

TOWN OF SCITUATE
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Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 6, 2022
Zoom Video/Audio Conference – 7:00 pm

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, Scituate Advisory Committee Members held the January 6, 2022 meeting via Zoom Video and/or Audio (Dial-in for those with only phone access). All participants participated remotely.

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

Committee Members Not in Attendance:
Lincoln Heineman

Also in Attendance: James Boudreau, Town Administrator; Nancy Holt, Finance Director/Town Accountant; Michael Minchello, Director of Information Technology; Kevin Kelly, Facilities Director; Mark Thompson, Chief of Police; Barbara DeWolfe, Communications Director; Don Knapp, Director of Veterans Services; Systke Humphrey, Beautification Commission; Leslie Dienel, Beautification Commission; Robert Chessia, Scituate Historical Society; Seth Pfeiffer, SCTV.

Mr. Gilmore called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Kelly made a motion to accept the agenda which was seconded by Ms. Seidel and voted unanimously in favor (6-0) by roll call vote; Mr. Gilmore-yes, Ms. Seidel-yes, Ms. Russo-yes, Mr. Kelly-yes, Mr. McGuiggin-yes and Ms. Ferguson-yes

Mr. Westort joined the meeting.

Mr. Gilmore called for a motion to accept the minutes of the December 16, 2021 meeting which was made by Ms. Russo seconded by Mr. Kelly. The minutes were voted in favor (5-0-2) by roll call vote for December 16, 2021; Mr. Gilmore-yes, Ms. Seidel-yes, Ms. Russo-yes, Mr. Westort-yes, Mr. Kelly-yes, Mr. McGuiggin-abstain and Ms. Ferguson-abstain.

Ms. Metro joined the meeting.

Review of FY 2023 Departmental Budgets

Dept. 155 – Information Technology

Mr. Minchello highlighted the implementations of fiber ring, wireless access, online permitting and security upgrades in the prior year in addition to the work on the new senior center and fire station 4 (Humarock). His goals are to improve security, expand the VoIP phone system and replace the core network switches. Mr. Kelly asked the type of switches that had reached end of life and the replacement switches. Mr. Minchello stated they were replacing Cisco switches with X-treme due to cost factors. Mr. Gilmore asked for more information relevant to the new personnel in the budget. Mr. Minchello explained there were over 200 users and eight unique entities and they are currently backed up on support calls and are unable to address preventative network and security updates as needed. He noted all of the new security measures as well as the new technology in the senior center and Humarock Fire station. The department is not actively assisting water, sewer and police departments to a level they had not previously been involved especially since the loss of the police officer that handled technology for that department. He noted that all of the improvements and upgrades also require maintenance and monitoring. He explained that two people can no longer keep up with the demand.

Mr. Westort asked if the less skilled needs could be outsourced. Mr. Minchello said that the new position would back up both the systems analyst that deals with user issues and to assist with Mr. Minchello with contracts, projects and other infrastructure needs. He noted his prior experience in the Town with outsourcing and found it was expensive and the result was not satisfactory in addition to having to constantly bring contract assistance up to speed on the network and its configuration. Ms. Russo asked for clarification on the 50% funding of the position. Mr. Minchello explained that that was the amount available to be allocated. Mr. Westort asked where the funding would come from next year. Mr. Boudreau stated that the additional 50% would come from additional funds available next year.

Dept. 410 – Facilities

Mr. Kelly highlighted his department achievements this past year including the senior center construction, opening of the senior center, challenges from the pandemic including signage and energy conservation improvements through grant. He noted that the pandemic had negatively impacted their ability to get quotes and get smaller projects completed. He noted the new administrative person had started and was expected to be a great help including obtaining bids, service contracts and grant requests. He said an example of the pandemic's impact was his goal to get Town Hall painted for almost a year.

Mr. Gilmore asked about the status of the HVAC Technician request. Mr. Kelly noted that there had been discussion about how to assist the Facilities Department relevant to its workload. One option was a project manager but Mr. Kelly said the biggest drain on their time is the HVAC calls. If someone was on staff to do this work, Mr. Kelly and Mr. Dillon would have more time to deal with project management. Mr. Kelly stated that there had been discussion of sharing the cost of the position with the School Department. Mr. Boudreau responded to Mr. Gilmore that the request would be re-visited after the state aid numbers were released. Mr. Westort asked what the \$80,000 in the public buildings line. Mr. Kelly stated they have a few plans for specific projects but it is meant for projects valued at under \$25,000 and is fluid.

