



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 14, 2023
Scituate Town Library, 85 Branch St., Community Room – 7:00 pm

Committee Members Present: Elise Russo, Chair; Lynda Ferguson; Missy Seidel; Patrice Metro; Dan McGuiggin, Vice-Chair; Conor Doherty; Jamie Gilmore and Jerry Kelly

Committee Members Not in Attendance:
Marc DiCosimo

Also in Attendance: James Boudreau, Town Administrator; Nancy Holt, Finance Director/Town Accountant; Kevin Cafferty, DPW Director; Sean McCarthy, DPW Engineering Supervisor; Wil Branton, Sewer Superintendent; Eric Langlan, Water Superintendent; Mike Breen, Highway & Public Grounds Supervisor; Maura Curran, Select Board Chair

Ms. Russo called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Kelly made a motion to accept the agenda which was seconded by Ms. Metro and voted unanimously in favor (5-0).

Ms. Seidel made a motion to accept the minutes of the December 7, 2023 meeting which was seconded by Mr. Kelly. The minutes were voted majority in favor (5-0).

Mr. McGuiggin joined the meeting.

FY25 Departmental Budget Reviews (full FY25 budget available at [final fy25 budget website.pdf](https://scituatema.gov/final-fy25-budget-website.pdf) (scituatema.gov))

Mr. Cafferty introduced his team to the members.

Mr. Doherty joined the meeting.

Water Enterprise (Dept 450) – \$7,816,903 - Eric Langlan, Water Superintendent

Mr. Langlan stated 500M gallons of water was delivered to residents. Mr. Cafferty commented that the Technical Services line declined by \$25,000 as the prior year was a one-time expense for a project. He noted the water rebate program funding was increased by \$10,000. He noted the fuels and lubricants line had leveled out as the prices came back down.

Ms. Russo asked about the requested new position. Mr. Cafferty stated it was due to the well 17 facility and if they were to hire an operator now, it would take up to three years to get fully licensed. He noted they had lost licensed operators to other districts. Mr. Kelly asked if the water services revenue was going up due to price increases or volume used. Mr. Cafferty responded it was due to price increases due to the investment in the system. Mr. Cafferty stated they are trying to replace 2 miles of pipe per year at about \$1M per mile.

Mr. McGuiggin asked if the water pipe replacement is ongoing or if it would have a completion date. Mr. Cafferty responded that it is maintenance and will continue. Ms. Metro asked about the pay scale differentials related to other districts. Mr. Cafferty stated one of the responses has been to increase incentives for licenses. Ms. Metro asked if it was a single union and Mr. Cafferty said there was different union in each town. Mr., Doherty asked about the amount paid to the Town of Marshfield for water and Mr. Cafferty responded approximately \$360K. Mr. Doherty asked about the cost to replace the mains in Humarock and Mr. Cafferty stated \$12M.

Ms. Ferguson asked about the brown water issues. Mr. Cafferty stated that the calls are down but there are still some isolated brown water issues that they are trying to chase down. He commented on the new green sand filter at well #17 and the troubleshooting that is occurring currently to reconcile continued brown water issues. Ms. Metro asked if there are any sections of Town that do not get brown water. Mr. Cafferty stated that it varies as there is a lot of manganese in the pipes. Mr. Langlan commented that the current plant and available treatment options will not address manganese. Ms. Seidel asked when the new treatment plant would be completed and the response was three years.

Sewer Enterprise (Dept 440) – \$4,445,833 - Wil Branton, Sewer Superintendent

Mr. Branton provided a summary of his goals and challenges including the upcoming facility/system study. Mr. Cafferty informed members of the inflow and infiltration work to provide expansion for North Scituate. Ms. Russo asked if the progress could be quantified yet. Mr. Cafferty stated that it can take up to a year to get an annual average through all the seasons to see the impact.

Ms. Metro asked about the issues with disposal of solid waste. Mr. Branton responded that PFAS is new contaminant of concern and there is some level in the residual solids and there is not any guidance from DEP yet. He noted there is discussion of a regional option for disposal but it has not moved forward yet. Mr. Cafferty stated that as more and more landfills are closed, there are fewer places that can accept it. Mr. Doherty asked if the material was dry and could be incinerated and Mr. Cafferty stated no as it is wet. Ms. Metro asked where the material was currently disposed and Mr. Branton stated it goes to Bourne but it may not be able to continue to accept the waste.

Ms. Metro asked about the cyber threats. Mr. Cafferty stated there had been an instance but they are pursuing separated networks for each site to address it with the IT Department. Mr. Kelly asked how long it took to get the new NPDES permit. Mr. Branton responded three years. Mr. Doherty asked about the doubling of the equipment parts project. Mr. Cafferty responded that there were a significant number of pumps and back-ups. Mr. Branton noted a motor for a pump

was \$15K not including installation.

Ms. Russo asked about the new position that was not recommended. Mr. Branton responded they had requested an additional person and additional funding in the budget. Mr. Branton stated that if he had additional resources, he could do more but it is balanced right now. Mr. Kelly asked the remaining useful life on the current facility. Mr. Branton stated that the facility will need to be retrofitted in the next 5-10 years but the facility may need to be relocated in 20-25 years beyond that. Ms. Seidel asked about the electricity budget change and Mr. Cafferty stated the costs have declined. Mr. Boudreau stated that there is a facility plan ongoing with the building which will direct other changes and the rates cannot afford more right now.

