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Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, December 16, 2021
Zoom Video/Audio Conference – 7:00 pm

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, Scituate Advisory Committee Members held the December 16, 2021 meeting via Zoom Video and/or Audio (Dial-in for those with only phone access). All participants participated remotely.

Committee Members Present: Jamie Gilmore; Chair, Missy Seidel, Elise Russo, Michael Westort, Jerry Kelly and Patrice Metro

Committee Members Not in Attendance:
Dan McGuiggin, Lynda Ferguson, Lincoln Heineman

Also in Attendance: James Boudreau, Town Administrator; Nancy Holt, Finance Director/Town Accountant; Joseph DiVito, Jr., Director of Assessing; Ian Kelley, Golf Course Director; Andrew Scheele, Board of Health Director; Linda Hayes, Council on Aging Director; Nicholas Lombardo; Assistant Recreation Director and Athena Brodsky, Commission on Disabilities member

Mr. Gilmore called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Ms. Russo made a motion to accept the agenda which was seconded by Ms. Metro and voted unanimously in favor (5-0) by roll call vote; Mr. Gilmore-yes, Ms. Seidel-yes, Ms. Russo-yes, Ms. Metro-yes and Mr. Kelly-yes.

Mr. Gilmore called for a motion to accept the minutes of the December 9, 2021 meeting as amended which was made by Ms. Metro seconded by Ms. Russo. The minutes were voted in favor (5-0-1) by roll call vote for December 9, 2021; Mr. Gilmore-yes, Ms. Seidel-yes, Ms. Russo-yes, Mr. Westort-yes, Ms. Metro-abstain and Mr. Kelly-yes.

Review of FY 2023 Departmental Budgets

Dept. 549 – Commission on Disabilities

Ms. Brodsky reviewed the Commission's mission with members. She noted that the Commission hopes to have another Disabilities Awareness event in 2023 as the past two have

been cancelled. These events include local and state vendors and agencies that provide services to residents and citizens from other communities. In FY21, the Commission allotted \$1,000 to the Recreation Department for devices for children with disabilities. They also provided funds to the Library to be used for books for those with disabilities such as audio books and C-pens. The I-Excel program at the School Department chose books they wanted and the Commission purchased them for that program. She asked for the Advisory Committee's support for their \$5,000 budget. She also informed the Advisory Committee that the Commission also received revenues from the handicapped parking fines and the Commission is looking for uses such as the beach wheelchair purchased in the past. Mr. Kelly & Mr. Gilmore thanked the Commission for their work.

Dept. 141 – Assessors

Mr. DiVito noted that his department's goal is equitable assessments across the board and they continuously improve by conducting additional inspections and all building permits are inspected annually. He noted that they had about 18 months to conduct 2,000 inspections. He thanked the Advisory Committee for their support of the new software, Nearmap, last year which allows them to measure properties remotely to within one foot. It allows them to work in inclement weather and prioritize their on-site time. They were able to use the software for 1,000 inspections. Overall, the only increase is a few hundred dollars in purchase of services. Mr. Gilmore asked if he had sufficient personnel and Mr. DiVito replied in the affirmative.

Ms. Metro asked about the 3,900 properties noted in the narrative as compared to the 2,000 properties Mr. DiVito spoke about in his remarks. Mr. DiVito replied that PK Associates, a contractor, will do the other 1,900. He said if they can do more inhouse, they will spend less funds with the contractor. Mr. Kelley asked the definition of the CAMA system and Mr. DiVito stated it was the computer assisted assessing system.

Dept. 610 – Library

Ms. Finnie reviewed the department's goals and objectives and highlighted their request for a new position. She noted she understood that it was not supported at this time by the Town Administrator. She said the commitment to maintain the new building with the same amount of staff is not working with four service points to cover over 60 hours a week. She stated the demand on children's services has increased and a dedicated staff person would be very helpful. She said the covering staff for that area just does not know the school assignments and the collection as well. She informed the Committee of another goal to become a fine free library. She highlighted some initial steps towards this goal by providing seniors with fine free cards and for children's materials. Ms. Finnie said the department is working with the Community Preservation Committee to develop a greenspace and patio which has already been funded. She provided an update of the progress with the project with a retired architect to assist with the bid documents.

