

TOWN OF SCITUATE
600 Chief Justice Cushing Highway
Scituate, Massachusetts 02066
Phone: 781-545-8716
FAX: 781-545-8704



**Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, December 9, 2020
Zoom Video/Audio Conference -- 7:00 pm**

Meeting conducted pursuant to the March 12, 2020 modifications to the Open Meeting Law made by Governor Baker pursuant to the state of emergency due to COVID-19.

Committee Members Present: Jerry Kelly; Chair, Jamie Gilmore, Lynda Ferguson, Missy Seidel, Elise Russo, Patrice Metro, Dan McGuiggin, Lincoln Heineman, Michael Westort,

Also in Attendance: Finance Director; Nancy Holt, Town Administrator; Jim Boudreau, SCTV Staff; Briana Trifiro SCTV, Seth Pfeiffer from SCTV, Recording Secretary; Alicia Anthony, Director of Assessing; Joseph Divito, Library Director; Jessi Finnie, Town Clerk; Kathleen Gardner, Director of Golf Course; Ian Kelley, Board of Health Director; Andrew Scheele, Director of Council on Aging; Linda Hayes, Recreation Director; Maura Glancy, Chairperson of Commission of Disabilities, Megan Sommer, Alison Steverman, Scituate Resident; Jennifer Kuhn

Committee Members Not In Attendance: None

Jerry Kelly called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Jerry Kelly made a motion to approve the agenda, which was seconded by Lincoln Heineman, and voted majority in favor (8-0) to accept the agenda as submitted by roll call vote; UNANIMOUS.

Jerry Kelly made a motion to approve the October 13th meeting minutes with amendments made by Lincoln Heineman, which was seconded by Jamie and voted majority in favor (6-0), Both Patrice Metro and Mike Westort abstained as they were not in attendance to at the mentioned meeting.

FY22 Budget Presentation:

• **Assessors (141) Joseph Divito, Jr., Director of Assessing**

Mr. Divito started off by stating that many of their goals and objectives are the same year in and year out. The tax levy is fairly responsible. Everyone pays fair share, no more or no less. Inspections, plans, and basic procedures were impossible to achieve this year. Mr. Divito stated that numerous inspections were still able to be done but there were no interior inspections after Covid hit. The department fell behind last year for obvious

reasons and will now be catching up with outside service. He said that the challenge they will face over the next two years is getting inspections done and feels it makes sense to be conservative with their projection.

Mr. Divito spoke on the department's accomplishments, stating that he is proud of his staff. They have stepped it up and are already seeing results from some new processes. He stated that there are always two sets of eyes, and all is double checked. The staff is going above and beyond and taking on double workloads. Mr. Divito also stated that he is very supported by Jim and Nancy and is happy with everyone at the town hall. A small cost saving to the budget, was to upload deeds directly from the Registry and attached to property cards. Saved \$700 in annual printing charges. Digital maps were done this year. Continue to work on making maps as accurate as possible.

- **Library (610) Jessi Finnie, Library Director**

Ms. Finnie started off by mentioning that as it has been a challenging year for everyone, she has found that she and her staff have had to adapt as well as change their business model three times over the course of the pandemic. First, they adapted to working remotely. When they returned to the building, they had to build up a curbside service and any elements that could be provided to residents while remaining closed to the public. Their biggest challenge was the reopening of the building in August, creating a safe environment for people to come in for materials. Ms. Finnie said that she feels they are fairly busy considering the huge drop off. There has also been a lot of staff moves within the library this year, leaving only one full time position that needs to be filled.

In regards to the goal to go a fine free library, Ms. Finnie said that it's become a pretty standard practice in the area's libraries. Lost and damaged items will still accrue charges, but the benefit to taxpayers and saving of staff time outweighs the lost revenue. Ms. Finnie also informed the committee that the prices are higher for leased digital books versus the traditional paper books. She said that downloadable Audio books are even more expensive, so being a part of a state wide library system that shares things stretches their budget dollars a lot.

- **Town Clerk (161) Kathleen Gardner**

Ms. Gardner started by saying that this already challenging election was made even more difficult with the pandemic thrown in as well. Scituate still had a record for highest turnout of 85.5% (13,665). Ms. Gardner stated that they worked hard to prepare for this and feels the staff did a great job. With the overwhelming response to the mail in early voting and return ballots, they had to have election staff come in and help out in the office prior to the election. Most of their budget was conducting of elections and town meetings. FY22 is only scheduled for Annual Town Meeting in May of 2021. There is a second night for the Annual Town Meeting budgeted in to be safe as they do every year.

