

ADVISORY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
Minutes
February 23, 2023, Hybrid Meeting

PRESENT **12 members of the committee were present:**

Gail Butler, Louis Cabana, Kevin Canty, Brian Dunn, Daniel Green, Joe Lalley, Timothy Lawlor, Steve Nearman, Christine Richards, Bethany Rogers, Evelyn Strawn, and Robert Zupperoli.

ABSENT **3 members of the committee were absent:** Bruce Howard, Steven Keith, and Ashley Shaw

Call to Order - The meeting was called to order by Chairman Kevin Canty at 7:00 PM.

Announcements

- **Hybrid Meeting:** This meeting is likely to be conducted in a hybrid format, with some participants attending physically and others attending virtually via a video conference application.
- **Ways to Watch:** The meeting will be airing on Comcast 15, Verizon 47, or on PACTV's YouTube channel which can be viewed at pactv.org/stream.
- **Public Comment:** Any speaker giving public comment is allotted up to 5 minutes in which to speak. Public Comment can be made at the beginning or end of each meeting, or in regard to a particular agenda item the speaker wishes to be heard on
- **Zoom Login Information:** Anyone who wants to attend the meeting virtually, including members of the public who wish to give public comment, can use one of the following methods in which to do so:
 - **Join via Zoom application:** Download the Zoom meeting application on your device, press/click on "Join", then enter Meeting ID: **995 2986 0638**, and then the Meeting Password: **100131**, or
 - **Join via website** (requires microphone): Go to www.zoom.us, click "Join A Meeting" on the top righthand side, and enter the meeting ID: **995 2986 0638**, and then the meeting password **100131**, or
 - **Join via Telephone (voice only):** Dial **929-205-6099** and Enter Meeting ID: **995 2986 0638** and enter Meeting Password: **100131**

Public Comment - None

Agenda Items

Approve Minutes of the February 8, 2023, Meeting – Ms. Butler made a motion to approve the February 8, 2023, meeting minutes as written. Mr. Cabana second. Motion carried unanimously, 10-0-1, Mr. Green abstained.

Town Meeting Articles

Special

Article 12 – Traffic Study – Chairman Canty advised that Precinct 3 was presenting this article. Mr. Dale Webber, Precinct 3 Chair, addressed the Committee and presented a presentation. Mr. Gerry Sirrico, Precinct 3 Assistant Chair, handed out printed materials. Mr. Webber advised that they are looking for a professional strategy to address the narrow street parking and travelling. The goal is to have an engineer review this problem and offer practical solutions that can be implemented. They consulted with GPI, who have done extensive projects in Plymouth, and the cost of the study is \$165,878 which is requested to come from Free Cash. There has been a consensus with the Downtown Steering Committee, Precincts 1, 2, 3 and 4. Precinct 3 is submitting this article to begin the process of addressing this problem. This comprehensive work will take approx. 9 months. Mr. Webber advised that the Chamber of Commerce submitted a letter of support and he has included the letter with the printed materials handed out at the beginning of the meeting.

Ms. Richards asked if there had ever been a traffic study. Mr. Webber advised a long time ago. Ms. Richards asked if the Planning Board is supportive. Mr. Webber advised that they have not presented this to the Planning Board. Mr. Webber advised that in addition to the Precincts approval the Select Board voted unanimously to approve.

Mr. Green asked if raise and appropriate as the warrant language says is an option. Ms. Barrett, Finance Director, advised that Town Meeting can vote to raise and appropriate but the Town is recommending a transfer from free cash. Mr. Lalley asked if the warrant should include the amount recommended. Chairman Canty advised that the warrant doesn't usually include the cost but the motion will state the amount.

Mr. Lawlor has a lot of questions and concerns. He thinks that the area being proposed is a small portion of Plymouth for \$180,000 and Plymouth as a whole has a lot of traffic problems. His concern is taking a swipe a such a small section of Plymouth. He would prefer a more global approach. Mr. Webber advised that the study would look at an overview of the area not just one. Ms. Strawn advised that this would be a step towards a larger plan and a Master Plan in the future will include traffic.

James Downey, Transportation Engineer, advised that the DPW sees the value in this study and spoke favorably about the scope, cost and credentials of GPI. Chairman Canty asked how the scope compares to some of the other traffic studies. Mr. Downey advised that this is a larger scope as it looks at parking, public safety, and connectivity. Mr. Nearman feels that after reviewing the map this is the area in Town that is shared with residents, businesses and tourists and that this is the spot in Town that everyone shares this area. He asked if GPI was chosen based on a competitive bid? Mr. Webber advised that engineering services are excluded from the procurement laws but they chose this company because they have worked on other studies for the Town in this area of expertise and are proven to be knowledgeable about the Town and the needs of the Town. The large scope of work that is included in the proposal is well priced and includes a lot of initiatives, both Engineering and DPW agree. Mr. Nearman asked when the study is complete and the recommendations are made where will the funding to accomplish those recommendations come from. Mr. Webber advised that funding would be requested at future Town Meetings.

