

TOWN OF SCITUATE
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Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 21, 2021
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, Elise Russo, Mike Westort, Jamie Gilmore, Dan McGuiggin, Lynda Ferguson, Missy Seidel, Lincoln Heineman, Patrice Metro

Also in Attendance: Finance Director; Nancy Holt, Town Administrator; Jim Boudreau, Recording Secretary; Alicia Anthony, SCTV Director; Seth Pfeiffer, SCTV Staff; Briana Trifiro, Town Planner; Karen Joseph, Director of Information Technology; Michael Minchello, Veteran Services Director; Don Knapp, Beautification Committee Chair People; Sytske Humphrey and Leslie Dienel, Historical Chair Person; Robert Chessia

Committee Members Not In Attendance: none

Jerry Kelly called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. which was seconded by Jamie and voted all in favor (9-0) by roll call vote; UNANIMOUS.

Jerry Kelly made a motion to accept the minutes from the January 7, 2021 and the minutes from the January 14, 2021 meetings, that was seconded by (???) and voted all in favor (9-0) by roll call vote; UNANIMOUS.

FY22 Budget Presentation:

- **Community Planning & Development**
 - **Planning (175) Karen Joseph, Town Planner**

Ms. Joseph said that they are working on their master plan and The Master Plan Advisory Committee is working with them. She stated that they are working on zoning before town meeting, saying that North Scituate Village Zoning Code Public Hearing is scheduled for 2/11 @ 7 p.m.

5% now at affordable housing, everyone required to be at 10%, five years ago we were in the low 4% range. In new construction there is a requirement for some affordable units. Ms. Joseph

then stated that the Front Street Situation, Scituate's main business area. Mr. Gilmore asked her what we are doing about it asked, to which Ms. Joseph said they're not doing anything as they're working on other places. Mr. Boudreau told Mr. Gilmore these questions didn't really have to do with zoning. Mr. Gilmore stated that he feels these are things that they should be involved with when North Scituate is getting a lot of attention and Front Street is not. Ms. Ferguson asked about other towns that have a bylaw where store fronts are taxed more to encourage them to lower rents/get businesses in. Ms. Joseph said that they haven't had time to look in to those issues as of yet but will put it on the department's list for next year. Mr. Kelly then said that on behalf of The Advisory Committee he would like to ask Ms. Joseph to Front Street. She responded to this stating that she'll talk to her committee about it at their next meeting. Mr. Gilmore spoke about the sign by laws and Ms. Joseph said the election signs aren't in this anymore. Mr. Kelly asked if Ms. Joseph would send Recording Secretary; Alicia Anthony an updated copy of the bylaws. Ms. Joseph agreed to have to Ms. Anthony by next Tuesday. Many of The Advisory Committee Members said they would also be in attendance at The Planning Board's February 11th meeting.

- **Information Technology (155) Michael Minchello, Director of Information Technology**

Mr. Minchello said network security is a constant worry. His department has also been doing a lot of migrations and upgrades and stated that that will continue.

Mr. Kelly stated that he knows that network security is discussed each year and mentioned that Mr. Minchello is always attempting to make it better. Mr. Kelly then brought up that it was decided to get rid of the copper phone system and move to fiber, and stated that he thinks he remembers last year even the email being an issue. Mr. Minchello agreed with Mr. Kelly and said that the department made some investments there and have almost completely finished migrating to Office 365. He said that the new goal is to move to a more efficient and more robust way of backing this all up using a new backup tool for the new email platform. Mr. Kelly stated that he feels Mr. Minchello did a great job highlighting the department's accomplishments and ongoing risks and then asked if the committee had any further questions. Mr. Kelly also stated that he feels Scituate is far more secure as a town now than before Mr. Minchello arrived in his Director position.

