



**Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Community Room, Scituate Public Library
Thursday, February 14, 2019
7:00 pm**

Committee Members Present: Lincoln Heineman, Chair; Jerry Kelly, Vice Chair; Anthony Antoniello; Patrice Metro; Elise Russo; Jamie Gilmore; Mike Westort

Committee Members Absent: Sean deLacy

Also in Attendance: Nancy Holt, Finance Director; Kevin Kelly, Facilities; Pam Avitabile, Treasurer/Collector; Gary Meyerson and Karen Connolly, CPC

Not in Attendance: Jim Boudreau, Town Administrator

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm by Lincoln Heineman

A motion to accept the agenda was made by Lincoln Heineman, seconded by Mike Westort; Unanimous vote (6-0)

A motion to approve the meeting minutes from the 02/07/19, with non-substantive corrections, was made by Lincoln Heineman seconded by Jerry Kelly; Unanimous vote (5-0) Lincoln abstained

Patrice Metro entered the meeting at 7:06

Facilities (410) Kevin Kelly

Accomplishments:

- Demolition of old police station, reused furnishings in other buildings
- 3 public buildings went on line, as well as the Performing Arts Center
- Created a new communication shed
- New space for Board of Health in Station 3
- Established B Wing (Old Gates)
- Managing HVAC in new buildings

Challenges:

- Improving Town signage

Goals:

- Protect and maintain the Town's new buildings with limited money
- Improve safety: add card access and cameras

- Managing energy systems
- Create new operation procedures
- Hire a full time employee

Budget: Level Staffing

Requested and TA approved differences:

Salaries: Salary increases included COLA, staff of 4 (3 custodians and new part-time custodian at Gates), reservationist in Town Administrator's office.

Jerry asked about the Repair Maintenance and Equipment line item that ended up being half of the estimate, he asked Kevin how that was accomplished. Kevin said that it was a challenge. He had requested \$50,000, for new building equipment maintenance for support service contracts.

Mike asked if it would be cheaper to hire another person instead of using service contracts, Kevin said we would need both, but the next full-time employee would be an HVAC Tech.

Anthony asked if someone from the school department helped, Kevin said that Bobby Dillion spends 95% of his time at the school and his salary comes from the school budget.

Jamie asked about the Natural Gas line item in the 2019 budget and what the \$60,000 was for, Kevin said it was a quote given by the engineer for the Public Safety Complex and that we only spent \$13,000 and that the remainder will be distributed.

Jamie asked Kevin if he would be able to operate with a \$90,000 discrepancy, Kevin said it depends on how successful they are at ramping down old Gates. For example, they cannot isolate the heating for buildings A and C like they thought, so they are adjusting settings to compensate.

Lincoln asked for a cost estimate for each building owned by the Town and how long it would take to provide. Kevin said he could pull most of it together. Some buildings are easier than others. Kevin said he had to talk to accounting. Lincoln said that North Scituate Fire Station, for example, is closed, so he was curious how much we were spending on it.

Lincoln asked the cost to maintain Gates, Kevin said approximately \$97,000 - \$115,000.

Lincoln asked the cost of the Community Center, Kevin said he did not know off hand, but it was mostly utilities.

Lincoln asked for a list of all the building we still own in the next 2 weeks, Kevin said we owned 59, but only 37/38 cost us money. Kevin said he would send Lianne start the insurance list because that would be a good place to start..

Elise asked about the Public Building line item, Kevin said it was a list of projects we need to do that would cost under \$25,000. For example, improve town building signage, deck at Maritime Center, WPA entrance, add main building to generator at the Captain Peirce Site and replace the main door at Town Hall.

Anthony asked about maintenance on the DPW buildings, Kevin said he does not maintain them, but he does help when needed.

Kevin said that they carried \$20,000 which will probably be cut down to \$10,000 for landscaping at the Library and Public Safety Complex.

Anthony asked about adding a light at the entrance of the library, Kevin said he thought there were plans to add one.

Patrice asked about Facilities Need Assessments for all buildings under the heading Risks and Challenges, Kevin said he has not started yet, but he was going to look at the spaces and identify the buildings that would need a professional assessment.

Mike asked if we paid to have the antenna by the police station moved, Kevin said no, that it was the shed. Karen Connolly added that the area was leased out to private companies, so she thought that we were stuck with it.

Anthony asked how many vehicles the department owned, Kevin said 2, but they are barely running.

Capital Items:

- Small Explorer
- Ford Transit (or similar)

Lincoln asked how much longer Town Hall will last, Kevin said it will last a long time.

Kevin added that the fire station bays are used for storage and that building will last for a long time as well, it is a solid structure.

