

TOWN OF SCITUATE
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Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 25, 2021
Zoom Video/Audio Conference - 7:00 pm

This meeting was conducted in compliance with Governor Baker's declaration of a public health emergency and the related Emergency Executive Orders; the Advisory Committee held the meeting via Zoom Video and Audio (Dial-for those with only phone access). All participants participated remotely.

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

Also in Attendance: Finance Director; Nancy Holt, Town Administrator; Jim Boudreau, SCTV ZOOM Facilitator; Seth Pfeiffer, Scituate Superintendent of Schools; William Burkhead, Scituate Director of School Finance and Business; Robert Dutch, South Shore Regional Technical High School Superintendent; Thomas Hickey, Water Resources Committee Chair; Becky Malamut, Waterways Commission Chair; Michael Gibbons and Capital Planning Committee Chair, Chris Carchia

Committee Members Not In Attendance: Lincoln Heineman, Jamie Gilmore

Mr. Kelly called the meeting to order and approved the amended agenda at 7:00 p.m. which was seconded by Ms. Metro and voted unanimously in favor (5-0) by roll call vote; Mr. Kelly-yes, Ms. Metro-yes, Ms. Seidel-yes, Ms. Russo-yes and Ms. Ferguson-yes.

Mr. McGuiggin joined the meeting.

Mr. Kelly asked that the members take a moment of silence to remember Michael Clark of the Capital Planning Committee that passed away on February 14, 2021.

Mr. Kelly made a motion to accept the minutes from the February 11, 2021 as amended which was seconded by Ms. Russo and voted in favor (6-0) by roll call vote; Mr. Kelly-yes, Ms. Metro-yes, Ms. Seidel-yes, Ms. Russo-yes, Mr. McGuiggin-yes and Ms. Ferguson-yes.

Mr. Kelly made a motion to accept the minutes from the February 27, 2020 as amended which was seconded by Ms. Russo and voted in favor (5-0-1) by roll call vote; Mr. Kelly-

yes, Ms. Metro-yes, Ms. Seidel-abstain, Ms. Russo-yes, Mr. McGuiggin-yes and Ms. Ferguson-yes.

Mr. Kelly made a motion to accept the minutes from the March 5, 2020 as amended which was seconded by Ms. Russo and voted in favor (4-0-3) by roll call vote; Mr. Kelly-yes, Ms. Metro-yes, Ms. Seidel-abstain, Ms. Russo-abstain, Mr. McGuiggin-yes, Mr. Westort-abstain and Ms. Ferguson-yes.

Mr. Westort joined the meeting.

Mr. Kelly made a motion to accept the minutes from the June 19, 2020 as amended which was seconded by Mr. Westort and voted in favor (5-0-2) by roll call vote; Mr. Kelly-yes, Ms. Metro-yes, Ms. Seidel-abstain, Ms. Russo-abstain, Mr. McGuiggin-yes, Mr. Westort-yes and Ms. Ferguson-yes.

Mr. Kelly made a motion to accept the minutes from the June 27, 2020 as amended which was seconded by Mr. Westort and voted in favor (4-0-3) by roll call vote; Mr. Kelly-yes, Ms. Metro-yes, Ms. Seidel-abstain, Ms. Russo-abstain, Mr. McGuiggin-yes, Mr. Westort-abstain and Ms. Ferguson-yes.

Mr. Kelly made a motion to accept the minutes from the November 16, 2020 as amended which was seconded by Mr. Westort unanimously in favor (4-0-3) by roll call vote; Mr. Kelly-abstain, Ms. Metro-abstain, Ms. Seidel-yes, Ms. Russo-abstain, Mr. McGuiggin-yes, Mr. Westort-yes and Ms. Ferguson-yes.

Discussion Article for Annual Town Meeting to amend Waterways General Bylaw Sections 30920 & 30930 - Waterways Commission Chair, Mike Gibbons

Mr. Gibbons stated that the Waterways bylaws had not been reviewed for many years and interest had been expressed in renting moorings. Currently under the bylaws, there is no ability for the Town or others to rent a mooring. The first proposed change would be to allow the Town to rent a transient mooring in Section 30920. Mr. Kelly asked about the private clubs and marinas and Mr. Gibbons said that the private entities provided a service to do that which was not considered a rental. The second change was to correct the title block of Section 30930 from "Decks" to "Docks" which is a typographical error that is being corrected. The final change is in Section 30930 in the first section of Section B to prevent someone from pulling into a town marina without first getting permission from the harbormaster. Currently the bylaws allow another boat to pull into a customer's slip for 60 minutes. The aim is to provide the harbormaster with oversight of the slips that are owned by the Town. Mr. Westort asked if the Harbormaster was in favor of these changes which Mr. Gibbons responded that Mr. Mone was in favor but was unable to attend the meeting.