Mr. Westort then asked at what point do we stop, although he understands that the town is more secure now, when is the line for need versus want get drawn. He said that the department is up almost \$200,000 since last year. Mr. Westort again said that he understands that some hardware purchases were necessary as there hadn't been any in many years but said that he was also curious if this was going to continue to keep going up. Mr. Minchello responded to this question, stating that this will level off but that it's always going to change. Mr. Minchello went on to say that the vast majority of the security that has been implemented has actually had no cost to the town. He went on to say that there's been little cost incurred related to security, one instance being there were many grants won for

security alone. Mr. Westort then asked where Mr. Minchello sees this, to which Mr. Minchello answered, using computers as an example, stating that the goal is to change 20% of the computers every year. Microsoft licensing was the big expense last year due to the program not being supported anymore, making this upgrade mandatory across the world. He also added that hardware was another expense as there hadn't been an upgrade in technology in a while. Mr. Westort brought up that from 2020 to 2021 budgets, he sees that the department is up \$70,000, which he understands was for Microsoft Office, but going on to ask if this means that the extra \$70,000 needed to be spent each year going forward. Mr. Minchello responded saying that this was correct. Mr. Westort then asked about the suggested \$60,000 increase from 2021 to 2022, stating that this would total \$130,000 in just two years. Mr. Westort went on to say that he understands that security is a big thing but wonders at one point will these numbers level off. Mr. Minchello responded saying that this will level off but technology is always going to change. He said the technology used for security will change, and there may be some ups and downs substituting products. Mr. Minchello went on to say that unfortunately technology is always evolving and changing. This means he'd like to stay one step ahead of the adversaries but in a way that makes sense to the town. Mr. Minchello informed the board that the department usually carries \$13,000/year in capital outlay for computer replacements. He went on to say at that amount, we'd be lucky to get fifteen computers each year, and the town has over 200 computers. Since computers don't get ten years, the investment needs to be made. With the increase he is asking for, this still doesn't get the department to their goal of replacing twenty computers each year, but says we're catching up. Mr. Kelly then did the math based on the information Mr. Minchello had provided and came up with forty five computers each year needing to be replaced. Mr. Minchello agreed with this number and added on that the sixty Notebooks the town has, each cost one and a half times, what a desktop does. Mr. McGuiggin then asked what the typical lifespan of a notebook is. Mr. Minchello responded saying that technically it's less than a desktop but to go ahead and use the same ten year average. He also said that the cost of notebooks is more as you're paying to shrink the technology to fit in to them. Ms. Russo then asked if the \$63,000 increase is for the network security that he has been talking about. Mr. Minchello responded that it is and offered to run down the list to explain each of his expenses. He started off with Office Machine Maintenance and said he is anticipating a \$3,000 reduction due to some equipment that has come off of lease. Next, Mr. Minchello said that in Existing Contracts he's anticipating an increase of almost \$3,700. He said there are also maintenance contracts that need to be renewed for new purchases the town has recently invested in which he's anticipating to be around \$4,700. He next brought up that the town has spent over \$400,000 on new cameras, camera systems, and card access and the security system, going on to say that he has budgeted for \$16,000 to cover the support maintenance contract. Lastly, he brought up the \$30,000 for End Point Protection

that he hasn't yet spoke on. He said that this used to be called antivirus but there is much more to it now. The town's subscription is coming to an end next year, saying that the current product is very subpar, not doing a lot of what modern day protection does. Mr. Minchello stated that he is glad that this is expiring as we do need to replace it, making \$12,639 what would be needed to spend on a level service replacement. He then brought up the \$18,000 that is new to the budget that he is proposing, going on to say that \$5,000 of this would go to email backup, and \$12,900 of it would be for a network security sensor. Mr. Kelly responded to this saying that he knows we have all heard horror stories of municipalities being held hostage, that this seems like without the due diligence or investment, anyone would be leaving themselves wide open to cyber-attacks. Mr. Minchello agreed with this. Mr. Kelly added on that the committee would always like to spend less in IT but knows that the cost would be extreme. Mr. Westort asked Ms. Holt why the IT Department takes the expenses on rather than each department that has the equipment. Ms. Holt responded saying that it was agreed upon a few years ago that all maintenance agreements be consolidated in IT so that they don't expire. This way there is somebody who actually understands them and in charge of them all as these are vital to be taken care of. It's in IT's budget for them to pay as he can't spend someone else's budget.

Ms. Seidel then asked if the town has had any significant near misses, to which Mr. Minchello responded that his department does investigate near misses and that there is there has been nothing significant in our network. Mr. Minchello stated that he always says that it's not a matter of if we are breached, it's a matter of when we are breached and having enough tools and policies and procedures in place at that time as well as knowing what to do.

