

**ADVISORY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
January 14, 2015**

A meeting of the Advisory & Finance Committee was held on Wednesday, January 14, 2015. 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 **Fourteen members of the committee were present:**
Cornelius Bakker, Kevin Canty, Richard Gladdys, Michael Hanlon, Kevin Hennessey, Michael Hourahan, Shelagh Joyce, Ethan Kusmin, Kevin Lynch, Christopher Merrill, John Moody, Harry Salerno, Marc Sirrico, Charles Stevens

ABSENT **One member of the committee was absent:**
Harry Helm

AGENDA ITEMS

RESERVE FUND TRANSFER REQUEST

Chad Hunter, Harbor Master, requested a Reserve Fund Transfer of \$3,632 to pay for the repair of a raw water pump on the Harbormaster MU-1 (Protector). Water was leaking through the mechanical seal. They tried several times to reseal it but it continued to leak and caused the metal to deteriorate. Brewer Marine is able to do the work for \$3,632. The current balance of the Repair and Maintenance line item is \$1,930.01 which will not cover the cost of the repair. This vessel is the only TOP vessel that is in the water year round ready to respond to emergencies, patrol and maintain the harbor during the coldest months so it is imperative that it be repaired.

Questions:

- What caused it to break? (K Lynch) Over time the seal breaks down and the metal deteriorates when it comes in contact with the salt water.
- Is it under warranty? (K Lynch) It is 10 years old and is not under warranty.
- Did you receive any other estimates other than Brewer Marine? (R Gladdys) There are only 2 Yan Mar dealers in the area, Brewer Marine in Plymouth and Long Point Marine in Duxbury, both are similar in price and Long Point is considerably farther away. Brewer did discount he price of the pump from \$2,900 to \$1,985 for the pump alone. So we decided to go with Brewer.

Michael Hanlon made a motion to approve the Reserve Fund Transfer Request of \$3,632 to the Harbor Master to pay for the repair. Christopher Merrill, second. The motion carries unanimously (13-0-0).

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING ARTICLE PRESENTATIONS

Article 11: Town Promotion Fund

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from the Town Promotion Fund created pursuant to Chapter 4 of the Acts of 1993, a sum or sums of money for programs and projects that enhance the beautification, recreational resources, public safety, promotional and marketing activities, events, services and public improvements, or take any other action relative thereto.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Lee Hartmann, Director of Planning & Development, presented Article 11. Paul Cripps, Executive Director of Destination Plymouth, was also in attendance to answer questions. Tourism is a large revenue generator for Plymouth, generating \$350 million per year. \$20 million of that is from hotel/motel room sales. In 1993 Plymouth successfully petitioned the state for special legislation to allow 45% of the hotel/motel room tax to be used to promote Plymouth, the other 55% going to the General Fund. For every dollar generated from this tax, \$4-5 is matched from the members of Destination Plymouth. Very few towns make this type of investment in tourism.

In 2015, the receipts collected through the 6% Hotel/Motel Tax totaled \$1,190,753.88, 45% of which goes into the Promotion Fund. Therefore the total FY16 funding to be approved for the Town Promotions budget is \$535,839. The Visitor Services Board oversees expenditures from the Promotion Fund. Estimated costs include:

- Promotions contract with Destination Plymouth: \$222,000
- Operations contract for Water Street Visitors Information Center: \$ 42,000
- Public improvements (including \$10,000 towards new Town Hall): \$ 53,584
- Salaries: \$ 600
- Event funding and additional marketing: \$172,655
- Distinguished visitors: \$ 5,000
- 2020 celebrations: \$ 40,000
- Total: \$535,839

Questions:

- Where is the Water Street Visitors Center? (K Hennessey) By the Memorial Hall parking lot, next to Al's, not to be confused with the small booth by Isaac's. The Water Street Visitors Center is fairly large and has male and female restrooms.
- Are there plans for the Visitors Center on Route 25 to reopen? (C Stevens) Cape Cod Chamber handles that building and reopening may depend on state funding.
- Who decides on which events receive funding and how much? (S Joyce) The Visitors Service Board decides and they try to spread the funding around. Organizations that receive funding must be non-profit whose purpose is creating events in Plymouth and they must guarantee a 4 to 1 match (for every dollar they receive from the Promotion Fund, they receive a minimum of \$4 from elsewhere).
- Is the contract with Destination Plymouth a multi-year contract? (C Merrill) Yes it is a three year contract and goes out to bid every three years.