Treasurer/Collector (145) Pam Avitabile

Goals:

- Land of low value: would clean up low value land in Scituate that no one is paying taxes on. It is a huge process which includes filing paperwork with DOR, IRS, investigations and auctioning. She added that Nancy Holt is more familiar with the process than she was.

Patrice asked how the land got into that situation, Pam said the owner's did not pay taxes. Pam thinks most people may know they own the land. Patrice asked what you would do with it, Pam said it would go on auction and abutters would probably want to purchase it.

- Tax Title

Accomplishments:

- MUNIS conversion
 - Water and Sewer bill, Excise and Boat
 - Real estate and tax title next
- Sent out 1,300 W2s

Challenges:

- Staff has had to learn payroll
- MUNIS, not thrilled with how it is working yet
- Busy department

Budget:

Personnel Services went up, 4 union contracts just settled--18 months of retroactive pay.

Jamie asked about ambulance billing, Pam said that Comstar is the third party ambulance

collector, billing goes to Comstar and they try to collect, after 90 days they send the Town a list of outstanding bills which now goes to the deputy collector. Pam said that other Towns write off what insurance does not pay. She further said that if the person passes away, it becomes an especially delicate situation.

Mike asked what the aggregate was, Pam said about \$80,000 and that she tries to collect the current balances.

Lincoln asked what Ambulance Receipts were, Pam said \$872,700.

*Patrice asked about the number of ambulance runs. **Lincoln said that Chief Murphy would know how many runs and what the cost was to Scituate. Patrice will follow up with him.***

Patrice asked if this was just for Scituate, Pam said yes.

Mike asked if you could you put a lien on a house for non-payment, Pam said no.

Lincoln suggested setting up a Billing Review Committee to help determine write-offs for some of the older bills.

Jerry asked about credit card surcharges incurred when paying online bills, Pam said when they use UNIPAY, it is 3%. Pam said you can pay through your bank account without a fee.

Tax Foreclosures (158)

Accomplishments:

- 93 properties that did not pay taxes, but went down to 38 parcels with follow up phone calls and letters.

Lincoln said Pam did a great job as a tax collector

Debt Service (720)

Accomplishments:

- 2 borrowings: BAN and Bond for \$8.5 M and \$8.4 M respectively, with low interest rates
 - Reduce cost of projects
 - Cover issuance cost associated with bond
- AA+ rating, strong liquidity, strong management, good budget with 2 exceptions.
 - Foreshore protection
 - OPEB Funding is low (Health Insurance for Town employee retirees) Currently, only \$80 M funded, but we will have new numbers this year. We only give 2% of the PCR Budget toward OPEB and we try to get the Board of Selectmen to understand that we should give more money. Lincoln was concerned that it would affect our credit rating at some point going forward.

*Jerry said we are currently funding out of budget and that the way we are managing it is not sustainable. He is concerned that we will not be able to borrow at 1% - 3% in the future and that once we lose our credit rating we will not be able to get it back. Pam said we were at an A- when she started. Pam said that Jim had told her that the actuarial reporting is making regulations regarding OPEB stricter. **Jerry will talk to Jim directly about funding.***

Lincoln said they need a revenue stream to start funding OPEB.

Non Contributory Pension (910)

Does not exist any more

Plymouth Country Retirement (911)

- Unfunded Liability
- Have not incurred the 8% increase yet, but will probably going forward

Jerry is concerned about the asset allocation and that they lost 7.1% of assets in 2018.

Jerry thought that they should come before Advisory every year and present and felt that they did not give an accurate picture last year.

Jamie said we should invite them to a meeting, Lincoln agreed. Jamie thinks they should come before Town Meeting, so we can provide answers at Town meeting if it comes up.

Patrice asked if they go in front of the Board of Selectmen, Pam said no.

Jamie said we had a meeting last year, Patrice agreed but thought the Committee really didn't do anything about it, Lincoln said we can talk about it, but we do not have a lot of options.

Jerry thought that we could not be the only Town that was concerned.

Mike thought there was a new investment strategy and advisor, Jerry said yes. Jamie felt that Jerry should lead the meeting when they come to present because of his background.

Pam to give Lianne information to reach out to invite them to a meeting.

Jerry thinks the information will not be available until June.

Lincoln wants to talk about the desired outcome of the meeting before they come in.

Gary Meyerson asked if the Committee has any recourse, Lincoln said no.

Jerry thought that We needed to find another credible administrator. Lincoln reiterated that we do not have any other viable options.

Patrice thought that we should talk to other Towns, Lincoln said Hanover has the same issues. Pam said that it is run by some of the same people as Mayflower was.

Jerry said he thought that other Towns had found work arounds.