- **Veterans (543) Don Knapp, Veteran Services Director**

Mr. Kelly started off by saying that Mr. Knapp is looking to move in to the new Senior Center and out of The Town Hall and asked Mr. Knapp to fill the board in on what he is doing. Mr. Knapp spoke saying that The Department's big move is moving to the new facilities and getting up and running. This new space is going to make them more available and be able to help the veterans more. The bigger space will help to keep things more confidential and Mr. Knapp said that he is really looking forward to this. He went on to say that there are a lot of things he'd like to do once in there, some which he has included in his budget proposal. Telehealth private conference rooms are a huge thing especially with COVID. Going on to say that fully developed claims that go forward with a judge, there is now the capability for them to have their hearings in one of the conference rooms. Mr. Knapp stated that he thinks this move is going to be great for the town and the veterans. He then said that as far as accomplishments, their biggest was Cudworth, which they expanded saying that it was well overdue but going forward should be set for many years. Mr. Minchello said that his only worry is that with all of the state offices still closed down, he is still servicing all of the

town's clients to help them meet their needs, the state is working with him to ease some requirements to get them certified and their services continued. Mr. Kelly spoke up saying that under Chapter 115, it's been noticed that 75% these expenses are reimbursed by The Commonwealth, asking if the town pays the remainder. Mr. Knapp said that that was correct, the town receives a check every three months for the 75% portion, which includes all Veteran's Day gravesite flags. Ms. Russo then asked how many veterans the town is currently serving. Mr. Knapp said that it's been a task to get the exact number of veterans in the town. As an organization they have and continue to work with the state to try and capture every veteran in the town. The latest mailing just went out, when the responses come back they will try to use that list to update theirs, but said he does feel it's getting there. Mr. Knapp believes the last mailing showed 998 Scituate Veterans. He also brought up that they would also now be needing office supplies as they head to the new building which will be ordered and come from his budget. Ms. Holt chimed in that postage was also something that made his budget go up. Ms. Metro then asked regarding the \$120,000 that the department was going to be getting from the state, how many vets would be supported. Mr. Knapp responded that because this is under the state's Chapter 115, any veteran, dependent or widow of a veteran that needs assistance due to falling under the poverty line, will receive support for everyday living from his office if they qualify. Currently, the number is at 15, which could be individuals or families. Mr. Knapp added that this line also includes medical so that if a client qualifies, they help with medical bills which is a huge part of their budget.

- **Beautification Committee (650) Systke Humphrey & Leslie Dienel**

Ms. Dienel said she will present the financial parts and Ms. Humphrey will present most other parts. Ms. Dienel started off by saying 47% of their budget goes for contract labor, which has been Bill Morse Landscaping for the last three years but is going up for bid this year. She said that the current vendor was able to keep it under \$10,000 but she's doubtful that they'll be able to do that again. Ms. Dienel went on to say that 10% of the Committee's budget has been going to Ship Shape Day. Finishing to say that 34% goes to purchasing the plants and materials that are used for the merchants in The Harbor, North Scituate, Green Bush, and the adopt-a-lots around town. As of now, there are 24 merchants. Ms. Dienel stated that all of the plant material is bought through R&C Farms. Due to COVID, this was about \$1,500 less than prior years. She went on to say that the committee did not put any money in to the railroad islands this past year and expect to have to do so this year as it seems to work out to be every other year. Ms. Dienel stated that she also goes down to the town nursery and uses the town tax i.d. to get material more at cost. She stated that although limited last year from not being able to hold Ship Shape Day, they did finish the second phase of their project at The Town Hall, which ran about \$8,000 total between 2019 and 2020. At the committee's upcoming February meeting they plan to discuss more