Michael Hanlon made a motion to recommend Article 11 appropriating \$535,839 for the Town Promotion Fund. Kevin Hennessey, second. The motion carries unanimously (13-0-0).

Article 17: Transfer Parcel to Affordable Housing – Cutter Drive

To see if the Town will vote to transfer the following parcels from the Town Treasurer to the Affordable Housing Trust for the purpose of affordable housing:

<u>Parcel ID</u>	<u>Road</u>	<u>Legal Reference</u>	<u>Tax Title</u>
050-001-329-000	17 Cutter Drive	Land Court #103055	#12069

Or take any other action relative thereto.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Lee Hartmann, Director of Planning & Development, presented Article 17 and started with a quick overview of Affordable Housing in Plymouth. State law requires that 10% of housing must be affordable and if a town does not meet that minimum it is susceptible to 40B housing developments. We are not at 10% but are working towards that goal to minimize our exposure to that law. The median income in Plymouth for a family of 4 is \$94,100. 48% of Plymouth families are considered low to moderate income. The median house price in Plymouth is \$308,000, families must make a minimum of \$83,236 to afford a house at that price. If they make 80% of that, or \$67,750, the maximum house price they can afford is \$248,000. Keep in mind these are working families.

Article 17 asks that a lot the Town owns be transferred to the care and custody of the Affordable Housing Trust. The current house, at 17 Cutter Drive in Ocean Air, has been destroyed twice by fire and is boarded up. They will demolish the current house, secure the site, build a new house, put a deed restriction on it as affordable housing, and then sell it. There will not be a request for any funding. This is a great way to take care of a neighborhood problem at no cost to the town.

Questions:

- Where does the funding come from? (M Hourahan) It comes from the Affordable Housing Trust and from community development grants from the federal government.
- Where does Plymouth stand with the state law requiring 10%? (C Merrill) We are at 3 ½% which is below the middle rank wise compared to other towns.
- What is the state time line? (C Merrill) Everything we do helps, we just need to illustrate that we are working towards that goal.
- What is the lot worth? (H Salerno) The land is valued at \$100,000.
- We are at 3 ½% and the goal is 10%, who is responsible for reaching that and is there a plan to progress aggressively? The Planning Board and Planning Department are responsible and are looking at every possibility, including partnering with Habitat for Humanity. To reach the 10% it will require thousands more units.
- How do other towns reach 10%? (K Lynch) Not sure any suburbs that have reached it. It is much easier in urban areas with higher density.
- Is it true modular houses are not included in the state's count? (M Hanlon) Yes, the state does not count mobile homes on wheels towards the 10%, and there are a lot of mobile homes in Plymouth.
- To request the state to count those would we need to contact our legislators and have them make the request? (K Lynch) Yes
- Regarding the deed restriction, if a family's income increases past the maximum allowed level can they stay in the house? (K Canty) Yes, as long as they were eligible when they purchased the home they can stay in the home.
- Doesn't a bank have a lien on the property? (J Moody) Either there was no lien to begin with or a bank chose not to enforce the lien.
- Is there an opportunity to do this with other vacant houses? (K Lynch) If a house is vacant a bank usually owns it and pays taxes on it, if taxes are not paid then the town can take the property.

Michael Hourahan made a motion to recommend Article 17. Michael Hanlon, second. The motion carries unanimously (13-0-0).

Article 1: Elections & Annual Business Meeting

To choose all necessary Town Officers, the following to be voted for all on one ballot, viz.:

One Selectman for three years; One Selectman for one year; Three members of the Plymouth School Committee for three years; One member of the Planning Board for five years and One Member of the Planning Board for three years; One member of the Redevelopment Authority for five years; One member of the Housing Authority and also a total of Forty-eight (48) Town Meeting Members, Three members from each precinct for three years, One member from Precinct 7, One member from Precinct 11, and One member from Precinct 13 for one year;

Further, and in the name of the Commonwealth, you are directed to notify and warn the Inhabitants of Plymouth qualified to consider and vote on articles at the Annual Business Meeting of the Town of Plymouth to meet at Plymouth North High School, on Saturday, the Eleventh Day of April, 2015, at 8:00AM to act on the following articles to wit:

John Moody reported that there is no vote needed with Article 1. We just wanted to review it and note that it sets the stage for Town Meeting.

