



**Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, December 19, 2019
Community Room, Scituate Public Library
7:00 pm**

Committee Members Present: Jerry Kelly, Chair, Elise Russo; Andrew Goodrich; Dan McGuiggin; Lincoln Heineman

Committee Members not present: Mike Westort, Vice Chair; Jamie Gilmore; Patrice Metro

Also in Attendance: Nancy Holt, Finance Director; Stephen Mone; Mike Dimeo; Seth Pfeifer; Pam Avitabile

Jerry Kelly called the meeting to order at 6:59 PM

Jerry Kelly made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Lincoln Heineman; Unanimous Vote (5-0)

Jerry Kelly made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 12, 2019 meeting, with non-substantive changes; seconded by Elise Russo, Majority in favor (4 -1 abstained)

Jerry welcomed everyone to the meeting. He explained to the presenters that the Committee wanted to be respectful of everyone's time and that the members had reviewed the budget, so there was no need to read their section word for word, he said that the Committee just wanted to understand what everyone does and their challenges and accomplishments.

Departmental Budget Reviews:

Waterways Enterprise: Stephen Mone, Harbormaster

Also in attendance: Brian Kelly, Chair; Howie Kreutzberg, Vice Chair; David Friedman

- Received Chapter 91 License for Cole Parkway Marina Project; the RFP will be done in a couple of weeks and then go out to bid. The project should be done by the beginning of boating season, May 15th, Stephen added that it will be a challenge to meet the deadline.
- Replacing the pilings at Maritime Center, will be much more secure, especially in a storm. Should also be completed by May 15th.
- Electrical system upgraded, pedestals are now GFCI protected
- De-icers have been successful which allows the fingers to stay in the water; the docks will also be able to stay in the water in the future
- Working on customer service

- Continue to promote usage of waterways: sailing program, safe boating courses
- Working with Scituate fire and police department for training, this year did oil spill protocol.
 - Had two boat fires this year
 - Will have new boat by June 1st.

Jerry asked about the revenue from the Maritime Center which appeared to go down, Nancy said it was a duplicate line [error]. Brian Kelly added that Waterways does not receive the income from the Maritime Center.

Lincoln said a lot of the revenue fees are down, Stephen said it had to do with the projections. Nancy said it is a conservative budget.

Elise asked about the line items not approved, Stephen said he was looking for a FLIR camera that was not approved. He also added that the expenses for the Maritime Center had been removed from their budget.

Lincoln asked about seasonal salaries going up, Stephen explained that he has employees with different skill levels and that the starting base salary for the seasonal employees (assistant Harbormasters) with good skill were increased, also the minimum wage was increased.

Elise asked about the original debt service, Nancy said that the purpose of the debt service was used for the land for the Maritime Center, the facility and dredging.

David Freidman asked who the new liaison was, Elise said it was now Dan McGuiggin

Stephen Mone thanked the Waterways Commission and added that he enjoyed working with them.

Jerry Kelly praised the Commission for managing their retained earnings, Brian Kelly added that they have managed their financial resources without raising fees.

Andrew Goodrich asked if they would raise or lower fees, Brian said possible raise them as they have a lot of expenses in the near future.

David Friedman congratulated Brian on doing a great job managing the budget.

David Friedman added for the record that he is against having the Marine Police Unit salaries come from the Waterways Enterprise Fund. He said he would like to make sure that their advisory liaison is involved next year. Jerry said their concern is dually noted.

Howie Kreutzberg, Vice Chair of Waterways said the Harbormaster has done a great job procuring money from the Seaport Economic Council, which is run by the Lieutenant Governor. He has received grants for the piling project and reimbursement from FEMA.

David Friedman said we should see an increase in mooring fees as we have assigned about 40 - 50 additional moorings.

Pam Avitabile said that DOCKWA is helping with revenues coming in as well.

Capital Budget Items 2021:

- Replacement of 2004 Harbormaster Truck
- New Docks and Gangways for Cole Parkway Marina
- Mooring Field Re-grid
- Pump Out Station Jericho Boat Ramp

Shellfish: Mike Dimeo

- Shellfish rules and regulations were approved by Board of Selectmen for the pilot program
- Cohasset may push back
 - They have been using the land for recreation
 - People are worried they will see the equipment
- Farmers will provide business plans
- Will charge for filing fees and inspections

Brian Kelly added that Mike is also the Harbormaster for Marshfield and that he worked with Stephen Mone to dredge this summer; they saved over a half of million dollars doing it this time of the year. Brian said they did a great job and the areas are much safer now.

Treasurer/Collector: Pam Avitabile

Level funded, would like to have more money for postage.

- 19 parcels redeemed
- MUNIS set up, took a lot of extra time
- Collected over \$80,000 in taxes
- Work with Veteran's Department, Council on Aging and Laura Minier (who has left)
- Money coming in quicker, online payments set up
 - May set up credit card payment capability

Jerry asked about the fees associated with paying with credit cards, Pam agreed that it would be better for the residents to make payments directly to the Town.