Ms. Russo asked the amount of the town that was sewerred and Mr. Cafferty stated 33%. Ms. Seidel asked about the reduction in the sewer connection fee revenue and Mr. Branton responded that connections have to come from land adjacent to the existing sewer. Mr. Kelly asked about the way the debt exclusions for the water treatment plant and potential new school would impact taxpayers. Ms. Holt stated that the water treatment plant will be financed through the Clean Water Trust and that may be issued in pieces as the Commonwealth controls the process.

DPW Engineering (Dept 411) – \$323,832 - Sean McCarthy, DPW Engineering Supervisor
Mr. McCarthy stated they support all of the other divisions and some departments including CPA, with projects. He noted that two of the three engineers were out of the office this past year monitoring the two water main replacement projects leaving only one to do all of the other tasks. He noted that there are at least 15-16 open FEMA projects delayed by permitting. Mr. McCarthy stated they are expanding the repair and adding mitigation and a stress on green solutions and not hard structures.

Ms. Russo asked about the North Scituate beach nourishment and Mr. McCarthy stated it will be sand and gravel. He noted that the bid was just issued for that project and it may start as early as February in order to be done for the wildlife arrival. Ms. Seidel asked if other towns were working with FEMA in an easier manner than me. Mr. Boudreau stated that FEMA is okay to work with but the state agency is the problem, CZM. CZM keeps adding conditions to the permitting process which may not be eligible for reimbursement. Mr. McCarthy stated the town had retained a consultant to assist with the claims and the overall process. Mr. Cafferty stated the grants from Seawall and Dam Repair Fund cannot be spent because CZM has hanged the permitting issues. Ms. Seidel asked if the grant will expire and Mr. Cafferty stated they were already granted a one year extension.

Transfer Station Enterprise (Dept 433) – \$1,716,114 - Sean McCarthy, DPW Engineering Supervisor

Mr. McCarthy stated the greatest challenge is disposal costs and the town has to pay for all of its recycling streams to be disposed. He stated currently they are at \$0 for glass disposal but the hoped for a return to a rebate. Mr. McGuiggin asked what the incentive was for disposal. Mr. Cafferty stated it is still less expensive than if it was disposed of as household waste. Mr. Cafferty informed members that South Shore Recycling was going out to bid for better pricing on disposal.

Mr. Kelly asked why the budget was decreasing when the costs were increasing. Mr. McCarthy responded that there was a reduction in C & D disposal because of people using dumpsters. Ms. Seidel asked about the recycling rate and Mr. McCarthy responded that it had remained the same. Mr. Cafferty stated that as PAYT people are incentivized to recycle so as not to fill up a bag.

DPW Highway (Dept 422) – \$1,256,218 - Mike Breen, DPW Highway & Public Grounds Supervisor

Mr. Cafferty stated the biggest increase is in the salaries due to the new Laborers' union contract. Mr. Cafferty summarized the different services provided by the division and informed members that there is now a full complement of personnel. Mr. Breen noted the staff's work on potholes, street signs and many other projects every day.

DPW Public Grounds (Dept 429) – \$1,042,482 - Mike Breen, DPW Highway & Public Grounds Supervisor

Mr. Cafferty provided a summary of the services provided by the division including tree work. Ms. Russo asked about the request for new positions. Mr. Cafferty responded that the goal is to do more tree work internally rather than outsource it which coincides with their capital project for a new bucket truck. Mr. Cafferty discussed the tree cutting classes the staff attends. Ms. Seidel asked about the cost savings and Mr. Breen stated the private tree crew is \$4,200/day. Ms. Seidel asked which contracts would be eliminated and Mr. Cafferty stated it depended on the skills of the personnel. Mr. Doherty asked how many days of tree crews are required and Mr. Breen it varies by year and Mr. Cafferty stated it was about \$90,000/year. Mr. Cafferty stated some trees will also need to be outsourced if a crane is involved or too technically difficult.

Ms. Russo asked about the cut in landscaping supplies. Mr. Cafferty stated that they had purchased a lot of playground chips and the current personnel at the School Department were monitoring it better. Ms. Ferguson note that the chips were being eliminated due to ADA access and Mr. Cafferty said some surfaces are being replaced with poured in lace rubber.

DPW Snow & Ice (Dept 423) – \$497,115 - Mike Breen, DPW Highway & Public Grounds Supervisor

Mr. Cafferty stated it goes up minimally from year to year. Ms. Metro asked why there was only an overtime line and Ms. Holt stated that snow events outside of work hours are charged to that budget as overtime.

DPW Administration (Dept 421) – \$239,282 - Kevin Cafferty, DPW Director

Mr. Cafferty stated the administration budget covers his salary and that of his office manager.

Other Business

Ms. Holt stated the next meeting will be remote via ZOOM on January 11, 2024.

Mr. Kelly made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Mr. McGuiggin at 8:20 p.m.; the Committee voted unanimously in favor (7-0).

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy Holt
Recorder