

## MEMO FROM HARBOR DEPARTMENT

FROM: Dennis Jason, Harbormaster

TO: Board of Selectmen

RE: Harbor Status Report and Recommendations

DATE: February 22, 2016

Dear BOS:

Now that the FinCom meetings are over and before the Town Meeting rush it seems appropriate to report what the Harbor has been or is doing.

**POWER PEDESTALS:** We have ordered 7 pedestals to replace the outdated and worn out utility pedestals on the West Dock. We researched and selected a very high quality SS Lighthouse Pedestal (same as on new transient dock) with various utility options including 30 and 50 amp service outlets and several hose bibs. While researching the pedestals we learned that they are intended to be installed with the hose bibs facing AWAY from the slips which will help prevent the damage inflicted by careless or less skilled boaters when they back in to a slip. Broken off faucets has been a constant complaint and has also caused further damage to the existing pedestals. Interestingly they were installed backwards on the new transient docks. We have been informed by the Eaton Corporation, which makes the pedestals, that in fact they should not be covered as the stainless steel construction makes them virtually impervious to damage and covering them, particularly with shrink wrap, could cause moisture to build up inside the cover causing damage. We intend to store the new pedestals in the harbor shack when they arrive and have been talking to electrical contractors about the installation. We will need to hire both a plumber and an electrician to complete the installation which will be accomplished by the summer season.

**SLIPS AND MOORINGS:** All of the slips and mooring permits have been allocated (no slips were transferred this year and only 5 moorings). We continue on with the policy of urging folks, and families in particular who are depending on a mooring in the name of an elderly parent, to place their names on the various waiting lists.

We received, yesterday, the minutes from the January 19<sup>th</sup> meeting about the decision for Everett Poole's narrow slip and also about the decision to take names off the slip waiting lists according to size of boat. We remind you that the state mandates that we maintain, and utilize a strictly chronological list for mooring, and in our Rules and Regulations (Section II L) it states: "The Harbormaster shall assign slips from these lists according to availability and as appropriate for each boat."

PILINGS: We have plans to replace about 10 pilings this spring and are in the process of asking for bids. The funding is already in place.

Meanwhile one of the fishermen advised us on February 17<sup>th</sup> that one of the pilings (installed last year) marking the Town Line up in Menemsha Pond had been broken off, apparently by the dredging operation. It appears that this was reported to the Executive Secretary, but not to the harbor, about a month ago and there have been ongoing negotiations with Aquinnah to replace it. One of the possible vendors spoke to me on February 18<sup>th</sup> and expressed concern about issues surrounding payment. From Tim I understand that there is some thought that Chilmark will pay for the piling although in fact it should be a joint obligation of the Towns and they should be reimbursed by the dredging company. I have an alternative plan which would provide a better line which is easier to sight and easier to maintain. Leave one piling mid way but install a visible day marker to the SW on the Aquinnah pond shore and another to the NE near Edy's Island. Thus any mariner or fishermen would be able to position themselves so that they can see the piling and the day marker and know instantly the location of the line. This works more effectively than two pilings as there is always a visible reference on shore, and it would be considerably less expensive. In the future, please be advised that the Harbormaster should be informed immediately when such a problem is reported.

NAVIGATIONAL AIDS: We have been arranging for some reasonably priced but effective aids to navigation (ordered from the Chilmark Chandlery) to use in the Channel and Pond. In addition we have been in discussions with BM1 Justin Perry from the Woods Hole Aids to Navigation group about providing Coast Guard installed and maintained secondary navigational buoys along the Channel up into the Pond as I have informed and shown several of you on the charts. Historically the Coast Guard did install and maintain several in addition to the existing #4 but they disappeared over the years. So far the response has been encouraging and we have provided them with an informational packet and asked for a decision although the aids will not be placed until after the dredging is complete. While we've been discussing this with the Coast Guard we have been, very recently, informed that Tim drafted a letter of recommendation (in late January or early February) to the FinCom recommending putting this purchase in abeyance. We were not informed of this nor did we see a copy of the actual communication until last week (the 19<sup>th</sup> of February). The Navigational Aids that we have ordered are \$755.00 plus the installation and we highly recommend their installation for the next season.