Discussion Article for Annual Town Meeting to amend Water Conservation General Bylaw Section 30660 - Water Resources Committee Chair, Becky Malamut

Ms. Malamut explained that the Water Resources Commission is proposing an update to the Water Conservation section of the general bylaws by putting everything in one place and putting teeth into the bylaw. The first change was an increase in the fines. There is a clause in the bylaw now that allows the Town to shut-off the water. A requirement for registration for all in-ground irrigation systems is also included. The water restrictions are now assigned tier numbers to make it easier to understand. Mr. Kelly note that the Commission is codifying the different rules, increasing fines, putting restrictions on new irrigation systems and registration of new irrigation systems. Mr. Westort asked about the registration of existing in-ground irrigation systems and Ms. Malamut explained that it was to be able to map the location of these irrigation systems and whether they are served by private or public water supplies. Mr. Westort asked if anyone had just asked people for this information rather than require it. Ms. Malamut responded that other than private wells being permitted through the Board of Health and plumbing permits for new systems; they are not tracked. Ms. Russo asked about the filling of swimming pools. Ms. Malamut noted that it would be totally banned during the stricter levels of a water ban.

FY22 Budget Presentations:

South Shore Regional Vocational Technical High School – Superintendent Thomas Hickey

Mr. Hickey noted that the overall budget increase is 1.89% in the aggregate and a slight reduction for Scituate of \$16,000. Scituate's enrollment is 30 which is down by one from the prior year. The first round admission letters are just beginning to go out. Mr. Hickey said that the biggest driver in this budget is a capital project to replace windows in the 1992 addition. Mr. Hickey said they are maintaining their one to one device model and replacing some history textbooks. The horticulture program is in its fourth year and will be **graduation** its first class this year. Mr. Hickey reviewed some minor staffing changes included in the budget. Mr. Kelly asked about the historical enrollment of Scituate and Mr. Hickey said they have a robust outreach program with the town.

Mr. Hickey went on to discuss the debt authorization article which would provide some additional space and address infrastructure issues for \$18.9M. **Mr. Hickey explained the method for a regional school to borrow money which includes putting the matter before the eight communities for them to take action.** He gave the example of the 2010 roof project. Mr. Hickey noted that since 2018, he has been communicating to the member towns and the MSBA of the need for these changes through their facilities plan. He further noted that the district has been targeting small capital projects in the operating budget but those have now been exhausted and the remaining ones would cause a spike in assessments if included. The major portions of the project are modernizing the 1962 portions of the building including HVAC and roof. The approach is to get a full authorization from the member communities but borrow the funds incrementally and phase in the projects over the next five years. He forecasted that the capital line in the budget would decrease from its current \$900,000 level and the debt service would increase instead. Mr. Hickey explained that the calculation is to look at the three fiscal years

preceding the debt approval per the agreement. Scituate's share is approximately 7%. There will not be any impact to the FY22 budget and assessment if the article were to pass.

Ms. Russo asked how the rating agencies rate this offering when there are eight different communities. Mr. Hickey stated he did not have an answer to that specific question but his understanding is that they would look at the district. Mr. Westort asked if the 7% would be in addition to the assessment. Mr. Hickey responded it would be included in the single assessment. Mr. Westort asked the time period for the three year average applies and Mr. Hickey responded it would be a look back to the three previous October 1st enrollments that preceded the debt authorization. Mr. Westort noted that the member communities are paying less than tuition based students and it is also different between member communities. Ms. Ferguson asked what the member communities received for membership. Mr. Hickey replied that members had a seat at the table, transportation reimbursement and there is an admissions preference to accept all eligible students prior to tuition based students. The minimum local contribution under Ed Reform is what is driving the difference in per pupil costs among communities. Mr. Hickey noted that the Commonwealth put a **gap** on non-resident based tuitions which has not helped the disparity.

