The meeting was called to order by Chair Lori Loughlin at 6:15 p.m.

MINUTES: Brad Hibbard made a motion to approve the minutes of January 30, 2017 as presented. Pam Griffing second. Vote was unanimous to approve the minutes of January 30, 2017 as presented.

EARTH REMOVAL BUDGET #13a: Melinda Czub, secretary to the Board was present. When asked she said her stipend is $50.00 for each meeting and $17.50 an hour for any work beyond the meeting. She said the Earth Removal Committee generally meets just a few times a year as necessary.

PLANNING BOARD BUDGET #12: Tim Morrell, Chairman and Melinda Czub, secretary were present. The Planning Board meets once a month and her stipend is $50.00 for each meeting and $17.50 an hour for after the meeting work. Melinda Czub is the secretary for the Master Plan Committee. They are presently meeting twice a month and the secretary’s rate of compensation is the same as for the Planning Board. The secretarial monies are being taken from the Planning Board Budget. When asked Tim Morrell said the bulk of the Master Plan budget goes directly to the consultant, Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission. He said there is $5000. in discretionary money. It is anticipated that the Master Plan meetings will exhaust the Planning Board budget this fiscal year. The committee asked if the $5000. could be used to fund the overage in the secretarial account. He was unsure. Lori Loughlin asked Melinda for an estimate of clerk funds needed from now to the end of the year. She will e-mail this to the Advisory Secretary.

BUDGETS 2, 8, 14, 15, 16, 34, 44 & 48: Executive Secretary Johanna Swain was present as well as Selectboard members Jack Tivnan and Sarah Allen.
The committee asked if budgets #14-17, #47-50, #35 and #52 could be listed separately in the monthly Department Appropriation Balance Report. Jack Tivnan said he had no objection to doing so and would support it when a new Town Accountant is hired.

**SELECTMEN BUDGET #2:** The committee asked why there such an increase in the Executive Secretary’s accrual and how was it computed? General discussion held on how the increase is figured. Johanna said it is a 2% cost of living increase and 1% longevity. Committee questions whether longevity stipends become part of base salary or are they considered an annual stipend? Selectmen said they have a written legal opinion that defines the process for figuring the accrual/stipend. The Advisory Committee asked for a copy of this report and both Sarah and Jack said they would provide it to the committee. The committee asked if the Board of Selectmen has approved longevity stipends for FY18 as required. Jack Tivnan said they have not voted on this yet. The committee had several questions on expenses that were answered by Johanna. Centralized office supply purchasing was also discussed. Jack Tivnan said it would require hiring another person to manage it. Johanna said in the past she has done regional procurement and that currently the Town departments are purchasing office supplies from WB Mason.

The committee is holding its recommendation on the budget pending receipt of the requested items.

**LEGAL BUDGET #8:** The Advisory Committee asked for a detailed breakdown of FY16 and FY17 legal expenditures. Johanna will e-mail this to members. The committee asked if legal expenses will be decreasing with settlement of several large cases. Johanna said the trend is down and legal expenses through the first six months of FY17 are just below $30,000. The BOS is hopeful there will be money turned back from the current FY17 budget of $75K but would like FY18 funded at a similar amount.

**TOWN HALL BUDGET #14:** Johanna provided the Leger History Details - Expenditure Ledger for FY16 which shows the actual FY16 expenditures. Her requests for FY18 are similar to the FY16 actuals. Town Hall fuel costs are lower due to efficiency measures undertaken, i.e. replacing boiler circulating pumps.

**GENERAL INSURANCE #15:** The FY17 budget is currently in deficit by just over $100. and there are further anticipated expenses. The BOS previously requested a $10,000. transfer from the Reserve Fund and due to an oversight the Advisory Committee approved $4505.24, Johanna anticipates an additional Reserve Fund transfer of approximately $3500. this fiscal year. Discussion over requested amount for FY18.
Johanna stated the town is changing insurance carriers and anticipates an increase of approximately 5%. The FY17 budget is inflated by $25,000 due to a Fire Department settlement. Johanna will provide further information and revise the FY18 request.

TOWN & ADVISORY REPORTS BUDGET #16: The committee asked if the Town could reduce the costs related to the printing and distribution of the Annual Town Report. The BOS said the number of copies printed was reduced several years ago, and currently there doesn’t appear to be an excess of reports.

MUNICIPAL LIGHTENING BUDGET #34: Johanna Swain presented a copy of the Town’s Solar Host Agreement with Brimfield for metering credits. These credits are applied to the Town Hall electric bill. She further stated that when the Route 32 Solar Field is up and running the Town will receive additional net metering credits. These credits will be shared with other town departments.

CELEBRATIONS BUDGET #44: The budget is level funded in the amount of $4,375.00. All FY16 monies have been expended.

CENTRAL MASS REGIONAL PLANNING BUDGET #48: Johanna explained that this is an annual stipend paid to the CMRPC for planning assistance throughout the year. Jack said they provide the town with approximately 15 hours of service annually. The increase for FY18 is expected to be 2%.

LIBRARY BUDGET #41: Librarian Katie Marsh and Board of Library Trustees members Alex McNitt and Paul Spencer were present. Since the library is one of the more complicated budgets, Lori Loughlin asked Katie for her opinion on the new budget form. Katie said she experienced no problems and said it is straightforward to complete. The committee asked if the library had returned any monies to the Town in FY16 to compensate for lawncare services now provided by the Highway Department. Paul said nothing was returned in FY16 due to insufficient funds in the budget. The library will return monies in the future when the budget permits. Katie explained that the State MBLC requires libraries to increase their budgets by 2.5% above the average of the three previous years to maintain certification. The requested FY18 budget is 1.36% above FY17. The committee asked about the current state of their computers. Katie stated the library had received eleven new computers through donation this fiscal year. The library averages just under 3,000 visitors per month and approximately 31,000 items are checked out annually. The library also just acquired a telescope with funds from the J. Irving and Jane L. England Charitable Trust Fund. The telescope will be available for loan shortly.
Katie Marsh will be leaving West Brookfield in May and relocating to the mid-west. The committee thanked her for her service and wished her well. The posting for a new library was recently rewritten and posted.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION BUDGET #43: Richard Rossman was present to discuss the Historical Commission Budget. He presented several pamphlets all of which are printable from www.westbrookfield.org website. He provided committee members with a pamphlet listing the accomplishments of the Commission since 2009. Costs for their printing is funded by the town and gifts from the J. Irving and Jane L. England Charitable Trust. They are currently working toward listing the Methodist Cemetery on the National Register. He anticipated the cost of research enabling the listing request to be approximately $7000. He is hopeful the England Trust will provide funding for this project. The requested budget for FY18 is $751.50.

MODERATOR BUDGET #1: Lori Loughlin spoke with the moderator who said he has never submitted a warrant for mileage. He currently commutes 94 miles from New Hampshire for meetings. The committee discussed changing the manner in which he is compensated for his services and will make a recommendation at a future meeting.

CLERK STIPENDS: The committee discussed standardizing compensation for part-time town secretaries. After further discussion, the committee will make a recommendation to the BOS.

NEXT MEETING:

Master Plan Survey – Discuss questions for Master Plan survey
School Budget - Information from school will be available for discussion
Meet with: 6:30 Jerry Czub, Recreation Committee
Marie Arsenault, Accountant
6:45 Jim Daley, Highway
Jim DiMaio, Tree Warden, Insect & Pest Control

Bob Blozie made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Pam Griffing second. The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine M. Long, Secretary