

TOWN OF SCITUATE
600 Chief Justice Cushing Highway
Scituate, Massachusetts 02066
Phone: 781-545-8710
FAX: 781-545-8704



Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, December 8, 2022
Zoom Video/Audio Conference – 7:00 pm

Pursuant to Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2021, Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2022 and Chapter 107 of the Acts of 2022, Scituate Advisory Committee Members held the December 8, 2022 meeting via Zoom Video and/or Audio (Dial-in for those with only phone access). All participants participated remotely.

Committee Members Present: Jerry Kelly, Lynda Ferguson, Missy Seidel, Dan McGuiggin, Patrice Metro and Jamie Gilmore; Chair

Committee Members Not in Attendance:
Marc DiCosimo, Elise Russo

Also in Attendance: Nancy Holt, Finance Director/Town Accountant; Seth Pfeiffer, SCTV Director; James Boudreau, Town Administrator; Stephen Mone, Harbormaster; Brian Kell, Waterways Commission; Michael DiMeo, Shellfish Constable; Pamela Avitabile, Treasurer Collector and Kevin Kelly, Facilities Director

Mr. Gilmore called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Mr. Kelly made a motion to accept the agenda which was seconded by Ms. Metro and voted unanimously in favor (6-0) by roll call vote; Mr. Gilmore-yes, Mr. Kelly-yes, Ms. Ferguson-yes, Ms. Seidel-yes, Mr. McGuiggin-yes and Ms. Metro-yes.

Ms. Ferguson made a motion to accept the minutes of the December 1, 2022 meeting which was seconded by Ms. Metro. The minutes were voted unanimously in favor (6-0) by roll call vote; Mr. Gilmore-yes, Mr. Kelly-yes, Ms. Ferguson-yes, Ms. Seidel-yes, Mr. McGuiggin-yes and Ms. Metro-yes

FY 2024 Departmental Budget Reviews

Waterways Enterprise – Dept 298 – Stephen Mone, Harbormaster

Mr. Mone stated it had been a busy year with the department receiving a \$1M grant from the Seaport Economic Advisory Council for dock replacement and \$367K for dredging permit

assistance for four areas. He noted that due to a new layout of the Scituate Maritime marina, three additional 40 foot slips were created. He reminded members of the fishing boat Bing Bing disaster and that all lives were saved which was helped by the new vessel. Mr. Kelly asked the home port of the vessel and Mr. Mone replied Gloucester. Mr. Mone stated it was a very busy season in both the harbor and rivers. He mentioned that the software Dockwa was used last year for transient slip registrations resulting in increased revenue. He stated the dock project should be done by May 1st now that a construction contract had been awarded and the total cost would be \$3M. Mr. Gilmore asked who was authoring the grants and Mr. Mone replied that he provides the information and it is done by different consultants.

Ms. Seidel asked what percentage the \$367K grant was towards the total dredging and Mr. Mone said that was just for permitting and he would apply for additional grants for the dredging itself. Ms. Seidel asked if that would yield additional moorings. Mr. Mone responded that larger boats would be able to be housed in the Maritime Center marina. Ms. Ferguson asked if there was a deadline for making the facilities ADA compliant. Mr. Mone said he was just bringing attention to the issue and that the building will be addressed after the marina work is completed.

Mr. Kelly noted the increase in seasonal salaries and Mr. Mone replied that is additional funding if need to address rates if staff recruitment was problematic. Mr. Gilmore asked if that was an issue for other marinas and Mr. Mone said it is a problem everywhere currently. Mr. Gilmore asked about the level of retained earnings at \$353,129 and Mr. Mone noted they normally like to keep it at \$500,000. Mr. Mone stated that additional moorings had been added. Mr. Gilmore asked when the last time rates were increased. Mr. Mone responded that rates increased 10% last year and mooring holders received a \$2/foot increase. Mr. Brian Kelly of the Waterways Commission noted that of the six municipal marinas in Massachusetts, Scituate is on the upper end of those marinas (5th of 6th in terms of highest). He noted some of the other marinas had additional amenities that Scituate cannot offer and are open for longer periods. He also noted that the long term debt will be dropping significantly over the new two years and the only significant capital project is the recently approved dock replacement which will add \$90-\$100K in debt starting in 2025 or later. He also stated that the Waterways Commission will monitor the situation and adjust rates as necessary.

Shellfish – Dept 295 – Michael DiMeo, Shellfish Constable

Mr. DiMeo stated the river closures occurred over two years ago. He said they are targeting a partial re-opening of the South River in January 2023 for recreational shellfish. He said they were working with Cohasset and Scituate sewer treatment plants so that they are able to communicate to shellfish constables and permit holders if there is a plant failure. He stated that Scituate and Marshfield are working on a reciprocity of permits for shellfishing. He said the areas of possible aquaculture in Briggs Harbor has been marked out in response to Mr. Gilmore's inquiry.

Facilities – Dept 410 – Kevin Kelly, Facilities Director

Mr. Kevin Kelly informed members that they removed and replaced all the insulation in the basement of Town Hall which was a large job which will improve energy efficiency as well as the replacement of garage doors at fire station 1. He stated that the exterior of several buildings and that the HVAC Technician position has been hired. He noted the department is working at

chipping away at the projects identified in the Facilities Study. He noted that the break-in period of the new buildings is at least 18 months which includes the senior center and the Humarock Fire Station. He said goals include facilities management software, policies for outside users of buildings, Green Communities grant applications with the assistance of Corey Miles and adding more charging stations around town.

