

TOWN OF SCITUATE



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**Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 6, 2020
Community Room, Scituate Public Library
7:00 pm**

Committee Members Present: Jerry Kelly, Chair; Mike Westort, Vice Chair; Andrew Goodrich; Lincoln Heineman; Jamie Gilmore; Patrice Metro; Elise Russo; Lynda Ferguson

Committee Members not present: Dan McGuiggin

Also in Attendance: Nancy Holt, Finance Director; Jim Boudreau, Town Administrator; Ron Griffith, Superintendent Scituate Public Schools; Paul Donlan, SPS Business Director; Tom Hickey, Superintendent South Shore Vocational VTHS; Jack Manning, South Shore Vocational VTHS; Peter Gates, liaison from School Committee; Chris Carchia, Capital Planning Committee; Bob Sanderson, Widows Walk Golf Committee

Jerry Kelly called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM

Jerry Kelly made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Lincoln Heineman; Unanimous Vote (6-0)

Jerry Kelly made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 16, 2020 meeting, with non-substantive changes, seconded by Lincoln Heinemann; Unanimous Vote (6-0)

Opening Remarks:

Last night doing budget. Then review articles. CPC has offered to take us on tour Mordecai Lincoln. They can do a tour this Sunday. Jerry will send email. Need to post meeting.

Jerry said that there were two upcoming Planning Board Meetings:

February 13: First Public Hearing regarding Section 810.0 and Section 830
February 27: Second Public Hearing regarding Sign Bylaw Section 710

Departmental Budget Reviews:

Capital Plan and Review

Chris Carchia, chairman capital planning committee

- 9 meetings this year. Reviewed about 60 projects from all departments
- 34M requested. Capital recommended about 21M

- 4 requests modified – **parking lot Minot Beach** – repair and adding spaces currently paved
- **DPW public grounds** requested \$45,000 to replace pick-up truck. Instead would put toward log chipper. Voted apply that \$45,000 plus \$10,000 from other places for log chipper
- **Widow's walk** – \$1,400,000 original request – prior to completing financials. Final request \$1,817,000, capital unanimously recommended that. Phase 1 – clubhouse improvements, phase 1 of 3 phase project. What is outside deck, becomes inside space, wrap around deck added. Move bathrooms. Improve kitchen. Make ADA accessible. Improved parking in another phase. Not final numbers. Still trying to work numbers down. Design concepts shared.
 - o Question from Mike about planning for locker rooms not being included. Explanation is that it is not what the community wants for the expense it would incur. Looked at plans including locker rooms, would mean expanding footprint. Went with concept that did not change footprint.
 - o Next phase parking lot and working on course
- Jamie – clarification – repairs and replacements not recommended? Not making repairs to water treatment – allocated \$4,000,000 to build new plant, so not repairing old one unless absolutely necessary. Fiber connection – we received \$200,000 state grant for that. Water plants not close enough.
- Permitting software will be decided by the new Development Director.
- Foreshore repair from FEMA, LEDPA working with FEMA, CZM and MEMA about 3rd cliff. Still needs environmental assessment. At least a year out, but at least finance in place. Egypt Beach berm should be in this FY 2020. 3rd Cliff is 75% reimbursable. Of the \$13,000,000, 25% long term borrowing. We are not going to borrow anything until FY 2021.
 - o Net cost should be \$3,250,000 . Maybe even better if get a grant.
- High school locker rooms – part of 1 phase of gym renovation. Top priority is what is being proposed.
- Andrew – back to Wampanoag School portico – can we see inspection report? Stands under it twice a day. How do we know not safe if no inspection., it has been moved several times. Hangs over, gets hit by delivery trucks. Neil has looked at it, never put in writing. It's not going to fall down, but need to replace it. Need to move it back to curb, so does not overhang.
- Sewer – \$4,900,000 requested, \$300,000 is just the design portion.
- Lincoln – sewer has such – with fiscal constraints (210K) 0 Nancy - can't run amnesty on capital projects. On public lines. Oceanside is completely separate project. I&I, like manholes, since cannot do amnesty.
- Jerry – asked Jim, what is your recommendation. Trying to catch up to maintain buildings. Foreshore is a lot of it.
- Wampanoag Portico. Needs to come down. More detail from school department - Cushing and Hatherly ES eventually go, Wampanoag is staying, with current recommendation.
- \$100,000 pump – trying to get grant – at boat ramp.
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- Water Department – \$200,000 for ice pigging. Company that did it, no longer doing it. Requested take \$200,000 and apply to water meter replacement program. Capital is recommended that transfer.
- Wireless smoke detectors – \$50,000