Ms. Sgarzi, DPW Director, advised the DPW supports this study, thinks the quote for the scope of work is very reasonable and they recommend GPI. Mr. Lawlor is concerned that if this gets approved further funding will be needed. Mr. Webber advised that this is Phase I. Ms. Sgarzi advised that funding could come from Chapter 90, grant monies or capital requests.

Mr. Nearman made a motion to recommend Article 12 to Town Meeting. Mr. Zupperoli second. Mr. Zupperoli noted that these roads are narrow, congested areas that are difficult to navigate and that a solution is long over do that would benefit the Town long term. Mr. Dunn feels this is extremely important and supports this request. Ms. Rogers also recognizes the need as this is a tourist area and thanks those who brought this forward. Chairman Canty feels that this area, with consultation with Public Safety, needs improving and there is a vested interest for everyone in this area as it includes downtown. Motion carried 10-1-0, Mr. Lawlor opposed.

Article 8 - General Bylaw – Town Manager, Derek Brindisi, advised that this article is to amend the bylaw to add a new section 71-10 Financial Affairs which would allow the Town to accept gifts of land or easement without Town Meeting approval as long as no appropriation was involved. The purpose is to allow the Town act more efficiently and expediently when opportunities arise that are in the Towns interest. Ms. Rogers asked if the gift of land was for a specific purpose and for that purpose only would this allow the Select Board to accept the single purpose gift? Mr. Brindisi replied yes, the Select Board could accept the gift but if an appropriation was needed an Article would have to put on the Warrant and Town Meeting would have to approve the appropriation. Ms. Richards asked if the Town could accept an easement in exchange for giving an easement (a reciprocal easement) and she has concerns about this not needing Town Meeting approval. Mr. Brindisi explained that for the Town to give an easement on Town

owned land they would have had to have gotten prior Town Meeting approval to dispose of the land to be able to gift an easement and therefore the answer depends on how the land is held. Chairman Canty said this article authorizes acceptance of a gift of land or easement and a gift doesn't involve giving anything back. Mr. Brindisi, in answer to Ms. Richards question, advised that the Select Board could leverage property already approved by Town Meeting to authorize the Select Board to the sell, lease, or transfer for the purpose of obtaining the gift of land or easement as a land swap deal, they would however be two separate transactions. Ms. Richards is concerned with the potential for easements to be exchanged without Town Meeting approval. Mr. Nearman asked about the process for vetting land gifts for clean titles and hazardous materials. Mr. Brindisi advised that there is a checklist of items that has to be accomplished before the Town can accept land that includes a Phase I Analysis and a survey to ensure there isn't a liability down the road. Mr. Nearman asked if this article would change those requirements. Mr. Brindisi replied, no. Chairman Canty asked if consideration that the gift of land would require future maintenance costs is considered an appropriation under this article. Mr. Brindisi feels that general maintenance on any property is assumed and would not be considered an appropriation for this article. Mr. Brindisi noted that the Conservation Commission has authority to accept gifts of land without Town Meeting process and this article would authorize the same to the Select Board without having to put a conservation restriction on it. Mr. Dunn motioned to approve Article 8 to Town Meeting. Mr. Green second. Ms. Butler advised that Plymouth prides itself on everyone being involved in the decisions and does this take them out of it. Mr. Brindisi agreed and said the aim is to allow the Select Board to act more swiftly when the gift of land is presented. Ms. Richards is uncomfortable with the easement being included in the article. Mr. Lalley, Mr. Green, and Ms. Rogers support this and feel there is no downside to accepting land. Motion carried 10-1-0, Ms. Butler opposed.

Article 4 – Capital Improvements – Ms. Barrett advised Article 4 is for Capital projects and studies. Items A1-3 are being recommended from free cash and B1 would be free cash and borrowing.

- A1 – Charter and Bylaw Codification – Ms. Strawn inquired about the timing of this project as the new proposed charter will be voted on in May. Ms. McElreath advised that she spoke with the vendor and they are aware that the work won't begin until after the May election when the Town knows which charter will be reviewed. Mr. Lawlor asked if there would be an additional charge if the new charter were adopted. Ms. McElreath advised the cost would not change. Mr. Lawlor asked about the maintenance costs. Ms. McElreath advised that there would be annual maintenance costs and both documents would be on the Town website as searchable documents. Mr. Lawlor noted that the proposal mentions attorney review several times and asked what the legal cost would be. Ms. McElreath advised that the attorney would review the final document when completed and shouldn't be more than a few hours. Mr. Lawlor asked about additional charges. Ms. McElreath advised that if the scope were to change that could involve additional charges.
- A2 – Police Department Study – No questions.
- A3 – DPW – Parks & Forestry - Ford F350 Replacement – No questions.
- B1 – DPW – Engineering – Bartlett Road Bridge Construction – Ms. Rogers asked if someone could speak about the need to replace the bridge. Ms. Sgarzi briefed that SLR inspected the bridge in February 2021 and recommended a complete replacement of the structure. The sub-structure, approach and guard rails were all found to be inadequate and since 2005 there has been a 5-ton weight limit restriction. This bridge replacement has been on Engineering's Capital Improvement list since 2005. Ms. Rogers asked if the weight limit restrictions prevented emergency vehicles from going over the bridge. Ms. Sgarzi replied yes, Fire Trucks, school buses and garbage trucks are all over the weight limit though ambulances can use the bridge there is a safety concern.
Ms. Butler read parts of a 2010 report that noted some areas needed improvement and others were in satisfactory condition but she feels that \$3.2 mil is more than repairs and overkill. Ms. Sgarzi noted that the report Ms. Butler is referencing is from 2010 and it's 2023 so there have been another 13 years of additional

