



**Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, December 7, 2023**  
**Zoom Video/Audio Conference – 7:00 pm**

*Pursuant to Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2021, Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2022, Chapter 107 of the Acts of 2022 and Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023; Scituate Advisory Committee Members held the December 7, 2023 meeting via Zoom Video and/or Audio (Dial-in for those with only phone access). All participants participated remotely.*

**Committee Members Present:** Elise Russo, Chair; Lynda Ferguson; Missy Seidel; Marc DiCosimo; Patrice Metro and Jerry Kelly

**Committee Members Not in Attendance:**  
Mr. McGuiggin, Mr. Gilmore and Mr. Doherty

**Also in Attendance:** James Boudreau, Town Administrator; Nancy Holt, Finance Director/Town Accountant; Seth Pfeiffer, SCTV Director; Stephen Mone, Harbormaster; Mike Dimeo, Shellfish Constable; Kevin Kelly, Facilities Director and Pam Avitabile, Treasurer Collector

Ms. Russo called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

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

*Ms. Ferguson joined the meeting.*

**Mr. Kelly made a motion to accept the minutes of the November 30, 2023 meeting as amended which was seconded by Ms. Seidel. The minutes were voted majority in favor (5-0-1) by roll call vote; Ms. Russo-yes; Ms. Ferguson-yes; Ms. Seidel-yes; Mr. Kelly-yes; Ms. Metro-abstain and Mr. DiCosimo-yes.**

*FY25 Departmental Budget Reviews (full FY25 budget available at [final\\_fy25\\_budget\\_website.pdf](#) ([scituatema.gov](#)))*

*Waterways Enterprise/Harbormaster (Dept 298) – \$1,168,897 - Stephen Mone, Harbormaster*  
Mr. Mone advised members that the Cole Parkway Marina project was completed and they were

now moving onto a dredging project in various areas of the harbor working with Woods Hole Group with a grant for permitting from the Seaport Economic Advisory Council (SEAC). He said the borings are now being tested. He stated he filed a second grant application for improvement to the Harbormaster's Building including accessibility through the SEAC. He said any future project would be supported through grants and Waterways enterprise funds. Ms. Russo asked if the dredging projects included the South River. Mr. Mone responded it was for the harbor. Mr. Mone advised that there is another grant filed by Mike DiMeo, Marshfield Harbormaster, for a joint dredging project on the South River. Mr. Mone noted some adjustments on the permit to reflect the actual area of the Scituate Maritime marina.

Mr. Mone stated they are maximizing revenue through the marinas including the addition of three commercial moorings and renting out to transient boaters assisted through the Dockwa mooring slip and registration system. Mr. Mone stated the budget was level service with increases in insurance and supplies. He noted the positive response to the Cole Parkway marina project including packed grounds for Santa's visit. He stated the de-icers had been deployed. Ms. Russo asked about revenue for the pump-out program and Ms. Holt and Mr. Mone responded.

Mr. Kelly asked why the slip and dinghies were down and Mr. Mone responded that some slips were lost during the Cole Parkway marina project and some are held vacant due to litigation. Ms. Seidel asked why all the revenue sources were down between 2022 and 2023 and Mr. Mone stated they lost some slips but gained finger length to accommodate larger vessels. Ms. Seidel asked if the revenues would rebound and Mr. Mone said yes. Ms. Ferguson commented that 2022 was a peak after the pandemic and 2023 is the start of the leveling off.

Ms. Russo asked about the lease receipts. Mr. Mone responded that it was due to Scituate Boatworks not paying their additional amount within the fiscal year as they had not filed their corporate taxes upon which the calculation is based. An adjustment is being made this year to make quarterly payments of the additional amount.

*Shellfish (Dept 295) – \$8,800 - Mike DiMeo, Shellfish Constable*

Mr. DiMeo noted the Briggs Harbor aquaculture program is underway and the oyster farms have been growing since August. He noted that the recreational shellfishing opened in the North & South River in November. He stated 160 bushels of quahogs were added to the rivers through the Town of Marshfield and more to come next year. He stated so far this year the Rockland Sewer Plant has not caused problems resulting in closure of the flats. He noted the changes to the shellfish placard system and notification of pollution within four hours from neighboring wastewater plants. He informed members that Scituate and Marshfield have a reciprocity agreement that a permit in one town can be used in either town. He said that permit holders now provide an e-mail address which enables the towns to communicate changes, closures and upcoming events.

Mr. Kelly asked the location of the three oyster farmers. Mr. DiMeo said they are in sub-tidal water in Briggs Harbor, north to northwest of the Glades, and they are difficult to see unless there is a negative tide. It is a three acre area with each farmer having one acre. Ms. Seidel asked if the three acres is the extent that can be used and Mr. DiMeo said the area is over 100

acres but it is an isolated area. He noted it is a pilot program and good for water quality. Ms. Seidel asked if there had been a harvest yet and Mr. DiMeo said it takes two years to mature and depends on the age when they are seeded.

*Facilities (Dept 410) – \$1,511,112 - Kevin Kelly, Facilities Director*

Mr. Kelly informed members that new generators had been installed at the library and Highway barn campus and all of the buildings have been tied into a single server for the building maintenance system. He stated the gazebo had been refurbished with town staff and the help of a volunteer. He stated he has filled the vacant Facilities administrative assistant position and the HVAC technician has been onboard for about seven months freeing up others for other projects that had started to fall behind. He noted he is on the School Building Committee and he is working on addition service contracts. He noted the budget increased in fuel, contractual salaries, utilities and equipment. He stated they were watching the increased costs for service agreements and that line item will be monitored.