Contributory Insurance (914)

Lincoln thought it was bad financial decision to leave Mayflower. We left approximately \$800,000 in reserve and it was a serious financial impact to the Town. Jamie said he was told it was a rollercoaster ride and that is why we left. Mike said the former Town Administrator was trying to do what was prudent for the Town.

Pam said that the highest increase on health insurance will be a maximum of 5% and that last year was 7%. Lincoln said Mayflower is going to have a 1% - 1.5%

Jerry felt that the Town had 3 issues: OPEB, Plymouth County Retirement and MIIA.

Pam suggested inviting the Selectmen if we have a meeting.

Budget:

Federal taxes: Increases from COLA, will look at everything again now that the payments have been made.

Nancy Holt entered the meeting at approximately 8:45 PM

CPC Review:

Rescissions

- Voted to rescind \$407,197.41
- Maxwell Trust Property - Title Issue: (Maxwell) \$389,000 will revisit in March meeting, Mike asked if it was Open space, Karen said yes. It is having title issues the parcel is behind Bates Lane, partially in Cohasset. Jerry asked what part was in Cohasset, Karen said about half and that the parcel was not that big.
- In March will vote to rescind \$131,000 for Central Field

Historical Projects

North River Shipyard Marker - \$4,400

Roof to Human Society Boathouse (by the Maritime Center) - \$17,500

Stockbridge Grist Mill Grain Chest – (\$39,500)

- One of a kind
- Museum of Fine Arts made a replica
- Will have a Historical Restriction (means they cannot sell it)

Lincoln asked if the Historic Committee voted unanimously, Gary said he thought so

Jamie asked what was left in the Historic Fund, Gary said \$790,000

Mike asked where it would be located, Karen said probably in the Little Red School house, which is climate controlled.

Affordable Housing Trust (\$100k)

- Looking for \$100,000 to re-fund

Mike asked if we put in another 10% as well, Gary said yes

Cole Parkway (\$81k) 7-0

- Bandstand
- Benches
- Trash cans

Jerry asked about the drawing regarding the bandstand and if we are were fixing the existing bandstand or adding on to it. Gary said we are fixing it, but thinks we are adding an entrance way. Gary will find out, he thinks it is minor.

Jerry thought it could be an ADA ramp.

Field Renovation (\$10M): 8-0

- Mark Novak made a presentation a few months ago to Advisory
- Project is fluid
- CPC voted to fund \$8.3M, \$2.9 in debt, \$5.4M Cash
 - \$1.6 M will come from Town, turf related items and maintenance
 - Cost included previous funds that went towards study: \$10.7M
 - Pulled out \$200k in items
- Mike said the Committee has really looked at the numbers, Lincoln asked what the biggest concern was, Mike said they will still be short fields after the project, 16 individual fields, but with multipurpose fields, will not be as short a originally projected.

Budgeted for:

- \$200,00 Grants
- Youth groups \$50,000
- \$10,0000 committed from a youth group

Borrowing/Debt analysis was done. Gary said they can go up to \$5M in debt. Lincoln said the analysis answered a lot of his questions. Nancy said that Capital Planning recommended borrowing \$1.6 M from the town side (not CPC). Gary said we can pay back with a series of BANS.

Lincoln was concerned that if we did this renovation, we could not do any other projects, Gary said that we would be able too. Gary said they will have money left over and they also should get matched.

Gary did scenarios with different surcharge rates (3% and 1.5%) and both showed the budget running on a surplus.

Jerry asked about the shortfall in the project, Gary said the \$250,000 shortfall is due to items being overestimated, it was done conservatively. They can also put in less expensive items or make cut backs if needed. Nancy added that the \$400,000 from free cash was already authorized.

Jerry asked how big the contingency was, Gary said it is built into each line item – 10% or 12% for

the overall project,

*Jamie asked about the tennis court, Gary said that the tennis courts are not part of the project, Jamie asked why. Gary said the applicant did not include them, all the numbers were for fields. Jamie thought it would cost more to do it as a separate project at a later date and that they should look into amending the proposal to include the tennis courts. **Gary said he would email Maura about the tennis courts.** Karen said that it was field orientated and the issue was that they had sticker shock when the price came in and they were trying to lower costs.*

Jamie asked about the ropes course, Gary said that the Clubs use it as a survival course and that they plan on segregating it out a little.

Patrice asked about the letter of non-support, and the comments regarding the natural habitat, Gary said he spoke with Steve McGuire (author), who does not want turf, but that he is supportive of the renovation. Gary told him that CPC has bought many natural areas in Scituate to replace the non-grass surface and that if we do grass, we cannot water them or put in multi-purpose fields.