traffic and wear and tear (weight of the vehicles) that have further deteriorated the bridge. Ms. Butler noted the Ms. Barrett said that if grants being sought aren't approved the project won't go forward. Ms. Barrett replied, yes. Ms. Butler asked what the Town share would be and how this would be put in the motion. Ms. Barrett advised that the Town share is 25% or up to \$812,500. Ms. Rogers asked about the feedback from the neighbors since previous bridges have been controversial with neighbors. Ms. Sgarzi advised that the neighbors feedback has been positive. Ms. Richards asked why a study hasn't been done since 2010. Ms. Sgarzi advised that it has been on their capital list for 18 years and Town Meeting approved the design phase which is almost complete and they are ready to move to the construction phase, which is this article. Mr. Lalley asked about the weight limit. Ms. Sgarzi advised that this bridge has the most restrictive weight limit in Town. The consultant from SLR noted that the most significant safety factor was the weight limit and the deck width. The weight limit prohibits fire trucks from crossing the bridge and the deck width makes it impossible for two vehicles to pass simultaneously. Mr. Zupperoli motioned to approve Article 4 to Town Meeting. Ms. Strawn second. Ms. Rogers supports all items in Article 4 but feels the Bartlett Road Bridge desperately needs to be safer. Mr. Lalley supports the bridge replacement and feels the Town will be at a greater the risk if we don't move forward. Mr. Richards echoes the sentiment of Ms. Rogers and Mr. Lalley. Motion carried unanimously 11-0-0.

Article 9 - Municipal Airport Capital Supplemental Appropriation – Mr. Cardillo, Airport Manager, discussed the Environmental Assessment (EA) request for an additional supplemental appropriation of \$183,000. The total cost of the EA is \$375,000 and \$167,000 was approved at Spring 2022 Town Meeting Article 9 A30. Grant funding will be based on the total cost of \$375,000 and the Federal share will be 90% and the State share will be 5%. The airport's 5% share will be from Airport Retained Earnings.

Additionally, the Airport is requesting an additional supplemental appropriation of \$50,000 for the State Police Hangar Insulation Replacement approved at the Spring 2022 Town Meeting Article 9 A31 due to increased construction and materials costs.

Mr. Lalley motion to approve Article 9 to Town Meeting. Mr. Lawlor second. Motion carried unanimously 11-0-0.

Article 10 - Municipal Airport Sewerage Treatment Plant Upgrade Supplemental Appropriation – Mr. Cardillo advised that he is requesting a supplemental appropriation of \$1,931,270 for Spring 2022 Town Meeting Article 4 B1. Mr. Cardillo advised that since the original request the airport has gone out to bid for the sewer treatment plant upgrades and the bid came in much higher than the engineers estimate therefore they need to request supplemental funding. The bid amount is \$4,200,000 and the airport has previous funding totaling \$2,268,730 so they are requesting an increase of \$1,931,270. Ms. Lynne Barrett, Finance Director, advised that the balance after ARPA funding and grants would probably be through borrowing and then paid back from airport retained earnings. Mr. Lalley asked what the original project budget was. Ms. Barrett discussed the lengthy process of estimates and there were a lot of numbers going back and forth. The engineer estimated \$2.5 mil but then the DPW requested their engineer peer review the design and this identified missing items and additional problems that significantly increased the quote. The construction came in a \$2,888,000. Mr. Lalley asked about the urgency and conditions that make this necessary to do now. Mr Cardillo advised that the plant was built over 20 years ago and wasn't built to the standard that a wastewater treatment plant should be and corrosive environment is resulting in the plant falling apart. Mr. Nearman motioned to approve Article 10 to Town Meeting. Ms. Richards second. Motion carried unanimously 11-0-0.

Article 13 – Purchase of Utility Owned Streetlights from Eversource – No Action. The article was withdrawn from the warrant.

Old/New/Other Business Mr. Lawlor apologized to the committee and acknowledged that he can really get involved in the issue and will pay better attention to structure and will refrain from being unfriendly to the presenters. He

appreciates the committees patience while he learns the process.

Next week's meetings are cancelled. There will be one more meeting prior to Town meeting to finish last minute details. Chairman Canty advised that Town Meeting will hybrid and if anyone wants to attend virtually please let us know. Ms. Richards reminded everyone to return the big binder books to Jeanette White after Town Meeting.

Public Comment None.

Adjournment - Ms. Rogers motioned to adjourn. Mr. Lawlor second. Motion carried unanimously 11-0-0. The meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM

Submitted by
Jeanette White
Budget Analyst