Scituate Public Schools – Superintendent William Burkhead and Director of School Finance and Business Robert Dutch

Mr. Burkhead reviewed the School Department's budget presentation by sharing his screen for a presentation. He noted there is additional staff to support student learning and increases in maintenance line items and a proactive maintenance plan. The staff changes included bringing five part-time positions to full-time (2.2 FTEs), one full-time nurse (1 FTE) and a new Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. A major change for FY22 would be to provide free full day kindergarten for all students. Mr. Burkhead stated that elimination of fees is one of his goals for the school system. He stated that these changes are supported by the additional funding available for the School Department for FY22. Mr. Burkhead also highlighted that the Coronavirus Relief Funds helped to address the HVAC needs of the schools allowing for many upgrades in that area as required due to the pandemic. Mr. Burkhead reviewed the enrollment statistics that there was a 126 student loss but expected to see them back next year and they were included in the budget.

Dr. Dutch explained that there was an additional \$2M available in funding from various sources in the forecast which is enabling the offering of free full day kindergarten and supporting a more comprehensive maintenance plan. He reviewed some of the allocation changes in the various sections of the budget to provide better cost center reporting. He noted the retirement of one teacher that will not be replaced. Mr. Kelly and Ms. Metro asked for confirmation whether there was a reduction in special needs teachers and Mr. Dutch responded no it was a re-allocation among lines. There would be a .7 FTE increase to allow for bringing in-house services that are now provided by consultants. He also noted that his budget presentation is showing the full cost of all services and showing any offsets at the end of the budget which is a change from previous budgets which only showed the expenses net of offsetting revenues. The new line item for the comprehensive maintenance plan was highlighted at \$125,000 which is new for this year. The private tuition was reduced due to some students moving out and others aging out. Mr. Westort

asked how many students were out of district or in collaborative programs and Dr. Dutch replied it was 55 students. Dr. Dutch moved onto a review of the offsetting revenues. He noted that the Title 1 is expected to go up by 50% due to the latest census data but it is not being incorporated until final amounts are received. Dr. Dutch reviewed the breakdown of the budget including 71.4% attributable to instruction and 8.66% to private school and collaborative tuitions. The per pupil expenditures for surrounding towns for the FY18-19 and FY17-18 years were provided and Scituate was in the middle of the pack and below the state average. The Scituate per pupil expenditure trend was increasing year over year.

Mr. Burkhead provided a summary of the district's accomplishments in 2020-2021 including the return to school plan, remote learning plan, commitment to safe buildings with HVAC upgrades and safety inspections, transparency and inclusion through increased communication and building cultural proficiency and promoting a culture that supports individual differences.

Ms. Metro asked if the decrease in enrollment was caused by an increase in private school enrollments. Mr. Burkhead stated this was an expressed concern and it is about 10% and he hopes to get those students back by providing a high quality education. Mr. Kelly and Mr. Westort expressed their thanks to the Mr. Burkhead and Dr. Dutch for their hard work and Mr. McGuiggin expressed his thanks for the sports programming being continued over the past year for the students.

Mr. Kelly asked Ms. Holt to provide information relevant to the recent bond issuance. Ms. Holt stated that the Town recently refunded the 2008 and 2011 bonds resulting on over \$500,000 of savings over the remaining 10 year life of the bonds. The Town also issued a \$2M bond and a \$4m **bon** anticipation note. The bond anticipation note included \$2M for the senior center project and 41.8M for the Cedar Point sewer replacement to be funded by betterments. She noted that these were not in the bond as the senior center had other funding sources that might be able to retire the note fully and that the Cedar Point project was still ongoing without **a** final costs and that betterments had not yet been assessed. She explained that the net interest cost on the new issuance and refunded bond was less than 0.5% and the bond anticipation note was approximately a net interest cost of 0.25%

FY22 Capital Plan Review – Capital Planning Committee Chair, Chris Carchia

Ms. Holt explained that Mr. Carchia had been notified of the meeting and that the Capital Planning Committee had voted in favor of the Town Administrator's recommended capital plan without any changes.

Mr. Kelly made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Ms. Russo at 8:41 p.m.; the Committee voted unanimously in favor (7-0) to adjourn by roll call vote; Mr. Kelly-yes, Ms. Russo-yes, Ms. Ferguson-yes, Ms. Metro-yes, Mr. McGuiggin-yes, Mr. Westort-yes, and Ms. Seidel-yes.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy Holt

Recorder