minimum contributions. Brett said he cannot make any cuts to the “bare bones budget”. He said the School Committee voted March 16, 2015 to approve a budget with level service and the addition of seven positions, having cut 22 positions in prior years. The minimum request for Warren has risen from $225,000 last year to $823,000 this year. The minimum request for West Brookfield has risen from $147,000 to $516,000. General discussion held between Town Officials, residents and School.

West Brookfield officials asked for a five minute recess and met in the hallway. The meeting reconvened and Tom Long stated that the Advisory Committee and the Selectboard had agreed to an override with an amount to be determined at a future date.

7:50: Advisory and Selectboard continued their meeting in the Lower Level Meeting room to go over the Articles for the Warrant.

Articles 1 thru 11 are routine.

Article #12: Two police cruisers $72,807.

Article #13: Chapter 90 $30,000.

Article #14: Road maintenance $25,000.

Article #15: Ground speed control $8,000.

Article #16: Water Line $38,700.

Article #17: School Street layout-yes.

Article #18: Smoke detectors-strike

Article #19: Pilot agreement- Barry Mongeon, Warren Finance Committee member stated that it is no longer called a Pilot agreement and to call Warren Assessors’ office for current verbiage.

Article #20: Strike

Article #21: Ground Water Protection District-yes.

Article #22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34 Strike.
Brad Hibbard reminded the Selectboard of the Town Bylaw relating to legal affairs previously discussed by the Advisory Committee:

“Chapter VII, Legal Affairs, Section 3: The Selectmen in their annual report shall state what actions have been brought against and on behalf of the town, what cases have been brought against and on behalf of the Town, what cases have been compromised or settled, and the current standing of all suits at law involving the Town or any of its interests.”

This information will further serve to justify the $25,000 increase in the FY16 Legal Counsel budget.

The Advisory Committee discussed the proposed 2 ½ override and suggested a figure not to exceed $300,000. Accountant Marie Arsenault said an override of $300,000 would increase the tax rate by .89 cents per $1000.

At 9:00 a motion was made and seconded to recess the meeting to Monday, March 30, 2015 at 6:30 p.m.

March 30, 2015

Present: Advisory Committee Absent: Richard Gobi
Lori Loughlin
Phil Landine
Brad Hibbard
Tom Long
Kevin Paquette

Selectboard Absent: Barry Nadon, Jr.
Diane Vayda
Sarah Allen
Executive Secretary: Johanna Swain
Accountant: Marie Arsenault

The joint meeting of the Selectboard and Advisory Committee reconvened and called to order by Selectboard member Diane Vayda at 6:30 p.m.

Highway Superintendent Jim Daley expressed his concern that the Advisory Committee and Selectboard had proposed cutting his Chapter 90 Supplemental and Town Road
Maintenance Articles in half. This was proposed based upon information that the Town would be receiving additional Chapter 90 funding from the State. Jim explained that there is no guarantee the State would come through with additional funds. As recently as last year the State cut back on promised Chapter 90 funds to cities and towns. Based upon this information the Selectboard agreed to reinstate the original amounts of $60,000 to the Chapter 90 Supplemental and $50,000 to Town Road Maintenance accounts. Jim further suggested taking off the Ground Speed Control Article for the Highway until they could purchase all three. He said it did not make sense to install just one as the sales representative told him there are often software changes from year-to-year. These devices regulate the application of sand and salt to roadways. Jim stated their installation will save on the cost of road materials and will pay for themselves in a short period of time. The Selectboard agreed to reinstate three Ground Speed Controls for the Highway at a cost of $24,000.

Fire Chief Paul Lupacchino wanted to know what Fire Department articles were taken off the warrant. He further demanded that the Selectboard provide him with a signed a letter of rejection. The Selectboard asked Paul for the estimate for the Vehicle Exhaust Vent system that they had previously requested. He stated he had not obtained one but said he will do it tomorrow. Selectboard agreed to put $10,000 for intake valves and $20,000 for the Vehicle Exhaust Vent on the warrant. Fire Chief Lupacchino will provide an accurate estimate for both items. Tom Long suggested funding out of the Fire Truck Stabilization account and the Boards agreed to do this.

Superintendent of Schools Bret Kustigian reconvened the School Meeting at 6:42 p.m. Diane Vayda asked if anything had changed and Bret said “Nothing at this point” and asked if the Board had a compromise figure. Bret said he wanted to win the support of the Advisory Committee and Selectboard in both towns. Bret asked if $300,000 override was in addition to last year’s minimum contribution and the answer was no. The Advisory Committee said they would not support an override in excess of $300,000. The School Committee recessed at 6:50 to the Great Hall.

During the recess, Accountant Marie Arsenault put together a fact sheet outlining the estimated tax rate increases resulting from a 2 ½ override of $300,000. and re-worked the FY 16 Draft Worksheet.

School Committee returned and Bret said the School Committee voted to reduce the school budget by $242,372, which would be level service plus an addition of two special education paraprofessionals. The five previously included additional positions were eliminated by the vote. As a result of the vote, the above minimum contribution for West
Brookfield was estimated to be $423,137 and Warren $674,495. When questioned, Warren Finance Committee member Barry Mongeon said Warren had not met and would be having a work session on April 11th. Selectboard agreed to a $300,000 override, closed the warrant and adjourned their meeting.

The Advisory Committee continued their meeting. They will meet on Monday, April 6, 2015 at 6:15 to begin reviewing budgets. Secretary will ask Jim Daley to be present to review his budget. The meeting will be recessed to April 7, 2015 at 6:15 to continue reviewing budgets. Secretary will ask Tom O’Donnell and the Library Trustees to be present to discuss their budgets. All are to provide specific information on their FY15 expenditures to date.

Kevin Paquette made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Phil Landine second. Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine M. Long
Secretary