Commented [JK1]: Jen please check with Nnacy

Commented [JK2]: Please ask Nnacy

- Humarock Firehouse – this is final of 3 phases. This is the final phase – the quarters.
- Jamie thanked Chris for his service on the committee

Scituate Public Schools

Ron Griffin, Superintendent, &

- 3000 students and 500 employees. 2 recommendations above service
- Increase new special education
- Plan for next 5 year – want to link budget to students and top 5 priorities,
- Discussed Enrollment projections
- Page 9 of report – executive summary of costs. Personnel is the largest cost. Contractual services – cost outside of staff; materials and supplies; \$44,000
- **Beyond level services** – \$110,000 expansion of special education currently only in elementary, but need to extend to Middle School as students age up.
- Referred to Retirement estimates in report
- Page 10 – spending is proportionate
- Jerry – are we accounting for custodial differently – yes – had been buying supplies by building. now consolidating purchasing on district level. Explained error in where money shown different place for different schools
- Page 17 – discussed large scale costs –
 - o Bus lease – some fluctuation – historically community capital purchases. Moved to leasing, because we need buses, can't let that expense pile up. So then does not need to go to capital each year. Offset, so budget neutral. conversation about what is needed regarding busing for students.
 - o Average cost per student has increased – the number students less, needs are more for special education needs. In FY20 did not project correctly. Needs were more acute. Were more conservative with this projection. Scituate Public Schools are one voice at IEP table, not completely in control of cost. Transportation is separate number. Transportation cost has not changed, but service needed has increased.
 - o Jerry – supports that out of district services are needed. Families need it. Surprised don't have stabilization fund to address it. Ron – page 18. This is the suggestion. Mike – who pays into fund? Ron – not enterprise fund. School does not have savings. Community does. Important to have stabilization fund, so if have spike in cost, such as increased cost in special education, don't have only one year to absorb cost difference. Nancy – would use free cash, currently.
 - o Mike - 9% of budget for 47 kids – at what point are we sacrificing the majority for the SPED students? Ron- It is a federal law to provide services to kids. Again – stabilization fund – that way you don't only have a one year notice of need, so less sacrifice to budget. Mike – concern is cost went up 44% in one year. Seems untenable. Ron – conversation needed at federal level. More complex now than it was decades ago. Opportunity to talk to state officials. Patrice – although required, whatever needed, needs to happen – can we be comfortable that they are providing service at justifiable cost? Make sure someone is not making money from this, vs money going to service for kids. Ron – there is oversight. In many cases, they are the only service provider. Reminder, cost increase is based on increased need, not increased tuition.
 - o Jerry – recognized and introduced – Peter Gates– 39 Persimmon Dr – liaison from school committee to Advisory committee – to the point of stabilization fund

– that is estimate of what expect to be next year. What have currently, plus estimating 2 – 3 additional students. If all is not needed, that extra not spent, should be put in stabilization fund.

Commented [JK3]: Please check with Ron. Does this refer to students?

- Ron – typically – \$250,000-350,000 is what typically see in stabilization funds.
- Andrew – sending students out of district, seems stressful to families – has there been talks from other communities trying to retain the students in the system?

Ron – looks at pg 19 – currently exist opportunities for students to stay in town. Named programs for students who would typically go out of district. Would like to expand GEMS program to Middle School. Currently only at elementary school level. Some programs cannot build to meet the needs though.