HARBOR BOAT: For months, we have been discussing with various vendors, including Defender Industries in Waterford, Connecticut, the purchase of a secondary harbor boat. The first choice is a rigid bottom RIB with a center console, large enough to accommodate the already existing 40 hp outboard currently stored at Don Edgar's in OB. On January 29<sup>th</sup> (by e-mail sent from Tim the night before) we were asked to provide information about the proposed boat for the upcoming BOS meeting. We were unable to get a firm price but we did provide a memo outlining what was proposed. It certainly was a surprise to learn, following the FinCom meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> of February (I believe) that that purchase would also be "held in abeyance until January of 2017." Again the Harbor Department knew nothing of this, received

no communication, and have only just had a chance to read that letter. We did, subsequent to the actual FinCom meeting, receive a copy of a quote from Defender. The hull for a 2015 Defender 430 Rescue RIB with a gray hull and red tubes would have cost \$5492 (including a municipality discount) while installing the console, bench seat, steering cables, fuel/water separator and battery installation would have brought the cost to \$8,030.97. That was significantly over the \$6,000 which was the budgeted item approved by the STM particularly since we would still need to arrange for transport. However we felt that the RIB is a good choice since it would provide the harbor with a very visible, viable and useful boat which should, with careful maintenance, last upwards of 10 years. It also would utilize the already existing outboard; it is a 40 hp which mandates a certain size and type of RIB. The boat would be useful around the harbor and Pond for various tasks.

SEASONAL STAFF: We have redrafted a simple ad to run soliciting applications for the four seasonal harbor staff (assistant HM and assistant Wharfingers – we have to advertise even though several prior staff have advised us that they wish to return and we would welcome them) and turned it in on the 18<sup>th</sup>. We were then informed, by Dilly, that there have been negotiations underway to extend the previous 16 week limit rule for seasonal employees to just under 20 weeks. This is a limit that actually works much better for the harbor. As you know the college kids get out early (when they are anxious to work) and have to leave for school in late August (when we really need them) so the Harbor is always scrambling from Labor Day on to staff the office adequately and efficiently. Although I applaud this initiative it would have been helpful to know about it as we could accurately respond to inquiries (and yes, we have had inquiries) and to provide some input.

Some of these communication problems are because the Harbor administrator (Ginny) is only in Town Hall a maximum of about 8 hours a week at this time of year and usually less. I, of course, am normally down around the Harbor periodically during the day, and always available by phone or through the communications center but am very seldom in Town Hall.

We have a suggestion on how to improve communication, to extend the courtesy of timely information to the staff, and to help the harbor staff more efficiently and effectively manage the harbor. It is that all proposals, new projects, negotiations, suggestions or financial decisions affecting the Harbor (or the budget) be communicated IN WRITING via memo as well as verbally and/or by e-mail to me in a timely fashion and before any actions are taken. I may not always be very diplomatic about what is being proposed or written but I would appreciate the opportunity to know what is going on and to have some input. Further, it is a matter of basic courtesy and there is far less muddle. I find, in dealing with various vendors, that when several people are dealing with them, or negotiating, that there are misunderstandings, and confusion which lead to upsets and even angry vendors. We attempt to maintain a good working relationship and clear communication channels with our vendors. Indeed, when we were talking about the broken piling the vendor informed me in very expressive language of his opinions about the process of several past projects. And they weren't pretty. Since he is a very capable and reasonably priced vendor keeping him happy, is important.

We believe that the funding for some of these projects is available from the waterways fund and does not require any Town action except the transfer. Funding for the pilings is part of an existing warrant article and future appropriations for this ongoing project.

As always please ask if you have questions or with comments.

Thank you.

Dennis Jason, Harbormaster