Ms. Finnie commended her staff for their work during the pandemic and that Scituate's library opened earlier than others in the area. She stated that residents and visitors from other towns borrowed 200,000 volumes and 150,000 other media. She updated the Committee on the Library's new webpage and the other programs. Ms. Metro asked why the Select Board did not approve the fine free program last year. Ms. Finnie responded that during the pandemic they did

not charge fines but there was a concern about the loss of revenue. She noted that the revenue had been declining when automatic renewals went into place two years ago.

Mr. Gilmore asked if the fine policy really cause people to return books in a timely manner. Ms. Finnie noted that some people were very conscientious but others were not phased by the extra \$0.10/day to keep the book for a longer period. She noted that other libraries had not seen a change in their return rate and she had delayed to see the experience of others. Mr. Gilmore asked about the vacant positions and Ms. Finnie responded they would be filled. Ms. Metro followed up on Mr. Gilmore's question as to whether the new position was in the request. Ms. Holt provided information that the personnel schedules were provided by her department and that new requests for personnel were not added unless approved and the position rated for grade. Mr. Kelly asked if the Committee could take a non-binding vote to support the position. Mr. Boudreau noted that there are several departments requesting positions and it seemed premature to take such a vote without hearing the merits of the other requests.

Dept. 161 – Town Clerk

Ms. Gardner reviewed her goals including her endeavors to receive her certification, re-organization of the storage areas due to the additional elections and election training for her staff and the election workers. She commended her staff and all of their hard work, especially the Assistant Town Clerk Heather. She noted the major expenditures were tied to the additional elections in FY23. She provided an update on the early voting process versus the absentee voting process and the different staffing requirements. She also informed the members that the census data only affected the voter precincts in a minor way and there will no longer be a different ballot for precinct 3. Ms. Russo asked for clarification on the election costs and why FY23 was so much more than FY21 which was a presidential election. Ms. Gardner noted that the salaries for election workers has increased, early voting and the addition of Sundays for early voting.

Dept. 661 – Widow's Walk (Golf) Enterprise

Mr. Kelley noted that despite the delayed start to the construction the course still did well working out of a trailer. He said there is a lot of excitement building about the improvements. Ms. Russo asked about the contract with IGM as the management fees went up substantially. Ian noted this is the first of two one-year option years in the existing contract. He noted that he will be looking at inhouse alternatives for the following year. Mr. Kelly asked about the declining dues estimates between FY21 and FY23. Mr. Kelley noted that the FY21 revenue was impacted by the Commonwealth's COVID protocols which did not allow golfers to play without a membership. He noted that there had been more requests for memberships. Mr. Westort asked for an update on the irrigation system. Mr. Kelley said that the \$2.2M project will be higher now that a few years have passed and that the course will not take on new debt until it retires some of its existing debt. He commented that the over \$400,000 of the \$730,000 in retained earnings was being put back into the course as improvements. Mr. Westort was concerned that the irrigation system was at the end of its life and will impact future revenues if there is a drought. Mr. Kelley said he wanted the irrigation system updated and the approved project of connecting the two ponds will assist in addressing those needs. Mr. Kelley noted they need to see what the revenues will be before committing to more debt including the new restaurant lease.

