

ADVISORY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

January 20, 2016

A meeting of the Advisory & Finance Committee was held on Wednesday, January 20, 2016. The meeting was called to order by Chairman John Moody at 7:00PM and was conducted in the Mayflower II Meeting Room at the Plymouth Town Hall, 11 Lincoln Street, Plymouth, Massachusetts.

PRESENT **14 members of the committee were present:**

Kevin Canty, Betty Cavacco, Robert Cole, Harry Helm, Shelagh Joyce, Ethan Kusmin, Mike Lincoln, Marcus McGraw, Christopher Merrill, John Moody, Patrick O'Brien
Harry Salerno, Marc Sirrico, Scott Stephenson

ABSENT **1 members of the committee were absent**

Patricia McPherson

Agenda Items

➤ **New Committee Member Introduction**

New Advisory & Finance Committee members, Scott Stephenson and Robert Cole, were introduced.

➤ **Budget Update**

The budget review process, template and schedule were shared. Sub-Committees A, C & F have all met already. Sub-Committees B, D & E have meeting scheduled next week. Final sub-committee reports are due by Friday, February 12th. The Budget Hearing, where sub-committee chairs will present the highlights of their budget sections, is scheduled for Wednesday, February 24th.

➤ **Annual Town Meeting Articles**

11 - Town Promotion Fund

Lee Hartmann, Director of Planning and Development, presented Article 11. In 1993 special legislation was passed which created the Town Promotion Fund (Chapter 4 of the Acts of 1993). 45% of Plymouth's Hotel/Motel Tax is placed into this fund through an annual Town Meeting article. Funds may be used for programs and projects that enhance the beautification, recreational resources, public safety, promotional and marketing activities, events, services and public improvements for the town. The Visitor Services Board oversees expenditures from the promotion fund. The other 55% of the Hotel/Motel Tax revenues goes into the General Fund. The receipts collected through the 6% Hotel/Motel Tax increased by 22% or \$267,646 this year (\$1,458,400 compared to \$1,190,754 last year). The total FY17 funding to be approved for the Town Promotions budget is \$656,280.

This year's budgeted costs include:

- Contract with Destination Plymouth \$290,000
- Water Street Visitors Center operation contract \$42,000
- Public Improvements \$65,628
- Salaries \$600
- Event funding and additional marketing \$213,052
- Distinguished Visitors \$5,000
- 2020 Celebrations \$40,000

Paul Cripps, Executive Director of Destination Plymouth, said that tourism is the largest economic driver to Plymouth and as we approach 2020 it is even more critical. Plymouth's tourism industry brings in \$350 million annually.

Questions:

- What is the status of the Boston to Plymouth Waterfront Shuttle? (S Joyce) The shuttle which was offered from various Boston hotels to Plymouth was not very successful, Destination Plymouth is considering other options.
- What is the duration of the contract with Destination Plymouth? (C Merrill) 3years, this is the first year of a 3 year contract. The contract does go out to bid.
- What do you attribute the 22% increase to? (P O'Brien) Excitement about 2020, Mirbeau opening, and successful events. We do not expect that growth each year.
- What is the formula for how much each \$1 of advertising brings in? (P O'Brien) Conservative estimates say that every \$1 in advertising brings in \$4, more commonly used is that every \$1 spent brings in \$6-\$7
- Do you measure the effectiveness of each campaign? (M McGraw) Not all campaigns are measureable and studies cost money. We are able to watch data collected at establishments including the Plantation where they track zip codes and country codes.
- How does advertising break down as far as social, tv, radio, print, etc.? (H Helm) We do have a detailed marketing plan that Destination Plymouth could share if the committee is interested.
- What is the number of times that one must hear a tell to generate a response? (K Canty) This is America's Hometown so students are exposed to Plymouth early in elementary school. What Destination Plymouth does is reinforce what they were taught as students, that Plymouth has a unique and powerful story, where America's story began.
- What percentage of tourists are international versus domestic? (P O'Brien) Educated guess is 20-24% are international.

Christopher Merrill made a motion to recommend Article 11 to Town Meeting. Patrick O'Brien, second. The motion passes unanimously (13-0-0).

14 - Water Pollution Abatement

Lee Hartmann, Director of Planning and Development, presented Article 14. Town Meeting has approved eleven prior rounds for this greatly needed and successful septic system improvement program. Due to the popularity of the program, the funds are expended quickly. The Department of Planning and Development is recommending that the Town Treasurer borrow \$200,000 from the Massachusetts Water Pollution Abatement Trust. The state provides these funds to the Town at a 2% interest rate. The funds are made available to local homeowners for sewer hook-ups, septic system repair or replacement (systems must be failed to qualify). Loans up to \$15,000 are available per household at 5% interest (the added interest covers the Town's cost of administering the program). Loans are recorded as liens on the property and are billed by the Assessor's Office as a tax bill attachment. Terms of the loan range from five to 15 years depending on the amount borrowed. To date, this program has enabled 255 homeowners to repair/replace their failed systems. This program is administered by the Office of Community Development on behalf of the Town.

Questions:

Is there an income requirement for homeowners to qualify for this program? (C Merrill) Households must not have more than \$150,000 of income.

Is this program advertised? (C Merrill) Yes, it is advertised and there is always a wait list, loans are available on a first-come first-served basis.