Article 2: Reports of Boards/Officers/Committees

To hear the reports of the several Boards and Officers and Committees of the Town thereon, or take any other action relative thereto.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

John Moody reported that Article 2 is an annual housekeeping type article. Approval of this article is required for the Town to accept reports from boards and committees.

Christopher Merrill made a motion to recommend Article 2. Michael Hanlon, second. The motion carries unanimously (12-0-1). Kevin Lynch, abstained.

Article 4: Continuation of Committees

To see what action the Town will take pursuant to Chapter 173 of the General By-Laws regarding the formation, reformation, organization, continuation or discharge of existing Committees created by vote of Town Meeting, or take any other action relative thereto.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

John Moody reported that Article 4 is also an annual housekeeping type article. Committees are reviewed periodically and come up for renewal every three years. There are three committees up for renewal this year: the West Plymouth Steering Committee, the Manomet Steering Committee, and the Plymouth Harbor Committee.

Michael Hanlon made a motion to recommend Article 4. Cornelius Bakker, second. The motion carries unanimously (13-0-0).

Article 6: Salaries of Elected Town Officials

To see what action the Town will take pursuant to G.L. c.41, §108 with regard to fixing the salaries of elected Town Officials, or take any other action relative thereto.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

John Moody reported that this is another article that appears annually. In the meeting packet there is a memo from Assistant Town Manager, Michael Galla, requesting the same salaries in FY16 as FY15 for elected Town Officials.

Questions:

- Why did their salaries increase so much several years ago? (K Lynch) John Moody said that at that time a survey had been done to see what area towns were paying their elected officials. Marc Sirrico pointed out that the salaries also changed in response to the elected officials losing their health care benefits.

Michael Hanlon made a motion to recommend Article 6. Harry Salerno, second. The motion carries unanimously (13-0-0).

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

OLD / NEW / OTHER BUSINESS

Annual Town Report

Chairman John Moody reported that all departments and committees prepare a report and provide it to the Town Clerk to be published in the Annual Town Report. Chairman Moody shared a draft of his report and asked for feedback before it goes to print. He also said that Town Clerk, Laurence Pizer, has asked that committees vote to approve their reports.

Discussion/Questions:

- Can we have 7 days to review? (K Lynch) No, report is past due.
- Regarding “lackluster commercial growth”, it is important to note that the last 2 Town Meetings had articles proposing raising height restrictions and both articles were voted down. (C Stevens). Taxes will be raised annually if we do not pass raising the height restrictions. (C Merrill). That point really must be driven home. (C Stevens). John Moody will add it to his report and noted that there is a group that is passionate about Plymouth maintaining its small town feel and are concerned about the impact that taller buildings will have on that feel.
- Is it appropriate to put the impact of dollar amounts, tax rate impact, of projects coming online in next few years? (S Joyce)
- Or maybe a possibility of a different commercial tax rate? (S Joyce) John Moody said that split tax rates are complex. Since 78% of tax base is residential, shifting the burden to the 22% commercial/industrial base would be significant, would have to double the commercial/industrial rate just to drop the residential rate by 10 cents.
- Interesting to learn at Selectmen meeting that the state is no longer going to fund charter schools. (S Joyce)
- Likes the use of words “lackluster commercial growth”, as a commercial real estate broker knows businesses avoid coming to Plymouth because of all of the hoops they have to jump through to get permits to open a business in this town so they are crossing border where it is easier and cheaper to open a business. (R Gladdys)
- Of the 22% commercial/industrial, is the power plant in that? (E Kusmin) Lynne Barrett, Director of Finance, said that yes Entergy is 7% of that 22%.