Mr. Jerry Kelly congratulated Mr. Kevin Kelly on the addition of the HVAC technician and the preventative maintenance. Mr. Jerry Kelly asked why the HVAC contracts had not been reduced with the addition of the new position. Mr. Kevin Kelly responded that not enough time has elapsed in order to identify and the funds might be needed for other contracts. Mr. Gilmore asked about the \$10,000 reduction in Technical Services and Mr. Kelly responded that the prior years' actuals showed it was not needed so it was moved to other areas.

Scituate Cable TV (SCTV) – Dept 159 – Seth Pfeiffer, SCTV Director

Mr. Pfeiffer reminded the members that the funding for the SCTV budget comes from Comcast and is not funded through taxpayer dollars. He noted that the PEG Access fund has approximately \$2M and they spend it carefully in case the funding is not continued in the next contract with Comcast. He highlighted the increase in part-time salaried is due to the hybrid meetings which require additional personnel. He mentioned that there were five concurrent events happening this evening that SCTV was covering. The capital outlay is for a variety of equipment that is known to be replaced but also for equipment they find they need to fulfill their responsibilities. One challenge is the hybrid technology that they have in three areas so far but the legislation is still only temporary.

Ms. Metro asked if there were any viewership metrics. Mr. Pfeiffer said they can see viewers with the online services but the three Comcast stations does not provide information but the franchise fees from Comcast have not declined. Ms. Ferguson said she posts the links on the Inn's Facebook page and they get many hits and that the viewership is not just limited to the television channels.

Treasurer Collector – Dept 145 – Pamela Avitabile, Treasurer Collector

Tax Foreclosures – Dept 158 – Pamela Avitabile, Treasurer Collector

Ms. Avitabile noted that there were increases in her printing line as the current printing firm closed its doors as well as postage. She stated that the department now has a credit card machine at the counter and a PCI compliant policy is being prepared. She noted her efforts to maximize investment earnings with the challenges of biweekly payrolls and weekly vendor warrants. Mr. McGuiggin asked if it is a percentage or an amount that she maintains liquid to meet these ongoing costs. Ms. Avitabile replied that her approach changes and if she identifies extra funds, she invests it out 3-6 months. She noted that the rates were between 3-4% currently for most of the accounts. She highlighted the cooperative relationship between the finance offices with the example of FY23 actual tax bill generation process.

Mr. Kelly asked for an explanation of land of low value. Ms. Avitabile noted it was an expedited manner of dealing with tax titles. Mr. Kelly asked about the disposition of foreclosures. Ms., Avitabile noted the sale of a foreclosed house and currently there was an ongoing project looking at other land parcels that could be sold. Ms. Ferguson asked why the cost of out of town beach

stickers are not being increased when they are selling out in an hour and Ms. Avitabile stated she could not respond as it was not her decision.

Debt Service – Dept 720 – Pamela Avitabile, Treasurer Collector

Ms. Avitabile stated they try to keep the debt service budget level funded. She noted that the interest rates have skyrocketed with the recent bond issuance was over 3.965%. Mr. Gilmore asked what the prior rates have been and Ms. Avitabile said 1.5-2.0%.

Plymouth County Retirement Assessment – Dept 911 – Pamela Avitabile, Treasurer Collector

Ms. Avitabile was happy to inform members that the budget would be going down due to a revision of the actuarial report to smooth the increases. She stated the FY24 increase was going to be 14% and only 7% in FY25 and Scituate was not the only one. She noted that the area treasurers met with the Plymouth County Retirement Board to work on ways to mitigate the FY24 increase while not extending the amortization schedule. She noted the unfunded liability is 68.6% and it should be 93.8% funded in 2029.

Mr. Kelly asked the savings if the assessment is paid on July 1st and Ms. Avitabile responded it was \$129,635. Mr. Gilmore asked Mr. Kelly if he wanted to meet with Plymouth County Retirement Board again. Mr. Kelly responded in the affirmative. Mr. McGuiggin stated we should write down specifically what information is being requested in advance. Ms. Metro agreed that asking for the information in advance would be helpful. Mr. Kelly stated he would work with others to create the request for information.

Contributory Group Insurance – Dept 914 – Pamela Avitabile, Treasurer Collector

Ms. Avitabile noted there was an 8% estimated increase for FY24 based on the meeting with MIIA due to high claims over the past several years. She said the exact renewal amount would not be known until late January or early February but the Medicare renewal did decrease for calendar year 2023 slightly.

Ms. Ferguson asked the types of plans that are offered especially the two person plans and utilizing that to reduce costs. Ms. Avitabile stated she thought it had been looked at previously.

Federal Taxes – Dept 916 – Pamela Avitabile, Treasurer Collector

Ms. Avitabile stated the increase is 4% due to step increases and cost of living increases.

Other Business

Mr. Gilmore asked Ms. Holt to invite the SHARC Committee to provide an update to the Advisory Committee. Mr. Boudreau said he had the presentation from the last meeting and he would forward that to the members. Ms. Holt asked if the members had made a decision whether to meet in person or by ZOOM for their next meeting.

Mr. Gilmore stated he wanted the members to meet in person at the next meeting.

Mr. Gilmore made a motion to have the December 15th meeting be an in person meeting with a ZOOM option as well which was seconded by Mr. Kelly. Mr. Pfeiffer said it could be a hybrid meeting. The Committee voted unanimously in favor (6-0) by roll call vote; Mr.

Gilmore-yes, Mr. Kelly-yes, Ms. Ferguson-yes, Ms. Seidel-yes, Mr. McGuiggin-yes and Ms. Metro-yes

Mr. Gilmore made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Mr. McGuiggin at 8:40 p.m.; the Committee voted unanimously in favor (6-0) by roll call vote; Mr. Gilmore-yes, Mr. Kelly-yes, Ms. Ferguson-yes, Ms. Seidel-yes, Mr. McGuiggin-yes and Ms. Metro-yes

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy Holt
Recorder