

ADVISORY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

September 14, 2016

A meeting of the Advisory & Finance Committee was held on Wednesday, September 14, 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 **15 members of the committee were present:**

Kevin Canty, Betty Cavacco, Robert Cote, Judith Fitzgerald, Harry Helm, Ethan Kusmin, Mike Lincoln, Peter Mador, Christopher Merrill, John Moody, Patrick O'Brien, Harry Salerno, Sheila Sheridan, Marc Sirrico, Scott Stephenson

ABSENT **0 members of the committee were absent:**

Announcements

- Recommendations of the Capital Improvements Committee (CIC) – The committee received the prioritized ranking of the Fall Town Meeting Articles involving capital expenditures. Funding sources are also indicated on the spreadsheet. This information is on the Town Meeting webpage as well.
- Solar PILOT spreadsheet – Lynne Barrett, Director of Finance, provided a detailed spreadsheet of all PILOT agreements with the Town both approved and pending. Chairman John Moody added two columns to the spreadsheet involving property value and taxes.
- Sub-Committee Assignments – FY2018 Budget Sub-Committee assignments were handed out.
- May have a few more articles to hear – We may need to meet again to hear a few articles. Articles 30 & 31 regarding Trees are going before the Planning Board on September 19th. Last night the Selectmen asked that the Poultry Bylaw, article 33, be re-written and brought back to them on September 27th. We will not hear the articles Saturday morning before Town Meeting so if it comes down to that, we will stick with our existing vote.

Fall Town Meeting Articles

➤ Article 4H: Capital – Airport Delta Taxiway

Tom Maher, Airport Manager, presented Article 4H. The Plymouth Airport Commission is asking for support of this article which regards the completion of the "Delta" taxiway at the Plymouth Municipal Airport. This has been on the Capital Improvement Plan for a number of years but was just moved up and onto the Fall Town Meeting Warrant because the FAA has funds coming available for this project in October. The total project cost is \$1.7 million. \$1,615,000 will be covered by FAA and MassDOT grants. The remaining \$85,000 will be covered by Airport Enterprise Retained Earnings provided free cash is certified before town meeting. If not, the airport may have to borrow until the free cash is certified. This project would connect the existing "Delta" taxiway to the Runway 24 end and would correct an existing safety concern where aircraft based on the south side of the airport have to cross the active runway to taxi and takeoff on Runway 24. This extension would allow aircraft to taxi directly to the Runway 24 end without having to cross the active runway first. We will finish the design and go to bid in the winter and construct in the spring.

Questions:

- Is the FAA grant earmarked for us? (C Merrill) Yes.
- The bold line on the map indicates the Delta taxiway? (J Moody) Yes.

Patrick O'Brien made a motion to recommend Article 4H to Town Meeting. Betty Cavacco, second. The motion carries unanimously (14-0-0).

➤ Article 34: Road Improvements

Christopher Fava, Petitioner, presented Article 34. He hears a lot of discussion around town about how bad the roads are. The money spent on road improvements is insufficient. We receive approximately \$1.55 million in Chapter 90 funds and Town Meeting approves another \$500,000 each year for

private/unaccepted road maintenance. That \$2 million per year only funds 5.3 miles of road repairs. Currently the amount of roads deteriorating is larger than the amount of roads we are repairing so we are digging deeper hole. The town currently has 241.7 miles of roads that need immediate repairs, rehabilitation, or maintenance with an estimated cost of \$134,456,390 not including repairs to sidewalks, bike paths or ramps. We need to think about a long term plan. This article looks at a phased approach to road maintenance. If we take out a bond where borrowing is phased over time, \$25 million in total, that will allow us to add \$5 million to our existing \$2 million per year for 5 straight years. The DPW is comfortable that they could handle this additional road work. If this total is all placed on the tax levy it will increase our tax rate by approximately 26 cents. That is a conservative number run at 5% interest rate, we can most likely receive a lower interest rate. Auto excise receipts are \$8 million per year in Plymouth. We should look at earmarking some of those revenues for road repair. The Selectmen indicated that it would require special legislation but they do have the power to set fiscal policy. Maybe they could say any dollar over \$8 million in excise tax receipts be placed in a fund to support road maintenance. That option can be explored later. Right now it is important to get the budget process in place and start on road improvements early in FY2018. With 2020 coming up, we have a unique marketing opportunity. Our roads are the first impression visitors receive. We want to be seen as a town on the go, investing in our infrastructure and businesses will catch on to that. Residents will also be happy to see infrastructure improvements which also improve public safety. They may see a reduction in car maintenance costs which may more than cover the increase in their property tax. This is a very workable plan.