projects that they'd like to do, saying that they have many ideas but have to reduce it down to a few. Ms. Humphrey then spoke and said that Ms. Dienel had hit on all of the important information. She said they are looking at 1 – 2 new projects and the committee will be voting on this. Ms. Humphrey said that there are about four areas in town that the committee is interested in looking at as well as spending money on Front Street to spruce things up in the spring and during the Winter Holidays. Mr. Westort asked if CPC funds could go towards any of their projects. Ms. Humphrey responded saying that she didn't think so but that they are very interested in CPC projects as well as collaborating with as many of the boards in town as possible. Ms. Dienel stated that she thinks projects need to be permanent to qualify for these funds. Ms. Humphrey said that the last two years, their main project has been plantings at the town hall as the committee feels that it should be the center piece of the town and wants citizens of the town to take pride in this building. This is why they chose to take action on this project first. She went on to say that the committee is also interested in The Health Department and are looking at The Library and The Safety Building. There are four buildings in town that they are interested in, but will not decide on where to go until their February meeting. Mr. Kelly complimented the committee saying this was a noble effort. Both women spoke up to say that they would really like to see the windows at the town hall painted. Mr. Kelly thanked the women again and stated that the town was happy with all their committee does.

○ **Historical (691) Robert Chessia**

Mr. Chessia started off by saying that they tried to keep their budget the same as it was last year because they understand that things are tight with COVID. He then mentioned that Dave Ball has retired and he is now taking over. Mr. Chessia stated that he has a list of things that need to get done and he tries to keep everything as cheap as he can. Mr. Kelly said that the one thing that scared him on their budget proposal was the powder post beetle damage at Cudworth saying that he assumes that this is something that we wouldn't want to continue. Mr. Chessia responded saying that they have Early Exterminators that come in, they were just in for mice, so he is hopeful that they'll take care of this issue. Ms. Russo asked about the Mordecai Lincoln House, saying that she knew this was in process of being purchased by the town, asking what Historical's role will be with that property. Mr. Chessia responded saying that this is not a property that Historical wants to take over because they have thirteen now that they are maintaining. He went on to say that historically The Mill is just an empty building and he assumes that the house will get rented out, but he doesn't think there is any role for them in this. Mr. Kelly then asked Ms. Holt who would be managing the property. Ms. Holt stated that at this time she doesn't have an answer as she believes this is still being worked out. Ms. Ferguson then asked Mr. Chessia if he knew if the historical sites would be open this summer. Mr. Chessia responded saying that they were going to try and hold things outside or

go through any of them in single lines. He went on to say that they have to wait and see what the state comes up with as they don't have the funds to put up plexiglass and all of the additional COVID precautionary procedures. He said that it's difficult with what they have but they did actually take a very small group when The Irish Consul General was here into The Irish Maritime and The Grist Mill. He said that they've been thinking if the town will let them, they would like to run The Grist Mill and have people come in and then go out of the back, as they believe that is the oldest Grist Mill in the country to still be running. He also said that the oldest recorded dam is the one at The Grist Mill. Mr. Kelly thanked Mr. Chessia for all he does and Mr. Chessia thanked the board for their support.

- **Finance Director/Town Accountant (135) Nancy Holt, Finance Director**
Ms. Holt started off by saying that the main drivers for cost increase in the department are in salaries. She said there is a \$9,000 increase which includes estimated contractual cost of living increases and step increases for everyone in the office. Ms. Holt said that she recently had a vacancy and is currently an office of one but will be having a new person starting on February 1st. She went on to say that it's time for the department's biennial post-employment liability actuarial study so that will go up approximately ten thousand dollars, which is what the department is budgeting for. Ms. Holt stated that these are the only increases on the department's financial side. Going on to say that other than that, it's the same as all of the other departments and they are just dealing with the new reality due to COVID. Mr. Kelly asked if there were any FEMA updates and Nancy replied that they have had two or three FEMA Elevation Grants that Kyle has been working on that have paid out so that the homeowners have been reimbursed and the last two have had an administrative cost to them so it's not a lot of money, a few thousand dollars, but that is the federal money that we're taking in currently other than The Corona Virus Relief Funds.

