

**ADVISORY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes**  
**September 6, 2023, Hybrid Meeting**

**PRESENT**     **14 members of the committee were present:** Gail Butler, Louis Cabana, Brian Dunn, Daniel Green, Bruce Howard, Joe Lalley, Timothy Lawlor, Steve Nearman, Lorenzo Pizarro, Christine Richards, Bethany Rogers, Ashley Shaw, Jim Young, and Robert Zupperoli.

**ABSENT**     **1 member of the committee was absent:** Evelyn Strawn

**Call to Order** - The meeting was called to order by Chairman Steve Nearman 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](http://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](http://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**

**Fall Town Meeting Articles**

**Article 2A Supplemental Budget – General Fund**

Ms. Lynne Barrett, Finance Director, announced that the DPW Facilities/Maintenance had withdrawn their request for an electrician and tools/equipment to support this position. Therefore, the Sub-Committee D supplemental amount being requested is decreased to \$670,777 and Article 2A total is \$1,038,201.

Chairman Nearman discussed the articles and advised the committee that Article 2 items would be voted by Sub-Committee.

**Sub-Committee A**

Mr. Dunn asked if the support staff for the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) was their request or the Town making that decision for them. Derek Brindisi, Town Manager, advised that the Town has noticed that these big Committees need support and they wish to provide them with support. Mr. Lawlor asked the Town Manager if they had consulted directly with the CPC about the support staff. Mr. Brindisi replied, yes, it was brought to the committee and the vote passed. Mr. Lawlor asked if the 20 hours/week was enough. Mr. Brindisi said he thought it would be. Mr. Lawlor asked how the hiring process would be conducted. Mr. Brindisi advised that CPC would have input as to the responsibilities but the Town will decide where the position falls within the Town classifications. Further, Mr. Brindisi said the Town will advertise the position and hire the appropriate person according to the Town guidelines. Ms. Richards asked if it would be a union position. Mr. Brindisi replied yes. Ms. Richards asked why the position would be under the

Town Manager budget. Mr. Brindisi said it was because he was leading this charge. He said that later it may be moved to a more appropriate department for oversight. Ms. Richards is concerned with how this position will satisfy both Committee needs. Ms. Shaw said that funding for a new position should be during the budget process not Fall Town meeting. Mr. Brindisi said that CPC had already funded for a part-time position and if they don't combine them now the part-time person may not want to go full-time and he would prefer to hire one full-time employee than 2 part-time employees. Ms. Rogers asked if there was a legal conflict to having a support person employed by the Town. Mr. Brindisi said many other Towns have support for CPC. Ms. Rogers asked if CPC wants a Town employee for their support. Mr. Brindisi said that doesn't matter the Town is the hiring authority. Mr. Pizarro asked if they have support now and have, they asked for support in the past. Mr. Brindisi said they don't currently have support but have asked the Town for certain reports and other clerical services and the Town Manager recognizes they have needs and would like to hire a person to prepare their reports and provide other tasks that they ask for.

Mr. Howard asked if the adjustment to Article 2A was the elimination of the electrician and tools for the Facilities department. Mr. Brindisi replied yes. Mr. Howard advised that the Capital Improvement Committee (CIC) had just considered this Facilities capital item earlier in the day. Ms. Barrett advised that the decision happened after the CIC meeting.

Ms. Shaw asked for an explanation on the salary requests. Mr. Brindisi said that one of his goals was to start a quality improvement process so he formed a quality improvement council, consisting of 3 current employees, that receive and review requests from departments for assistance with process improvement. The council pulls the problem apart and comes up with solutions. In the last year they have solved 4 problems and he appreciates that they have taken on this secondary duty and would like to reward each of these employees with a \$1,000 annual stipend. Ms. Richards asked who the 3 employees were and asked why the Department Heads aren't solving these problems. Mr. Brindisi advised that Department Heads have full responsibilities already and that the council members are from different departments and work to identify the problem, solve the problem, and come up with solutions. He said there can be a breakdown in the process and it needs to be challenged by someone with no vested interest.