Dept. 510 – Board of Health

Mr. Scheele thanked his staff for all of their dedication during the pandemic. He noted that his budget is basically the same as last year other than contractual salary increases. He stated that COVID is the number one issue right now relevant to his goals. Ms. Metro asked if his department was set up for the future based on the issues they are handling. Mr. Scheele said they had been stretched over the last two years but so had the other town departments. He said that when COVID is finally over, which will still take a while, the workload would return to normal. He provided the updated vaccination numbers and breakthrough cases to highlight the need for vaccination to finally address the COVID crisis. He noted they had offered booster clinics and would offer more to residents. He also commended the public health nurse, Eileen Scotti for her work during the pandemic. Ms. Metro asked who staffs the clinics and Mr. Scheele responded that they had medical corps, school nurses and EMTs. Mr. Westort asked where he could access the vaccination percentages and Mr. Scheele directed him to the [mass.gov/dph](https://www.mass.gov/dph) site for municipalities.

Dept. 541 – Council on Aging

Ms. Hayes provided highlights of the past year including the soft opening of the new senior center, the ribbon cutting in May 2021, and by June the residents were able to use the building as normal. She said the center very quickly became a busy place and the demand increased, especially exercise programs. She said residents are waiting at the door at opening in the mornings. She said the volunteers help at the front desk and in the lunch program. She noted that November was the highest month for usage to date including 2,587 check-ins, averaging 128 people per day, 1,000 check-ins for exercise and 210 came for lunches. She noted they are developing new classes and they have been allowing some additional use of the building such as the Veterans Day luncheon and the policemen's luncheon. She explained that classes were scheduled in rooms based on the number of signed up participants and she needs to take into consideration the available parking. They are trying some community meetings at night as well.

She noted that operational expenses are level funded to FY22 and she highlighted that the Facilities Department is paying the utility costs and providing custodial services. A new custodian for Recreation and the Senior Center was approved for FY22 in the Facilities budget but that position had not started yet. She noted the chef was doing well and that a kitchen assistant was needed in case of back-up and to provide additional assistance. She said the Launch and I-Excel program participants also help to set-up and clear after the meals.

She noted they had a new van for transportation services and it was funded fully from a grant.

Mr. Kelly asked about the number of the lunches provided per day. Ms. Hayes said they do limit it but they keep a waitlist and it is around 30-42 per day. Mr. Kelly asked how many lunches they provided in the old facility and she replied they did not offer daily lunches in the old facility, only special occasion luncheons limited to 50 persons. Ms. Seidel said she took a tour of the facility yesterday. Ms. Seidel asked if the classes were run by volunteers. Ms. Hayes responded that some were and other instructors were compensated from the fees charged. She noted the historical class was so desired that they had to meet in a larger room and will in future run additional sessions to keep the personal feel.

Mr. Westort asked why additional funding for staff was provided to the senior center and not to

the Library or Recreation. Mr. Boudreau stated that the main cost was for the lunch program and that was known all along.

Dept. 630 – Recreation

Ms. Glancy acknowledged the Assistant Recreation Director who was also at the meeting. Ms. Glancy praised her staff and stated she loved building at the other end of the Gates complex. She notified the members that Mr. C was retiring after 33 years and the annual Mr. C award was going to Bob Drew this year. Ms. Seidel asked about the \$20,000 line item in the Beach Revolving Fund for seaweed removal. Ms. Glancy noted that when this account was set-up in 2011 there had just been a major seaweed issue. It had not happened again but the line is left in place for other needs such as a sea gate repair.

Mr. Gilmore noted that he would be away for the first meeting in January.

Review of Agenda for 1/6/22 meeting

Ms. Holt noted that the Facilities Director and Fire Chief had requested to swap places on the Advisory Committee agenda. Facilities would now appear on 1/6/22 and the Fire Department would appear on 1/13/22. Ms. Holt stated she would revise the agendas and re-post them.

Ms. Russo asked if there had been any thought about liaisons. Mr. Gilmore asked to put that on the next agenda. Mr. Gilmore asked Ms. Holt to send out the liaison list again to the members.

Ms. Russo made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Ms. Seidel at 8:35 p.m.; the Committee voted unanimously in favor (6-0) by roll call vote; Mr. Gilmore-yes, Ms. Seidel-yes, Ms. Russo-yes, Mr. Westort-yes, Ms. Metro-yes, and Mr. Kelly-yes.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy Holt
Recorder