Patrick O'Brien made a motion to recommend Article 14 to Town Meeting. Kevin Canty, second. The motion passes unanimously (13-0-0).

24 - School Info Display Boards – Amend Zoning Bylaw

Lee Hartmann, Director of Planning and Development, presented Article 24. In 2013 an article was brought to Town Meeting to amend zoning bylaws to allow internally illuminated school information

display boards. A Town Meeting motion limited this article for use at Plymouth North High School only. State law requires the town to be uniform. This article will allow the same to be installed at Plymouth South High School, this time 633 feet off Long Pond Road.

Questions:

- Wouldn't the sign be more effective right on the main street like it is on Obery Street so it can be used to announce elections and such to the entire population driving by? (S Joyce) Superintendent Gary Maestas responded that based on discussion at the 2013 Town Meeting, it was clear that the LED lights could be a distraction to homes and since there are homes at the entrance to Plymouth South High School, it was a strategically responsible solution to move the sign 633 feet off the main road, face it towards trees and not homes, and limit usage from 7AM-10PM to help the article get passed.
- Why limit this to only high schools? (B Cavacco) Based on the 2013 Town Meeting feedback, and the fact that a 2/3 vote is required to pass this, the decision to limit this to the high schools is supported by the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen.
- Since Plymouth South Middle School uses the same entrance as Plymouth South High School and they will most likely utilize the sign as well, will PCIS then make the same request for uniformity? (C Merrill) PCIS has a relatively new letter based sign. It is best to look at doing this one school at a time.
- If this is for high school use only, why would PSMS use it? (K Canty) Zoning is involved with the physical location of the sign but can not control its content.
- This seems intrinsically non-uniform. Do you feel it would be difficult to pass this zoning bylaw for the high school and the middle schools? (K Canty) Yes, that would be difficult.
- What is the cost of this sign? (H Helm) \$5,000, 50% will be paid by MSBA.

Harry Salerno made a motion to recommend Article 24 to Town Meeting. Chris Merrill, second. The motion passes unanimously (13-0-0).

1 - Elections & Town Meeting

This is a standard annual article which offers an announcement of the upcoming election.

Patrick O'Brien made a motion to recommend Article 1 to Town Meeting. Harry Salerno, second. The motion passes unanimously (13-0-0).

2 - Reports of Boards & Committees

This is another standard annual article which allows the town to receive reports, hear reports at Town Meeting, and make the reports available to Town Meeting in a bound Annual Town Report book.

Patrick O'Brien made a motion to recommend Article 2 to Town Meeting. Harry Salerno, second. The motion passes unanimously (13-0-0).

4 - Committee Reauthorization

This is another standard annual article. Every committee created by Town Meeting, must be re-authorized every 3 years. This year the Plymouth Center Steering Committee and Cedarville Steering Committee are up for re-authorization.

Patrick O'Brien made a motion to recommend Article 4 to Town Meeting. Harry Salerno, second. The motion passes unanimously (13-0-0).

6 - Salaries of Elected Officials

This is another standard annual article which sets the salaries and authorizes payment of the salaries of 6 elected officials. There are no changes this year. Salaries will continue to be: \$4,500 for the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, \$4,000 for the other 4 Selectmen, and \$2,000 for the Town Moderator.

Patrick O'Brien made a motion to recommend Article 6 to Town Meeting. Harry Helm, second. The motion passes unanimously (13-0-0).

29 - Procurement Reorganization – Amend Charter

Article 29 is the result of a recent slight reorganization. The Board of Selectmen voted at its meeting December 8, 2015 to move the Procurement division from the Finance Department to Administration. This was done to leverage the expertise of the new Assistant Town Manager and because the Town Manager is the Chief Procurement Officer for the Town. This change will allow a more efficient and effective purchasing program. As a result, the Town Charter needs to be modified by deleting the term “general supervision of the purchase of all goods, services, materials, and supplies by the town: and” under section 3-8-2 and deleting the word “procurement” under section 3-9-4.

Questions:

- What happens if the Assistant Town Manager with this specialized skill leaves the town? (C Merrill) The town can proceed or it can choose to reorganize and amend the Charter again.

Patrick O'Brien made a motion to recommend Article 29 to Town Meeting. Betty Cavacco, second.

Patrick O'Brien pointed out that Procurement was in Administration in the past and had been moved. It makes sense for it to be in Administration.

The motion passes unanimously (13-0-0).

Old/New/Other Business

- Sub-Committee & Committee Liaison Updates

The Rules Sub-Committee met recently and settled on a final draft of the committee bylaws. They are working on standing rules and may be set to offer them to the full Advisory & Finance Committee in March for a vote.

Harry Helm is taking over the liaison role with the Community Preservation Committee.

Meeting Minutes

- December 16, 2015: **Kevin Canty made a motion to approve the 12/16/15 minutes. Mike Lincoln, second. The motion carries (7-0-5). Betty Cavacco, Marcus McGraw, Patrick O'Brien, Scott Stephenson, Robert Cole, abstained.**

ADJOURNMENT

Patrick O'Brien made a motion to adjourn. Marcus McGraw, second.

The motion for adjournment carries unanimously (13-0-0).

The meeting adjourned at 7:58PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kere Gillette