- Tax bills go in mail December 31, with water liens added (MUNIS)
- Always explore different avenues with banks to save money
- Implemented the Community Septic Management Program (only 2 residents have taken advantage to date)
- Wellness Committee, meet monthly with MIIA and have combined with Cohasset. Awarded Best Wellness Newcomer for 2018

Elise asked if ambulance billing is a percentage, Pam said yes and added that it is hard to collect, especially now with the two ambulances. Pam added that many towns do not bother to try to collect. Pam said that the deputy collector and COMSTAR try to collect the fees that insurance does not cover as there are specific rules regarding the collections of these fees.

Lincoln Heineman said that Pam does a great job and he has learned a lot from her.

Pam said she just completed the certification process.

Tax Foreclosures

Level funded

- Collected 19 tax titles
- Nancy is helping to implement “Land of Low Values” for liens, a way to file with the commissioner of revenue. Can auction the property to collect taxes (value must be less than \$20,000).

Debt Service

Level funded

- Big projects: athletic fields, new Senior Center, Widow’s Walk. Just did a \$9 million BAN for 1.75% (short term borrowing)
 - Will look again in May/July, may BOND
 - Trying to get AAA, but OPEB and coastal issues are holding us back. They do not seem to be putting as much emphasis on OPEB and we have a proactive plan to protect the coast which should help going forward.

Jerry said we got 1.75% so AAA would not get us that much.

Plymouth Country Retirement -- Defined Benefit Plan

Unfunded liability for Plymouth County

- Assessments expected to be a 8% increase every year, 7.1% next year.
- Looking for a building in Plymouth
- 2% must go into OPEB
- Budget was approved

Jerry would like to have them come in and justify their fees and their investment plans.

Pam said their accountant was arrested for stealing money.

Jerry asked why the goal is 94%, Pam said she asked the same question. Nancy said it is a 5 member board and we do not have any say.

Andrew Goodrich is concerned unfunded OPEB and what we can do, Pam said we have to get the Board of Selectmen to agree to fund it better, Nancy and Pam said they have a plan. We could direct funding right to OPEB.

Lincoln thinks it will be hard to find the money when we need it. Lincoln said it is also hard to borrow funds. Pam does not think they are as focused on OPEB and more concerned about natural disasters.

Pam said that some towns are looking into employees contributing to OPEB.

Nancy said that town employees have to enroll in Medicare now when eligible.

Jerry Kelly said that we have a funding policy in place for OPEB, but feels that it is grossly inadequate. Jerry said the Committee has to take a position at Town Meeting. Nancy said we could use Meals Tax (like many towns) or the New Room Occupancy Tax. This tax may be

reduced from 6% to 4% depending on a vote at Town Meeting. Nancy said we do not know how much money this will bring in.

Meals tax each year: \$260,000

Contributory Insurance

- Estimated Health insurance rates 6% increase, will know at the MIIA conference January 24 and 25th.
- 40% are on Medicare supplemental plan

Lincoln asked about Mayflower, the company we used prior. Nancy said there is no way we are going back because of the governance.

Federal Taxes

- 4% increase

Scituate Cable Television: Seth Pfiefer

- Media for the town
- Channel: 8, 9 and 22
- Funds come from Comcast
- Requested \$40,000 equipment and software
 - Need to be compatible with all software
 - online development, stream 1 or 2 channels
- Need to do some upgrades in the buildings we film in
- Want to be a communication department for the Community
 - Could film live from the Public safety complex during storms
- Hire seniors to help film
- Studio needs upgrades

Andrew asked about upgrades to the studio and what was needed in the future. Andrew asked if they could do online advertising through their youtube videos.

Seth said that the new technology would allow for residents to get information online similar to Facebook Live, but more professional.

Andrew asked about closed captioning, Seth said that we currently do not do it.

Lincoln asked about the Comcast contract, Seth said it is 10 year contract and they are prepared in case they do not renew.

Seth said that they were going to move into the new Senior Center, but were cut out of the project due to cost. He felt that the move was not really necessary.

New Business:

Andrew suggesting having an open meeting before the Town Meeting so that residents could ask questions. Lincoln said we could use the Moderators meeting too. The Committee thought it was a good idea. Jerry said we usually meet before the meeting and we could expand that

meeting and book a separate room.

Next Meeting on January 9th in the Community Room.

Jerry Kelly made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 PM; seconded by Lincoln Heineman. Unanimous Vote (5-0)

Respectfully Submitted,
Lianne Cataldo (Recording Secretary)

Referenced Materials:

- Agenda
- Minutes
- Budget Book
- Capital Plan

Follow-up:

- Jerry would like to have Plymouth Country Retirement come in and justify their fees and their investment plans.

On-going Items:

- Jamie asked Sytske Humphrey, Vice President of the Beautification Commission if she could make a list of the areas in Scituate that needed improvement.
- Security Upgrades to Town Facilities, Jim said he would get the break down.