



**Advisory Committee
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, March 9, 2017
GAR Hall
353 Country Way
Scituate, MA 02066
7:00 pm**

Committee Members Present: Jamie Gilmore, Mark Sandham, Jerry Kelly, Lincoln Heineman, Anthony Antoniello, Patrice Metro

Committee Members Absent: Sean deLacy, Geoff Burns, Michael Westort

Also in Attendance: Nancy Holt (Finance Director), Patricia Vinchesi (Town Administrator), Bob Sanderson, John Hallin, Pamela Avitabile, Kevin Kelly, Tom Hickey, Jack Manning

The Meeting was called to order at by 7:03pm by Jamie Gilmore.

Agenda for Thursday March 9, 2017 approved by Mark Sandham second by Lincoln Heineman (6-0)

Dispatch (dept#230): Patricia Vinchesi presented. It's currently a transitional period, going live March 15, 2017. It's a new cost for the Town. There are 10 dispatchers. Both Police and Fire dispatchers are learning equipment/systems. The budgets were pulled from Fire and Police but could be subject to change in the future. There will be a working supervisor in addition to the dispatchers. All dispatchers are current dispatchers but will be working together side by side. There will be four consoles. It will help with storms allowing more hands on deck. Patricia said grants pay for E911 training. Even though 10 dispatchers, 42 people have been trained through grants.

There are five main goals. The first is refine and revise operating protocols and policies as procedures as needed or warranted based on industry practices. The second is to implement employee training and evaluation process. The third is to monitor call volume and optimum staffing levels. The fourth is to establish annual communications center goals and operational and capital budgets. The fifth is training certification quality assurance. The Public Safety Communications Center is a new departmental budget for FY18. All costs previously associated with dispatch functions in police and fire has been consolidated into one unit. The net increase for this is approximately \$44,000 and that reflects increases in fire dispatch salaries so they are comparable with clerical unit employees. The center is coordinated by a Communication Manager who is also a working dispatcher. The remaining budget components consist of training and operational expenses association with the Communications Center separate and apart from the fire and police budgets.

ZBA (dept#176): John Hallin presented to the Committee. General funds: personal services,

purchase of services, and materials/supplies total \$22,573 for FY18.

The Zoning Board seeks to decide each application before it in accord with the applicable regulatory law, consistent with relevant appellate law. The Board seeks to comply with all rules and regulations that govern hearings before us to create solid, thoughtful decisions that will be upheld on appeal. The Board seeks to hold hearings that allow each citizen who appears before us, whether as an applicant or a person who opposes a particular application, to recognize that their concerns have been heard, that they have been treated with respect, that the Board applied the law in a fair and impartial manner and that the decision has been filed in a timely manner. The projected FY18 budget is \$5,800 up from \$2,900 FY17.

Widow's Walk (dept#661): Bob Sanderson presented to the Committee. The drought was very detrimental. Retained earnings were eaten up by the damage caused by the drought. DEP cut off water supply early on. They are working on improving the turf. It will be a goal to regain reputation.

This department has four main goals. The first is continue development of a long range capital improvement plan aimed at creating new revenue opportunities through possible renovations to the golf course, Clubhouse, parking lot and surrounds. The second is to concentrate efforts to rebuild Widow's Walk's reputation resulting from golf course drought damage as well as equipment replacement delays due to debt expense. The third is to increase merchandise sales and profits, while improving customer satisfaction. The fourth is to collaborate with the Recreation Department to add on-course golf instruction offerings.

In order of total cost, the major expenditures for the golf course come from the following areas: IGM golf course maintenance fee, golf operations salaries, equipment rentals and leases, indirect costs, merchandise supplies, technical services, electricity, and repairs and maintenance. The 2016 drought brought an urgent and unprecedented challenge to the forefront at Widow's Walk. The sub-standard turf conditions have triggered a year over year revenue short-fall around \$120,000 for the first four months of FY17, as many of the loyal patrons have opted to take their business to less affected area courses. Revenue for FY16 was \$1,350,467, FY17 was \$506,875 and FY18 is projected to be \$1,312,350.

Jamie asked if fees were reasonable. Bob doesn't think now would be the time to raise fees for seasonal passes because people that stuck through last year shouldn't have fees hiked. He thinks they're about where they should be. Jerry Kelly asked about a roof replacement request being denied and what the ramifications would be. Bob said the roof is in rough shape but thinks it was put on the back burner because of what might happen with the building. Patricia said the HVAC system is also something needing to be replaced. The irrigation system also needs to be replaced. The irrigation system, by industry standards, have a 20 year life span.