Mike said if we used grass we would not have multi-purpose fields and therefore would have to knock down trees in other areas to clear space to build more fields.

Lincoln asked if there were any other concerns, Mike said all the line items that could be fought as to whether CPC could pay (gray issues like the ticket booth for example) were taken out.

Lincoln asked if everything is CPC eligible now, Mike, Karen and Gary agreed that it was. Karen said that the plan makes a lot of sense. Other towns use CPC to borrow money. Gary said that now is the perfect time to borrow because of rates and inflation. Lincoln asked when do we borrow the money, Nancy said we borrow what we need and we can roll it over; unless the interest rates turn against us. Gary said we can pay it all down in 3 years.

Gary explained that the Athletic Field Proforma spread sheet on the CPC drive has a tab called Skyler which shows areas that could be problematic. For example, if we build stands on the other side of the field, it could be considered a stadium.

Jerry is in favor but he asked about opposition, \$10.3M in fields is a lot. Gary said people called and asked why isn't CPC is buying Gates, or why aren't you buying water; (which they bought 400 acres on the West End, just need to put a well in). Mike said once you talk through the issue with people they understand.

Patrice felt that that all the Towns have good facilities, so we need to do this.

Patrice asked about the ticket booth, Gary said that Skyler pointed out that it could be a restriction on public access. Ticket sales have to be noted as a voluntary donation. Karen said that it is the ticket that is causing the restriction not the booth. Jamie said if you leased it out to a private enterprise they would use a ticket booth. It was decided that CPC can pay for the ticket booth if they use voluntary contribution language on the ticket or the booth.

Gary said there will be slight movement on either side of the ledger, about \$100,000. Gary will email Lincoln as soon as he knows.

Lincoln said they can come back Town Meeting night to vote if budget numbers change.

Jerry asked if we will be number two in the Commonwealth in debt outstanding if we go forward with the renovation of fields project, Gary said yes. Mike said we will be at the higher end because we would be at the beginning of the borrowing process.

Attendance for February 21st Meeting:

Patrice - Y

Anthony - Y

Elise -Y

Jamie –Y

Jerry – Y

Mike –Y

Jamie asked if the Senior Center Project was going forward, Nancy said yes, but with an alternate plan that does not touch Gates. Building C will be knocked down and the Senior Center will replace it. Recreation will stay in A Wing with minor changes, elevator, ADA bathroom and a new roof. \$11.9 M all together.

The Advisory Committee was not happy with keeping the Old Gates Building due to the ongoing cost to maintain (about \$110,000 including insurance in 2018).

Vote:

- 3-1 vote in favor from the Board of Selectmen
- 5-3 vote in favor from the Council on Aging

Nancy said that they want the Senior Center built and they are trying to get to that point. There is a growing number of people that do not want to demolish Gates.

Jerry asked how far away the Senior Center would be from Gates, Nancy said about 30 feet.

Lincoln was going to contact Doreene Close to come to Advisory to discuss why she does not want to demolish Gates and what she wants to do with it in the future.

Lincoln Heineman asked for a motion to adjourn, Jamie Gilmore made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 PM, Mike Westort seconded the motion; Unanimous Vote (7-0).

Respectfully Submitted,
Lianne Cataldo (Recording Secretary)

Follow up Items:

- Lincoln asked for a cost estimate for each building owned by the Town
 - Kevin said he send the insurance list to Lianne
- Patrice will follow up with him Chief Murphy regarding the number of ambulance runs and the cost
- Jerry will talk to Jim Boudreau about funding OPEB
- Lianne to set up meeting regarding Plymouth Country Retirement, invite Selectmen – Timing to be determined)
- Gary will email Maura about the tennis courts
- Cole Parkway: drawing showed addition, Gary to research

- Gary will email Lincoln with any changes to the budget
- Lincoln will contact Doreen Close to come to Advisory to discuss why she does not want to demolish Gates and what she wants to do with it in the future.

On-going outstanding Items:

- Lincoln asked for the balance in the Conservation Fund and the Driftway Park Fund
- Lincoln asked Brad to talk to Jim and Town Counsel regarding the option of stopping further building in Scituate due to the water restrictions
- Lincoln said the Town gave up \$200,000 by not selling the small parcel of land in Greenbush back to the MBTA and asked Brad to look at this issue when they negotiate.
- Flexible Open Space Article: Lincoln asked for the language as soon as it is available.

Referenced Materials

- Agenda
- Minutes from 2/7/2019
- CPC Documents https://1drv.ms/f/s!ApZBdgJktejggYB96P1Ou-Fqzwqe_w
- Town of Scituate Budget Fiscal Year 2020