- There was discussion about emailing suggestions for report, possibility of emailing approval, the lack of transparency that might cause, sharing vote at next meeting, and it was finally decided that the best way to proceed would be for the committee to vote to authorize Chairman Moody to finalize and submit the report to the Town Clerk.

Harry Salerno made a motion to authorize Chairman Moody to finalize the report based on feedback received and submit the final report to the Town Clerk. Michael Hanlon, second. The motion carries unanimously (13-0-0).

Committee Liaison Updates

Capital Improvement Committee: Ethan Kusmin reported that he attended that Capital Improvement Committee meeting. It was an all day meeting where they reviewed all of the capital requests from each department (items over \$15,000 with a minimum 5 year life span). The committee hears all the requests and then ranks them. He said it was a great education but difficult to take the money out of consideration and rank based on the merit/value of the item and how it compares to the other items. Lynne Barrett added that the committee has a set of criteria to help them such as safety, age, deterioration, etc. They look at how important a project is and how it fits within the community. The Town Manager looks very closely at the CIC rankings when coming up with her recommendations.

Charter Review Committee: Kevin Lynch attended the Charter Review Committee meeting as an observer. He said there was a lot of interesting discussion. He hopes to attend more of their meetings.

Plymouth Growth & Development Corporation: Michael Hanlon reported that he has not been able to attend a meeting since November because they meet at the same time as Advisory & Finance usually. The group did not receive the TIGER Grant that they were hoping to receive for the parking garage project behind Memorial Hall. They are going to apply again and are still moving forward with the design. They are also looking ahead to where a second parking garage might make sense.

Revenue Ideas Taskforce: John Moody said that the Revenue Ideas Taskforce is working on their next 5 recommendations. They are looking into SILOTS and GILOTS as a possible way to receive something on a voluntary basis from organizations that don't pay property taxes. SILOT is Service In Lieu of Taxes and GILOT is Gift in Lieu of Taxes. They are a 9 member committee, with only 6 active members.

Budget Review Process and Suggested Schedule

John Moody reported that the Board of Selectmen approved their FY 2016 budget last night. He handed out a budget review process and suggested schedule. Final subcommittee reports are due by February 19th. Subcommittee Chairs will be making presentations at our public hearing on February 25th. John Moody will email the subcommittee report template to the Chairs. Michael Hanlon will email the preferred format for revolving accounts.

Chairman Moody thanked the Advisory and Finance Committee members for attending last night's budget presentation at the Board of Selectmen's meeting. He asked members if they had any thoughts or comments about the meeting or budget presentation.

- Kevin Hennessey is going to be diving in to the health insurance premiums to see what he can discover there. Lynne Barrett said that the premiums are increasing 12% which correlates with a 7 ½% increase in the member insurance budget overall.
- Charles Stevens says that the state must be told to stop unfunded mandates, voters are leaving the state because taxes keep going up with no end in sight.
- Shelagh Joyce said that lots of people were in attendance at the Selectmen’s meeting but it was disheartening when half the room cleared out after the brewery hearing
- Ethan Kusmin noted that the Selectmen added \$70,000 to the budget for 2020. He said there was a presentation made 4 years ago at a Selectmen’s meeting about Jamestown’s 400th celebration and he would like to hear that presentation again about what the upsides, expectations and longer term effects were. Charles Stevens agreed that it would be great if that speaker would come back and make a presentation.
- Shelagh Joyce said that originally the meals tax was going to be divided 50/50 between the Burial Hill project and 2020 celebration then it was changed to 100% for the new Town Hall.
- Charles Stevens asked when the borrowing for Town Hall would show up in the budget. Lynne Barrett said that during the start-up phase the town borrows temporarily so you will see Town Hall notes in the FY2016 Short Term Interest budget.

MEETING MINUTES

- December 17, 2014: **Cornelius Bakker made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of December 17, 2014. Harry Salerno, second. The motion carries unanimously (10-0-3). Shelagh Joyce, Charles Stevens, and Michael Hourahan, abstained.**

ADJOURNMENT

**Michael Hanlon moved for adjournment. Kevin Hennessey, second. The motion for adjournment carries unanimously (13-0-0).
The meeting adjourned at 8:50PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Kere Gillette