Questions/Discussion:

There were a lot of questions about funding and the use of excise taxes. If we utilize existing excise tax revenue to fund roads than that will leave a hole in the budget elsewhere. If we earmark only the new revenue above the \$8 million, that would solve that problem. We can also look at grants that may be available for green gate type projects like bike lanes, etc. The phased approach provides flexibility. Braintree has instituted a similar approach and it is working well for them.

Jonathan Beder, DPW Director, said that Chris Fava is spot on with this article and numbers and need. The town invests in water and sewer needs but not roads. We need to invest more in roads and \$7 million per year is very doable for his staff. It is cheaper to maintain roads than it is to rebuild them. We would like to use the bond to fund road repair and the Chapter 90 funds for road maintenance. We started this discussion with the Board of Selectmen last year and then the sewer broke. We were told to follow through with the road discussion.

Public Comment:

- Paul Hapgood shared a large map which illustrated the road plan. He said the town has worked hard at coming up with the plan and scheduling the specifics and priorities and now all they need is the funding to move forward. Jonathan Beder added that the maps are available on the town's website on the Engineering Department page.
- Dave Bustere said that everyone uses the roads and everyone uses the infrastructure. Yes, 2020 is coming but the residents are the ones using the roads everyday. The road conditions are a safety issue, an aesthetic issue, and a quality of life issue.

Christopher Merrill made a motion to recommend Article 34 to Town Meeting. Mike Lincoln, second.

Discussion:

- This is a significant amount of money and it would be nice to see new excise tax revenue above the \$8 million earmarked for road repair and maintenance. (B Cavacco)
- Roads are important to public safety and to commerce. I am grateful this has been brought forward our roads are in desperate need for repair. Excise tax should fund road repair. This article should go to Town Meeting for discussion. (M Lincoln)

- The complete lack of funding is negligence and once again taxpayers are being asked to bail out negligence, I can not support a \$25 million bond with the tax burden we have going on now. (H Helm)
- Why can't the selectmen make a decision regarding how the excise tax is used? I believe what has been presented but believe the eggs are in the Selectmen's basket. Now we are asking Town Meeting to make a decision because the Selectmen haven't. (S Sheridan)
- I do not usually embrace petitioned articles but this one is well thought out, it places the Selectmen in a position to fund roads, and sometimes we have to spend money to save money. Preventative maintenance saves taxpayers money in the long run. We can not earmark dollars like the Selectmen can. It does not matter which pot the funding comes out of. Roads have a weaker voice in town and this article gives roads a voice. (H Salerno)
- I agree with Mr. Salerno, it forces the hand of the Board of Selectmen. We can grapple with the problem now or face a much larger issue later. Infrastructure has been neglected throughout the country not just Plymouth. Roads are our red carpet, greeting potential house buyers or those considering opening a business in town. The plan is a good start to solving the problem. (K Canty)
- I am not supporting this article because this is not the right time. A year ago this topic was pulled because of the sewer issue, we are still working on that issue. I understand the concepts of sending the message and putting excise tax towards the roads, but not yet. (E Kusmin)
- I support this article. We have to stop kicking the can down the road. We have to stop acting reactively because that always costs more money. We should send Selectmen the message that we would like to see every \$1 over \$8 million in excise tax revenue earmarked for road maintenance and repair. (B Cavacco)

The motion carries (10-4-0). Ethan Kusmin, Harry Helm, Marc Sirrico, Judith Fitzgerald, opposed.

➤ Article 4B: Capital – Wastewater Facilities Assessment

Jonathan Beder, DPW Director, presented Article 4B. \$200,000 will fund a study to evaluate the current conditions at the Wastewater Treatment Plant and the 5 municipal lift stations which include Holmes Point, Water Street, Hedge Road, Industrial Park, and Long Pond. These facilities are covered under the current operation and maintenance agreement with Veolia North America which expires on June 30, 2021. The condition assessment is critical as it will delineate any item needing to be addressed. Veolia is required to transition the plant and all the stations back over to the town in good working order and in compliance with all legal requirements, consistent with good industry practice. The proposed assessment will assist the town in determining the current condition and value of the infrastructure. The cost to perform this work is \$174,470 and is expected to take approximately 5 months to complete. The capital request is for \$200,000 should any more in-depth investigations be required.

Questions:

- This is for the study only? What is the scope? Did you receive bids already? (C Merrill) Yes, an assessment study of everything within the plant and stations. We looked at 2 companies and the bid we chose is in the meeting packet which outlines the entire scope involved.
- The bid mentions Gary & Chad, their titles should be included so we know who they are. It says report will be provided to the town. Who will it be provided to and will it be available electronically? (S Sheridan) I agree titles should be included. The report will go to me directly. It may need to go down the legal avenue so may not be shared publicly right away. We will have to wait and see.
- What if the equipment is not in the condition it should be? (H Helm) We will receive the assessment and can then have a discussion on Veolia about replacing or upgrading equipment, we will know the exact values and we can document a specific plan.
- We are essentially auditing the entity we are having a legal suite with? (M Lincoln) We will receive the assessment, provide them with the information and hold them to that line in our agreement.
- How often will this have to be done moving forward towards 2021? (C Merrill) I think this assessment will get us through the remainder of the contract.