Mr. Gilmore asked for more information on Scituate Food Pantry project. Mr. Kelly stated his department had re-done an area of the basement in old Gates as the Pantry was losing their home. He said there was some cost and a lot of effort and credited the Pantry with all of their work and effort on the space. Ms. Seidel asked if we received any funding for HVAC from COVID related funds and did it help or cause more work. Mr. Kelly responded that it had been a great help and he noted that all of the supply and exhaust systems were repaired and fully running in all six schools. Mr. Boudreau noted that the HVAC systems had never been in better shape but now it had to be maintained. Mr. Kelly noted that new buildings have energy management systems and those take considerably more time to operate and troubleshoot.

Dept. 210 - Police

Chief Thompson noted that the response to the pandemic has been a major accomplishment. He also noted a promotion of one officer to sergeant and four new officers were brought on board. Chief Thompson highlighted their training on mental health issues and Metro LEC. He noted the challenges included how to recruit, attract and train new officers in the new policing realm. He stated that accreditation is their main goal as well as officer wellness and development. He noted that many good things have come out of the police reform legislation but some aspects have ramifications for staffing and training for communities like Scituate.

Mr. Westort asked that the reform has caused to no longer be able to use part-time officers and required us to hire full-time officers. Chief Thompson said that historically the department has hired part-time officers that had been through a shortened police academy to assist in the summer, to backfill on vacations and as other needs arise. These part-time officers are also the feeder system for replacing retiring officers which helps the departments as they have had to evaluate them and see their performance in the field. Chief Thompson noted that this year's budget is to bring awareness of this issue and how these needs of the community will be met without these part-time officers. He noted that overtime is not the answer as there is not an appetite for all of those additional shifts.

Mr. Kelly asked about the general bylaw change relevant to Camping and Tenting. Chief Thompson responded that there were some instances this past year on Cole Parkway but they had noted that there was nothing on the books to regulate these issues. Mr. Boudreau noted they had some people that camped out for almost a week for the mooring list and then some campers that were in Cole Parkway for almost a month. He further stated that just regulating Cole Parkway would not resolve the issue as people will move to the Lighthouse parking lot or other areas. Chief Thompson said they had looked at other communities, especially in the western part of the state, to craft this bylaw. Ms. Metro asked if someone could have an occupied RV on their land and Mr. Boudreau said not under current zoning. Ms. Seidel asked about the amount of funding received from COVID funds for the HVAC as it relates to staffing given a newly upgraded system.

Dept. 230 – Public Safety Communications

Ms. DeWolfe stated that the department's goal was to maintain the staffing levels. She noted that COVID is causing overtime issues for the department. She said that the increase in calls was putting a strain on the communication specialists. Mr. Gilmore confirmed that there were no additional staff requests and Ms. DeWolfe noted they were fully staffed with full-time staff and

some good part-time staff. Mr. Boudreau noted the work of Ms. DeWolfe and her staff to assist public safety and get assistance where it is needed. He noted several stressful rescues that were facilitated by the skills of the communications specialists.

Dept. 543 – Veterans Services

Mr. Knapp noted in the coming year he wanted to increase outreach now that the department was located in the senior center including additional events. He mentioned some of the events had already occurred with the Veterans' Advisory Council. He stated they were working on a caregiver's guide now that is really needed to provide resources to persons that might not necessarily covered by other veteran's benefits. He highlighted the chair of honor ceremony on Memorial Day and the purple heart community celebration. He stated that the Commonwealth decided to change its online access system at the same time as the department was moving into the senior center. He pointed out that the Department of Veterans Services was working remotely due to the pandemic which delayed response to calls and that training was also impacted. He stated that the fully developed federal claims were also seriously delayed because of a backlog of 550,000 record requests. Mr. Gilmore asked the number of pending claims due to this issue and Mr. Knapp said it was probably twenty. Mr. Knapp noted that a claim that would normally take 38 days took two years to get addressed. Mr. Gilmore noted that the budget was basically level funded and asked if anything additional was needed. Mr. Knapp said he has received the support that he needs.

Mr. Westort asked about the change in subsistence benefits between 2020 and 2021. Mr. Knapp stated that this program also covers medical expenses. He noted that they had lost clients that had passed away, moved into assisted living or nursing homes or became ineligible due to stimulus payments. He noted that the asset limit has just been changed to address this issue but it did not help all of those that were disqualified.

Dept. 650 – Beautification Commission

Ms. Dienel, treasurer for the Beautification Commission, noted the major budget components included 43% for contract labor for the railroad islands which had a new vendor this year that was less expensive. She noted that 5% of the budget goes to Ship Shape Day that had 600 volunteers last year and 20 workers. She also said that 20% was spent on planting materials including the 30 adopt a lot and 47 merchant programs. The remaining funds are used for special projects including the final phase at Town Hall and the Board of Health this year. She said their main challenge was recruiting volunteers. Ms. Metro asked if there would be a need of additional funds for the merchant program once COVID passed.