Ms. Gardner said she feels her staff's accomplishments included being safe and working hard to follow through with instructions on running an election during a pandemic.

Future early voting was discussed and although this worked very well for the COVID restrictions all agreed that it would be a conversation worth taking further with the state representatives. The cost for this election was high, up about \$10,000, for early voting, although there were some grants given for this election.

- **Widow's Walk Enterprise (61) Ian Kelley, Director of Golf Course**

Mr. Kelly started by saying that although so many businesses were negatively affected by COVID, golf has grown again. Widow's Walk was shut down for the first few months of the pandemic and once reopened it was only at 66% capacity. As more people started to pick up the golf game again, Widow's Work was fortunate to net about \$225,000 at the end of last year. Since July 1, YTD, they are at \$200,000, ahead of any year over the last ten years.

Estimates for budgets were made going off with their current revenues are at and the fact that they still have three months to go.

The bids for the new clubhouse project are due back by the end of the month.

- **Board of Health (510) Andrew Scheele, Board of Health Director**

Mr. Scheele started off by thanking the board for letting him be here to present. He was happy to report that he has great staff at The Board of Health, as everyone has pulled together with the pandemic and hard times. Mr. Scheele stated that there have been four more cases just reported and said he will put in his report tomorrow. A lot of The Public Health Department have been restricted. Mr. Scheele closed by saying that the budget is up a little due to budget services.

- **Council on Aging (541) Linda Hayes, Director of Council on Aging**

Mr. Boudreau responded to Mr. Kelly's question regarding the future plans for the department versus what was presented in the budget, saying that Ms. Hayes has submitted this budget and he is reviewing currently. Ms. Hayes stated that she would like to bring in new programming in the new building and this would need more staff. She feels that these new programs would be a great way to get the information on residential seniors instead of this being given to The South Shore Elderly Services at a regional level.

Mr. Kelly spoke and said that he feels that when The Senior Center Project was voted on at The Town Meeting there were great intentions, as well as great intentions here, he said he just feels there is a disconnect from the funding. He then said that he thinks that to respect everyone's time, Ms. Hayes, Mr. Boudreau, and Ms. Holt need to sit down and come up with what they want to present to the committee. Mr. Kelly invited Ms. Hayes back to present to The Advisory Committee once they had the details nailed down.

- **Recreation (630) Maura Glancy, Recreation Director**

Maura started by saying that back when they closed down in March, knowing that summer, their biggest season was coming up, they held their breaths. Mr. Lombardo and Maura put their heads together and came up with a plan on how to make this work. On July 16th, two weeks earlier than normal, they opened the beaches and residents flocked and out of town stickers were sold out. Maura said that she was really proud of her staff, especially her lifeguards. July 5th was their next big date, when they opened up registration for programs, not knowing who would be comfortable with this year with the COVID guidelines in place. She then said that this year was such a great turnout and thanked her amazing staff. COVID has limited program participation which limited their funding as most of her income comes from the fee based programs. The tennis courts

were redone as their as so many people that want to be outside during these times and she feels it was a great decision based on the amount of use its been getting.

- **Commission on Disabilities (549) Nancy Holt, Finance Director**

Nancy Holt spoke on behalf of the commission. She said that it was a disappointment that the Third Annual Awareness Event was cancelled due to COVID. As of right now, the thinking is that they won't be able to hold this event until March of 2022. This is their big thing to bring all of the providers and constituents together so that they can find each other and be made aware of services they didn't know were available for them. The commission is still working hard, currently looking at the projects that were done this year, and budgeting for next year. They have been doing as much outreach as they can and meet monthly. Ms. Holt said that she fully supports this commission and all that they do for the Scituate residents, especially those who have a more difficult time accessing some of what the town has to offer. Mr. Boudreau spoke up and said that this commission has such a small budget but does such huge things for the community.

Other Business:

Mr. Boudreau said that the entire town is all doing their jobs and employees deserve a tremendous amount of credit for the service they've been giving. He said that everyone wants to provide as much as possible for the town, with the most safety possible.

Mr. Kelly made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:54 p.m. and voted majority in favor (8-0) by roll call vote; UNANIMOUS.