- If Veolia is responsible for returning the plant to us and certifying that it is in a certain condition then why wouldn't they pay for this assessment? (J Moody) They have their own engineer and their own interpretation. Given the current situation, I urge the committee to support this article, it is sensitive in nature and this assessment is something we need to do.
- Has this company attested in court to similar issues in the past? (C Merrill) Yes, they are very reputable and have experience doing that.
- Has Veolia accepted this company to come into their space? (S Sheridan) Not yet but this happens at all of their plants. We will have that conversation once Town Meeting approves the funding.

Patrick O'Brien made a motion to recommend Article 4B to Town Meeting. Harry Helm, second.

Comment: We are essentially hiring our own expert witness. (M Lincoln)

The motion carries unanimously (14-0-0).

➤ Article 4G: Capital – GPS Survey Equipment

Sid Kashi, Town Engineer, presented Article 4G. We have used our GPS survey equipment for the past 16 years. It has stopped working and the manufacturer no longer provides service or parts for this unit. We are asking for \$25,000 to replace the equipment.

Questions:

- How often is it used? (C Merrill) Whenever we are in the field, basically daily, except when it is snowing.
- Have you looked into renting or leasing? (C Merrill) No. These are tools we use everyday and use them for a great number of years so we purchase our equipment. The last one lasted 16 years.
- You have never investigating leasing equipment where every 5 years or so you can turn the equipment in for the latest model? (J Moody) I have been in this industry for 35 years and we have never leased survey equipment. We purchase our equipment through capital or article 8. There is no line in the Engineering operating budget to pay for leasing. If we did turn it over more frequently, there would be inefficiency in having to retrain on the new equipment.
- Can this work be outsourced to a survey company? (C Merrill) Yes, but there is no money in our operating budget to fund that.

Scott Stephenson made a motion to recommend Article 4G to Town Meeting. Patrick O'Brien, second.

Discussion:

- This town needs to do a better job at cost analysis of purchasing versus leasing, particularly when equipment may become obsolete in 5 years. (C Merrill)
- This article is a no-brainer and I support it fully. I work in the industry and it costs \$2,000 for an engineer to come to a job site and look at a foundation for no longer than an hour. Even if this equipment only lasts 5 years, that is only \$5,000 per year total for all of the projects they handle. (E Kusmin)
- This topic of leasing has come up time and time again. I just googled the equipment and it leases for \$1200 to \$2000 per month. Not sure if I will vote to approve purchase or vote no to send a message. (H Helm)
- It is a no-brainer. 2 employees use this equipment almost daily. Do not hold off on principle. They need this equipment to do their jobs, why make it more difficult for them? (P O'Brien)
- I have used survey equipment at work and leased equipment is never as good a quality. It is never cheaper to outsource than to do the work in house. (B Cavacco)
- We have heard from many at the DPW that they do not lease equipment. This is a conversation to have with department and division heads during sub-committee meetings. It is ludicrous to ask for this leasing cost analysis the night of the article presentation. I believe Mr. Kashi when he says this equipment is vital and needed. (M Sirrico)

The motion carries (12-2-0). Christopher Merrill and Harry Helm, opposed.

➤ Article 22: Easements – Water St & Resnik Rd

Sid Kashi, Town Engineer, presented Article 22. This article involves two articles with the same intent. On Water Street, the Water Street Café has agreed to give us an easement for highway purposes to widen the roadway and sidewalk. On Resnik Road the property owner of the medical building at the corner of Industrial Park Road, has made roadway improvements. Part of the infrastructure is located outside of the roadway layout. The property owner has agreed to grant the town easement for highway purposes. Town Meeting action is required to authorize the easements and to accept alteration of the road layout allowing the easements to become parts of the layout.

Patrick O'Brien made a motion to recommend Article 22 to Town Meeting. Harry Salerno, second. The motion carries unanimously (13-0-1). Harry Salerno, abstained.