Ms. Humphrey, chair of the Beautification Commission, responded that the addition of new areas will bring more merchants into the program. Ms. Dienel stated that they set up the Christmas tree on the Common and in the gazebo. She pointed out that the Commission had fully used their prior year budget. Ms. Humphrey noted that the Beautification Commission was building relationships with many entities in town especially the School Department. She noted the Gates School Citizen project resulted in a donation to help keep the beaches clean. Also mentioned was the Cushing School environmental video on how to eradicate garlic mustard which was posted to their website. She noted they are interested in projects at the library on the slope, tree replacement on Front Street, addition of more trees on the Common and a park in North Scituate.

She also noted the Commission was interested in streetscape issues as projects are developed with the Planning Board. She stated that they are concerned about putting funds into plantings if there are no budget funds to maintain those plantings such as the library and senior center.

Dept. 691 – Historical Buildings

Mr. Chessia stated that their budget maintains seven properties for the Town and that their budget request was level funded. He noted they made repairs at the Mass Humane Boathouse, painting and trim work at Cudworth House, landscaping and painting at Lawson Tower. He noted that a major component of their budget was for alarm management agreements and pest service. He said they had put forward a CPC application to rebuild the lantern room at the lighthouse. Mr. Gilmore noted that he had heard the CPC application and pointed out that the lighthouse is the iconic symbol of the town and that he had spoken to the state representative in hopes of obtaining funding. Mr. Chessia noted that they had recently met with the Town Administrator and had met with a couple of contractors that have worked on lighthouses. Mr. Kelly noted that the lighthouse is the 11th oldest in the nation and its current condition is very concerning.

Dept. 135 – Town Accountant

Ms. Holt noted that her department worked to support all of the other departments. There were contractual payroll increases of \$10,516 and a reduction in purchase of services of \$3,180 as there did not to be an OPEB actuarial study in FY23 for a net increase of \$7,336. She noted that her department worked on the filing of claims for reimbursement for the costs incurred to deal with the pandemic and in support of the FEMA disaster projects. Ms. Russo asked about the Popular Annual Financial Report and Ms. Holt stated that it is an ongoing goal for her and would be a short document that would provide the financial highlights of the town in an easy to understand manner.

Review of Liaisons to Other Committees/Boards

Mr. Gilmore noted that Mr. Heineman was going to leave the Advisory Committee due to his new position and he asked for any volunteers or candidates that were interested in joining the Advisory Committee. The current liaisons were decided as follows.

Economic Development Commission	To be determined
Capital Planning Committee	Jamie Gilmore replaced Elise Russo
Street Acceptance Committee	Missy Seidel replaced Jamie Gilmore
Public Building Commission	To be determined
Community Preservation	Mike Westort
Planning Board	Jerry Kelly
School Committee	Patrice Metro
Waterways Commission	Dan McGuiggin
Widows Walk Committee	Dan McGuiggin

Ms. Ferguson stated she would take wither of the unassigned committees that MS. Russo did not elect. Mr. Gilmore is hoping to get more reports back from the liaisons with these committees.

Review of Agenda for 1/13/22 meeting

There were no changes to the agenda.

Other Business

Ms. Holt advised the Advisory Committee that the Planning Board would be holding a zoning workshop for the zoning articles on January 27, 2022 at 7:00 pm including the following:

- Section 440.5 adding VCN
- Section 620.3 Change setback in R-3 from 8' to 15'
- Section 610.18 Add a lot shape criteria
- Multiple sections – marijuana articles (also amending general bylaws)
- Section 810/830 – non conforming structures

The public hearing will likely be held on February 10, 2022 at 7:30 pm but is yet to be confirmed. The Planning Board will appear before the Advisory Committee for their budget hearing on February 3, 2022. That meeting also includes review of petition articles, of which there is only one relevant to the wind turbine and non-monetary articles which would include the proposed zoning bylaw and general bylaw changes.

Mr. Gilmore asked if Advisory Committee was meeting on that date and Ms. Holt confirmed and replied that she thought it would be recorded. Ms. Metro asked about the deadline for the petition articles. Ms. Holt responded it had already passed and there was only one relevant to the wind turbine and that the Select Board would be bringing forward an article as well. Ms. Metro asked about the marijuana articles and Ms. Holt noted that the petitioner from the prior town meeting was working with the Planning Board on their articles.

Ms. Metro made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Ms. Russo at 8:45 p.m.; the Committee voted unanimously in favor (8-0) by roll call vote; Mr. Gilmore-yes, Ms. Seidel-yes, Ms. Russo-yes, Mr. Westort-yes, Ms. Metro-yes, Mr. Kelly-yes, Mr. McGuiggin-yes, Ms. Ferguson-yes.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy Holt
Recorder