Treasurer/Collector (dept#145): Pamela Avitabile presented to the Committee. Pam said it's very busy time of year. Payroll is now being done in house where it used to be sent out. There is a full time position which will be specifically for payroll. Jamie asked about the process, if it saves the Town money. Patricia said the new data base will be much more efficient. The Town will have access to overall reports.

This department has three main goals. The first is to maximize efforts to collect a minimum of 15 tax title accounts without incurring additional legal expense. The second is to insure departmental

fluency in the conversion for the new integrated financial software. The third is tax title- Land of Low Value and Town Owned Land: evaluate existing tax liens for those eligible for land of low value process, meet with assessor, Finance Director and T.A. to review the town owned land that is eligible to sell, gather documentation for submission to Dept. of Revenue, advertise town owned land for sale and mail letters to abutters, submit application for land of low value to DOR electronically, and record subsequent affidavits and arrange auction.

In FY18, the \$275,583 Personal Services component equals 75% of the total \$367,233. Treasurer/Collector's budget, and covers the cost of four full-time and one part-time employees. Ambulance Billing was new expense line item in FY15. This represents the payment for Comstar for ambulance collection services. In prior years, this expense was included in the Ambulance Revenue. In FY17 for four months \$13,652 has been paid. Postage is a major component for the budget. Conference/Meetings and Mileage are related to the education of the TC and Assistant TC. It is imperative that the TC keep abreast of changes in municipal finance laws by attending meetings so the staff and other Town employees work collaboratively performing their duties properly. Mileage is also used for bank visits in addition to a multitude of educational meetings.

Tax Foreclosure (dept#158): The goal in FY18 is to aggressively pursue the real estate property tax dollars owed to the Town along with interest and fees while managing the legal budget effectively and efficiently. There is an inventory of Town possession properties that need to be reviewed for the purpose of auction, and/or Town use annually. Parcels in tax title must be constantly assessed for assignment to the tax title attorney for foreclosure proceedings or to negotiate payment arrangements in a reasonable period of time. The first priority is to protect the Town. The major budget component of the tax foreclosure appropriation is the legal cost of foreclosure to Land Court and title search, especially for estate issues. Additionally, there is a sizable cost to record liens at the time of each annual tax taking. There is a charge of \$77 per item to place a lien either at the Registry of Deeds or Land Court for land. In FY17, 51 parcels were advertised for delinquent FY16 taxes.

In FY17, the total revenue was \$583,669. FY18 is project to be \$500,000.

FICA/Debt & Interest (dept#720): The Treasurer/Collector is responsible for coordinating all Town borrowing for both the tax supported and five self-supporting Enterprise Funds (golf, sewer, transfer, water and waterways). This includes the various short-term and long-term debt plan options for existing, and proposed borrowing. The Treasurer/Collector works closely with the Town's financial advisor, and bond counsel to implement borrowing for departments in compliance with MA General Law with the assistance of the Town Clerk, Board of Selectman, Town Administrator, and the Finance Director/Town Accountant to fulfill requirements of that role properly. There are three main goals. The first is to continue to collaborate with the Town's financial advisor to obtain best borrowing rates for the Town. The second is to provide timely funding needed by town departments for debt projects and maintain sufficient cash flow. The third is to maintain the Town's positive bond rating and outlook. For FY18, the total existing dept-excluded and tax-supported debt is \$7,589,131 while the total revenue-supported Enterprise Fund debt is \$4,362,061.

Pension (dept#910): Non-Contributory Pension: This budget represents the funding of retirement benefits for those employees whose service began prior to the establishment of the current Plymouth County Retirement contributory system. The Commonwealth reimburses the Town for past cost of living (COLA) adjustments granted through the year 1999. Currently, there is

only one remaining individual receiving the pension benefit. The COLA base for FY18 is \$14,000 for retirees with a 3% increase.

Plymouth County Retirement (dept#911): PCR bills the Town annually for its share of its fiscal year appropriation. Employees of all member units of the Plymouth County Retirement Association who are employed for a minimum of 20 hours per week and earn a minimum of \$5,000 per year must become members of the retirement association. Scituate's assessment has increased 3.6% over the FY17 assessment. The FY17 and FY18 Assessments were expected to increase by 8%. The unrecognized gains for the last two years a net asset gain decreasing the FY17 and FY18 Assessment.