Petition Article/Water Conservation Mandates and Rebate Program

Stephanie Burke was introduced to the board. Mr. Kelly informed Ms. Burke that last year, the town considered a water restriction petition from a citizen the name of Bemke. This was to halt construction until the water issue was addressed. He went on to say that last week, the board spent a considerable amount of time talking about the town's water supply, the challenges, new sources of water and conservation, fines and everything else, to prove that we spend a fair amount of time talking about water. Mr. Kelly then asked Ms. Burke to talk to the board about her desired conservation efforts as well as any other areas of municipality in The Commonwealth that have embraced this concept. Ms. Burke started off by saying that there are two parts to this; one being the rebate and the other the mandate. She said that the mandate part of this would come in as the fact that as there are people doing upgrades all of the time, and in 1994 the water standards were changed to go from 3.5 gallon per flushes to 1.6, but now what is hitting the market is the 1.28 gallon flush. This would encourage people that are going to switch out their toilet, if there is a building upgrade, or a remodel happening, it would make sure they are going that extra step of making the purchase of the 1.28 GPF Fixture. Ms. Burke said that the mandate

side of this does give an expiration date of twenty years out from now hopefully having people have already switched over to the 1.28. She went on to say that she went with The Water Sense EPA Standards for a couple of reasons. One being that this would allow the town to apply for more grants and possibly get more finances to fund a rebate program. The second reason being that they're stricter than the current fixture requirements of federal but they're also less strict than some of the ones being done in California or Oregon. This had Ms. Burke thinking that this was a happy medium. Ms. Burke said that she spoke to DPW and was told that about 75% of Scituate residents are still using the 5 – 6 GPF. She went on to say that a family of four would save about 27,000 gallons of water per year. Next saying that if a rebate program could be created to incentivize families that could save millions of gallons of water. Ms. Burke agreed that \$50,000 is a lot of money but in ten years when the town as a whole has saved 135 million gallons of water, we still would only have spent that \$50,000. She said that every town in Massachusetts has structured their program differently. Ms. Burke said she spoke with Mr. Cafferty and he made a great suggestion, if Scituate is allowed to do this, add to the petition "pending funding" so that it doesn't require for this to pass and if there isn't a rebate program the first year, there's not. She also said there have been towns that use the money saved to fund the program. Ms. Burke said that The Water Resource Commission has also discussed that if their fines pass that may be a way to fund this program as well. All of this is contingent on these being passed. She also said that overall there are two parts to this because she thinks there are a lot of citizens in Scituate who may consider switching out their fixtures and once they find out that there's a rebate and they can afford it, to see the savings on the other end. Ms. Burke finished up by saying that she had reached out to Matt at the hardware store and they spoke about the possibility of creating a program or rebate that incentivizes people who shop through the local hardware store which is another avenue to create flexibility and local revenue. Mr. Gilmore asked how this would apply to Scituate's facilities and public buildings. Ms. Burke responded saying that within the mandate she has a commercial, a multi-family and a single family residence breakdown. She went on to say that there aren't any rebates for town buildings but said that this is just to incentivize if there's going to be a toilet that needs to be replaced. Mr. Gilmore then asked if she applied the mandate side of this to the town as well to which Ms. Burke said yes. The board agreed that this was a good idea and thanked Ms. Burke.

Other Business:

Mr. Kelly reminded the board that they are scheduled to meet next week on January 28th and then not again until February 25th as it was anticipated that there would be far worse weather than we've actually received. At next week's meeting we will be hearing from Conservation, Zoning, Economic Development, and Inspections. Mr. Kelly went on to say that the board is going to have to use a week to hear from The Council on Aging/Senior Center. He then asked Ms. Holt when she suggests that be done. Ms. Holt stated that The MMA Conference is going on currently (today and tomorrow) and this will give a look towards the governor's feeling for his state aid in his budget as well as our health insurance. She went on to say that with this information, Financial Forecast can then hold another meeting and see if there are then any adjustments to their forecasts that need to be made. From there, Ms. Holt said, we can then look at The Council on Aging budget. A week from Thursday, they should probably have an update to which Mr. Boudreau agreed. It was left that the February 4th meeting would be scheduled and would be cancelled if needed. The Council on Aging will be done with CPC on March 4th if it can't work for the possible February 4th date.

Mr. Heineman then asked Ms. Holt where the town is in the five year assessing reevaluation. Ms. Holt informed him that there was just a reevaluation two years ago so there is still a few years to go.

Mr. Kelly made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m. which was seconded by Elise Russo and voted all in favor (9-0) by roll call vote; UNANIMOUS.