➤ Article 24: Road Layouts

Sid Kashi, Town Engineer, presented Article 24. There are 3 roads or portions of roads proposed for layout as public way. This is just procedural as Town Meeting action is required to accept the layouts as public way. The first is Loring Boulevard (approx. 1,040 feet). This will allow the town to accept the entrance way of Cordage Park from Court Street to the MBTA right of way. Acceptance of this layout will allow the state to grant the town funding for construction of the roadway. Cordage has agreed to provide the design drawings, construction plans, and coordinate with the town on construction and oversight of the project. The second is a portion of Commerce Way (approx. 2,325 feet) where the Cranberry Crescent project extended Commerce Way from Plympton Road (Route 80) to Carver Road. Acceptance of this roadway will improve fire and police responses in the area and will benefit the overall transportation network system in town. The third road layout is a portion of Carver Road (approx.. 1,500 feet) where the Cranberry Crescent project has improved the section of the road in front of that project and granted the town an easement for highway purposes.

Questions:

- Have these new sections of roads been constructed to town standards? (J Moody) Yes, they went through a two year process and hired the appropriate engineers and inspectors.
- Is anything going to be done to make the public aware that the extension of Commerce Road is a public road and not a driveway into their stores? (H Helm) That is a good point, we have not thought of that. Many people are already using the road.

Ethan Kusmin made a motion to recommend Article 24 to Town Meeting. Scott Stephenson, second. The motion carries unanimously (14-0-1).

➤ Article 25: Easements – Taylor Ave

Sid Kashi, Town Engineer, presented Article 25. The Taylor Avenue Project has taken 12 years to get to where it is now. The project consists of a bridge replacement and significant roadway and pedestrian improvements. The project, which totals close to a \$10 million, will be funded and overseen by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT). The town is required to obtain permanent and temporary easements in order to receive state and federal funding. The easements will allow the contractor to perform the work and allow the town to use and maintain the improvements once the project is complete. These easements include the backs of sidewalks, grading, driveway aprons, setting utility poles back, widening sidewalks to meet ADA requirements, etc. The Town will be contacting each affected property owner individually to discuss these easement acquisitions. Town Meeting action is required to accept the easements. The town is in the process of completing a final design of the project and Mass DOT will advertise it in the spring of 2017.

Questions:

- So this article is just to approve acceptance of a lot of little easements? (P O'Brien) Yes.
- How do the residents of Taylor Ave feel about this? (H Helm) Mass Highway held a public meeting on June 2nd and answered all questions and concerns. The town also had a public meeting to discuss the land takings. We have some in opposition where properties have walls and fences built on the town right of way. There are 3 different widths of town right of way on the street, 35 feet, 40 feet and 50 feet. The town is trying to occupy the town right of way to allow ADA compliant sidewalks and a shoulder for bicycles, with the goal being accommodation of pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers.
- Will there be added parking along Taylor Ave? (H Helm) We will add formalized parking where we can where there is a 50 foot right of way, not where there is only 35 feet.
- Do you know what the cost may be for the eminent domain takings? (J Moody) April Town Meeting approved \$250,000. When we did the Samoset Street project. 20% of the easements were donated. We have seen some interest in easement donations for the Taylor Ave project. We do not know the exact cost because we do not have an appraisal done yet and we do not know how many will donate. We think the total cost will come in the \$200,000 to \$250,000 range.

Patrick O'Brien made a motion to recommend Article 25 to Town Meeting. Harry Helm, second. The motion carries unanimously (14-0-0).

Old/New/Other Business

Chairman John Moody asked if the committee had a chance to review the changes that legal counsel had made to Article 28 - Plastic Bag Ban bylaw. He asked if the committee felt the need to reconsider the article or if they felt their action taken previously covered the bylaw changes. Harry Helm said that the changes were to the language and not to the intent. The committee was in agreement and decided keep their existing recommendation.

Minutes

- July 13, 2016: **Patrick O'Brien made a motion to approve the 7/13/2016 meeting minutes. Mike Lincoln, second. The motion carries unanimously (10-0-4). Robert Cote, Peter Mador, Judith Fitzgerald, and Sheila Sheridan, abstained.**
- August 17, 2016: **Betty Cavacco made a motion to approve the 8/17/2016 meeting minutes as amended. Kevin Canty, second. The motion carries unanimously (11-0-3). Judith Fitzgerald, Patrick O'Brien, and Ethan Kusmin, abstained.**
- August 24, 2016: **Patrick O'Brien made a motion to approve the 8/24/2016 meeting minutes as amended. Harry Salerno, second. The motion carries unanimously (9-0-5). Judith Fitzgerald, Betty Cavacco, Sheila Sheridan, Christopher Merrill, and Mike Lincoln, abstained.**
- August 31, 2016: **Patrick O'Brien made a motion to approve the 8/31/2016 meeting minutes as amended. Kevin Canty, second. The motion carries unanimously (13-0-1). Robert Cote, abstained.**
- September 7: We will add the September 7 to the next meeting agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

Betty Cavacco made a motion to adjourn. Patrick O'Brien, second. The motion for adjournment carries unanimously (14-0-0).
The meeting adjourned at 9:26PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kere Gillette