- State and federal grants and offsets explained
- METCO, about 30 students. Mentioned history of program in Scituate.
- Change in circuit breaker numbers - Mix of students currently – explained cost breakdown. Would expect FY22 to be better.
- Mike - How come up with per pupil cost? End of year report takes everything into account. MTRS, healthcare.
- Offset – page 25 – \$1,200,000 from fees
- Bus fees – explained fees, they offset cost, don't 100% cover
- HS students pay for parking sticker – that money goes to town. Offsets other costs effecting schools.
- Page 30 – executive summary. Keeping balance until March timeframe, then School Committee will vote on budget.
- Lincoln – should have budget 90 days in advance of Town Meeting. School committee voting 5 weeks before town meeting, is how they do it, but please ask them to please follow the charter. When increasing every year, ultimately not sustainable – what is the plan. Ron – contractual costs alone go up 2.5%, that is not anything new being provided.
- Andrew – going from 2015 to this year 30% increase, but down 170 students. Ron – the programs are more expensive. The 2015 budget process was different superintendent – different numbers included – grants not included, for example. This budget includes everything in and everything out.
- Lincoln – Portico – can we just take it down. Ron – yes, could, of course, but use it for little kids 4 months of the year.
- Lincoln – \$80,000 for vans – explained why lease and not buy sped vans.
- Jerry asked - Circuit breaker and partial reimbursement – Don – circuit breaker – state paid for schools. 72% in rear additional needs needed in FY2019.
- District services – services across district. District has own fleet and staff for buses, which provides much flexibility.

Commented [JK4]: Please check with Ron

- Jerry – spike in cost of materials – Ron – FY20 had increased need special needs testing. Made significant purchases. This year, will be spent on out of district materials.

South Shore Regional VTHS

8 towns. First town to present to.

Tom Hickey & Jack Manning

Tom – Thanked Scituate for support from town. Enrollment for current class down, had large graduating class. Fluctuating is normal. Looking for 200K less than last year, but could go up next year. Capital numbers have gone up recently. Well maintained, old building. Needs to

repair septic, roof, and other large ticket numbers. Doing their job regarding goals of preparing students for career. \$782,414 of capital request, only \$22,500 for instruction. Rest is septic, roof, window, and grounds. Outside firm put together report showing \$12,000 for maintaining. Would like to get plans done, so ready to do work, maybe even in FY22 – would like work done over summer. Trying to plan accordingly to hit that timeframe. Scituate's share of capital is about 7.5%. These numbers based on 3 previous years. Over \$1,000,000 in stabilization fund. So don't have to borrow the whole thing.

Could use 24,000-45,000 additional sq ft. Maybe do small addition, without triggering having to update everything to code.

Roof of 1992 addition and septic priority over other items.

Debt from roof replacement of older section paid off early.

Mike – why don't we just go out of district? Would it be cheaper for Scituate that way? Answer – capped at 125% of resident tuition. Admission policy, transportation for towns in district for school. Non resident has to transport own kids. And Governance - having representative.

Explained that numbers are in proportion to enrollment.

Andrew - is there a wait list. Yes – about 25 on wait list last year. Not sure how many were for Scituate. Try to accept as many as possible. 320 applications for freshmen class last year, that is typically about 170.

Has 3 programs that are not heavy equipment programs. They could be located in rooms that don't need 12 ft ceilings. If we targeting spot, relocate those courses, then could expand programs that require space. Even for kids who get into school, there is not enough space for all the want electrical. Reviewed history of when consolidated from 2 locations to one location, made sense for many reasons, many years ago. Another option, would be collaboration and funding, could run programing for evening specialized training.

Follow-up:

- Invite Golf Committee to attend next meeting. Nancy will email them. They replied and will attend next meeting.
- Tour of Mordecia Lincoln property

On-going Items:

- Jerry would like to have Plymouth Country Retirement come in and justify their fees and their investment plans.
- Jamie asked Sytske Humphrey, Vice President of the Beautification Commission if she could make a list of the areas in Scituate that needed improvement.
- Security Upgrades to Town Facilities, Jim said he would get the break down.

**Jerry Kelly made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Lynda Ferguson;
Unanimous Vote (6-0)**