Health Insurance (dept#914): July 1, 2017 the Town is switching to MIIA. The Town has met with some of the retirees. The Town is now starting to give presentations to the active employees. The departmental goal is to provide quality health insurance plan options to all school and town employees, retirees, as well as timely information regarding insurance benefits and regulations. Contributions from all participants are managed through the Treasurer/Collector's office, a time-consuming, and labor-intensive process. Referrals to appropriate parties are given as necessary. It is necessary to keeping abreast of changes in the law (eg Affordable Health Care Act and Cadillac Tax). The health insurance contribution rate is on average, 53% Town and 47% employee. Health insurance rates have been quoted from MIIA at 11.9% increase and retiree Medicare plans will maintain the same level of coverage but decrease 10%.

Federal Taxes (dept#916): The annual challenge is to sufficiently fund the FICA costs to cover fluctuations in employment and changes in wages. The line item will continue to increase as the exempt employee population decreases and wage scales increase.

South Shore Regional Vocational Technical High School: Tom Hickey (Superintendent), Jim McLaughlin (Treasurer) and Jack Manning (School Committee/Scituate) presented to the Committee.

The proposed budget for 2017-2018 is \$12,920,216. The revenue reconciliation breaks down to: Chapter 70 State Aid \$4,301,030, Non-Resident Tuition \$318,750, Regional Transportation \$355,000 and District Assessments \$7,945,436. The district assessment for Scituate is \$754,321.

Scituate's enrollment has gone from 42 to 45 students. They are looking for support in 3.7% increase. They are looking for modest renovation for technical space. They need to address some of the systems. They are projecting to talk to MSBA to have money set aside in a stabilization fund for a feasibility study for overcrowding of technical departments. If they are accepted into the "pipeline" of MSBA, Tom Hickey said he would like to know that all of the communities would be support by warrant article.

They are opening a horticulture program in the Fall. They had 25-30 local companies come forward saying they would support the program. There will be a 3,000 square foot out building that in-house people can renovate.

There's been an increase in non-resident students. There are currently 17 students that are out of district. They charge tuition by state standards. Mark Sandham asked why there was a jump. Tom Hickey said the admission regulations have changed. They are considering asking Hull to join the district. Lincoln asked if other communities would have a say. Tom said it's a town meeting decision.

They are also looking to update the regional agreement.

Roof replacement loan has a formula based on previous enrollment (three year look back). It remains fixed.

Patrice asked about the direction of students after graduation. Tom said 55% of students are accepted to secondary schools. Many seniors are out on co-op right now. They do one week of academics then one week of co-op. Many students transition from co-op to jobs. Students receive third party certifications in their “field” which is built into the curriculum.

Agreements on solar energy are coming up on the three years. It’s been very successful.

Facilities (dept#410): Kevin Kelly presented to the Committee. They are moving building utilities into facility budget. It makes things easier for accounting purposes. The new Public Safety Complex is a new utility to add to the budget. A new custodian (full time) will be dedicated to PSC. The budget will also carry Gates Intermediate utilities.

This department has five main goals. The first is to manage and operate three new Public Buildings. The second is to secure any available Green Community grants. The third is to manage three current Public buildings to be vacated. The fourth is to create service contracts for town-wide service providers and join Custodial Collaborative. The fifth is to complete five year Capital plan for each Town and school facility. The major budget components are: personal services \$286,189 (36%), utilities \$266,590 (34%), repair and maintenance \$21,750 (2%), supplies \$13,675 (1%), technical services \$10,000 (1%) and fuel \$205,800 (26%).

Lincoln asked if Kevin was confident in the budget numbers. Kevin said yes. He said the following year is when he will have to start worrying about maintenance on the new buildings.

Meeting Minutes Thursday March 2, 2017 by Anthony Antoniello second by Mark Sandham (6-0)

New Business

Lincoln brought up topic of remote participation. Nancy said the Selectman have to adopt a policy. Lincoln thinks it would be a valuable option if someone couldn’t make the meeting but could be available via phone for voting.

Miscellaneous

There being no other business to discuss Jamie Gilmore adjourned at 9:30pm second by Mark Sandham (unanimous vote 6-0)

Respectfully Submitted,
Kelli Rodgers
Recording Secretary