Ms. Ferguson asked about the energy rates that the town currently follows for energy aggregation. Mr. Kelly stated that there is an agreement and Ms. Holt stated that the Select Board voted to follow the same program that residents are enrolled for energy aggregation. Ms. Ferguson expressed concern that the rate was higher and Ms. Russo said it fluctuates. Ms. Metro noted that any change should be monitored closely and Mr. DiCosimo said the rates change based on lock-in periods as well. Ms. Russo asked if the Select Board would have to initiate that change and Ms. Holt said yes. Mr. DiCosimo asked why the FY24 budget numbers for electricity were lower than the FY23 actuals. Mr. Boudreau noted that the rates had come down since last year. Mr. Kelly commented that some bills were grouped under one cost center and moved to another as well as looking at energy conservation measures.

Ms. Seidel asked about the interaction with enterprise fund departments. Mr. Kelly stated that with increased staffing, he was now able to lend his experience and attention to the facility needs of these departments.

*Scituate Cable TV (Dept 159) – \$229,097 – Seth Pfeiffer, Cable TV Director*

Mr. Pfeiffer reminded members the SCTV budget is supported by Comcast through customer fees and a franchise fee through a contract which expires in 3-4 years. The funds are put in a dedicated revolving fund which has a balance of \$2.5M and should the Comcast contract end, this will keep the department functional for a period of time. He noted the department spends wisely and conservatively. He noted that the demands on the department due to changes from the pandemic are reflected in the personnel costs for hybrid and remote meetings. He noted the issues with hybrid meetings and that new technologies may assist. He also noted the new AI components available in the ZOOM application.

Ms. Russo asked about the reduction of the \$150,000 in the equipment line. Mr. Pfeiffer responded that due to the uncertainty of the pandemic meetings resulted in more equipment purchases and uncertainty. Ms. Metro asked about the new technologies coming forward. Mr. Pfeiffer responded that additional cameras and microphones for hybrid meetings. Ms. Ferguson commented that the hybrid meetings are difficult and she also applauded Mr. Pfeiffer's coverage of events throughout town. Ms. Seidel asked about revenue for FY23 and Ms. Holt responded

that it appeared to be just the first quarter amount for FY23 rather than the full year amount.

*Treasurer Collector (Dept 145) – \$492,376 – Pam Avitabile, Treasurer Collector*

*Tax Foreclosures (Dept 158) – \$39,000 – Pam Avitabile, Treasurer Collector*

Ms. Avitabile commented on both budgets stating that 30 tax title parcels were redeemed in the prior year and seven so far in FY24. She informed members that 18 foreclosed land parcels were auctioned in FY23. She stated that they were expanding wellness programs and received a grant from MIIA for \$25,000. She praised the new permit software as she was able to sign off that taxes were paid. She noted that credit cards were now able to be used at the counter and she was seeking the highest interest rates available including treasuries. She noted the sticker sales have stayed high since the pandemic and they are looking at changes to the non-resident stickers. She noted the only concern was the Supreme Court decision on a Minnesota tax foreclosure case that could impact Massachusetts proceeds from the sale of tax foreclosed properties.

*Debt Service (Dept 720) – \$7,989,583 – Pam Avitabile, Treasurer Collector*

Ms. Avitabile stated that debt service is kept level funded as much as possible. She commented that a \$7M bond was sold last week at a 3.51 true interest cost for a 20 year obligation bond with 14 bids received.

Ms. Russo asked if the debt exclusion debt was \$7M and if that was the full amount outstanding.

Ms. Holt responded it was over \$100M and the \$7M was just principal and interest for FY25.

Ms. Russo asked about concerns on the credit rating. Ms. Avitabile noted the AA+ was affirmed but the town had sought to be rated higher. Ms. Russo asked the reasons S & P stated for why the town was not higher rated and Ms. Avitabile stated the unfunded retirement liability and the level of reserves. Mr. DiCosimo asked about the rate spread and Ms. Holt responded 3.51-3.83%

*Plymouth County Pension Assessment (Dept 911) – \$7,722,480 – Pam Avitabile, Treasurer Collector*

Mr. Kelly asked about the funding level for Plymouth County Retirement and Ms. Avitabile responded 68% funded. Mr. Kelly asked about the OPEB funding level and Ms. Avitabile responded that additional funds were added to the account bringing it to \$3M and the unfunded liability was \$74M. Ms. Avitabile informed members that she is now on the Plymouth County Retirement Board.

*Contributory Group Insurance (Dept 914) – \$7,662,346 – Pam Avitabile, Treasurer Collector*

Ms. Avitabile stated an estimated 10% was reflected in FY25 and that other options were being investigated with MIIA.

*Federal Taxes (Dept 916) – \$917,625 – Pam Avitabile, Treasurer Collector*

Ms. Avitabile stated it is an estimate 4% increase due to cost of living and step raises.

*Other Business*

Ms. Holt stated the next meeting will be at the library on December 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Mr. Kelly made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Ms. Metro at 8:20 p.m.; the Committee voted unanimously in favor (6-0) by roll call vote; Ms. Russo-yes; Ms.**

**Ferguson-yes; Ms. Seidel-yes; Mr. Kelly-yes; Ms. Metro-yes; and Mr. DiCosimo-yes.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy Holt  
Recorder