Ms. Shaw asked about the Town Clerk salary increases. Ms. McElreath explained that she was upgraded to a Department Head and that entitled her to vacation buy back which had not been budgeted and this would increase the budget for that. Additionally, there was an increase in hourly rate for poll workers and wardens which hadn't been budgeted for so the Election salaries budget needs to be increased. Ms. Shaw asked about the Election Equip Rental for voting. Ms. McElreath advised it was for printing addresses on the Vote by Mail ballots and would save on manual addressing costs.

Mr. Howard asked why the Inspectional Service budget was coming up now and not during the budget process. Mr. Brindisi advised that Inspectional Services has an Article 5 Blight/Nuisance bylaw on the Fall Town Meeting that if approved will need enforcement. The Inspectional Services request is to enforce the bylaw and remediate the problem. The \$125,000 is not for staff but compliance enforcement such as contract services to take a building down. Mr. Dunn asked if Article 5 Blight bylaw didn't pass would the \$125,000 be returned to free cash. Mr. Brindisi replied that the \$125,000 wouldn't be used if Article 5 failed and would be returned to free cash at the end of the year.

Ms. Shaw motioned to separate Line item #3, Salaries - COPC Support in the amount of \$25,000 from Sub-committee A. Ms. Rogers second. Ms. Shaw stated that new positions should be handled during the budget Sub-Committee process and everyone has proper notice of the agenda and the appropriate Sub-Committee can evaluate the request. Mr. Zupperoli asked for clarification on what the vote meant. Mr. Nearman said the vote is to separate the COPC salary request from the Sub-Committee A vote. Motion carried 11-2-0. Ms. Rogers would like to see a job description for this position prior to budgeting for it and would like to revisit this in the spring.

Ms. Butler motioned to approve Sub-Committee A without the \$25,000 Line item #3, Salaries -COPC Support. Mr. Lalley second. Mr. Lalley would like input from people out of the department, such as the quality council, as this can help resolve an issue before it can get worse. Motion carried unanimously (13-0-0)

Mr. Howard motioned to approve Sub-Committee A Line 3 Salaries - COPC Support. Mr. Dunn second. Mr. Zupperoli likes the idea of a combined position of the CPC and COPC and feels that putting it off to the spring doesn't do either of

these committees any good. Mr. Lalley supports this request and feels a full-time position is necessary. Motion carries 7-6-0.

### **Sub-Committee B**

Ms. Butler asked about the OT amount of \$8,834 for the Charter Committee and why they were paying so much for OT. Ms. Barrett, Finance Director, advised that David Golden, Charter Committee Chair, met with Ms. Barrett regarding providing support for the Charter Committee and based on the meetings scheduled from now to June 30 they came up with a budget. The same person that provided support to the Charter Commission will provide support to Charter Committee.

Mr. Lawlor asked Mr. Young, IT Director, to explain the \$86,097 Open Gov Annual Maintenance package to the committee. Mr. Young advised that this pertains to the Town online permitting and payment system hadn't been budgeted for year two. The department of Inspectional Services took care of the first-year billing in their budget for this system and the communication regarding this being moved to the IT department in year two was missed and therefore it wasn't budgeted by either department. Mr. Lawlor noted that there were two levels of service and which did the Town have. Mr. Young responded that the Town has premium service and is getting premium service. The difference between the two levels of service is response time and a dedicated contact person. Mr. Lawlor asked how often the Town uses the service and Mr. Young said that it was used 5 times that day and all 5 calls were in the urgent category. Ms. Rogers said it was her understanding that this was something that was already contracted but needed to be paid. Mr. Young responded yes.

Mr. Lalley motioned to approve Sub-Committee B. Mr. Howard second. Motion carried unanimously (13-0-0)

Mr. Lawlor sees that we need support for this product but noted that the standard service has a 1-hour response for urgent calls, which is the same as premium service so the only difference he equates to premium service is the dedicated contact person. Mr. Lawlor feels the cost for this dedicated contact is pretty steep. Ms. Richards supports this service, which is vital to the smooth operation of the online system.

### **Sub Committee C**

Ms. Barrett, Finance Director, spoke, on behalf of the Police Chief, that all of Sub-Committee C items are related to the transfer of the dispatchers to the Plymouth County Sheriff's Department (PCSD). The changes are to move the budgeted funds to the appropriate line item to pay the contractual commitment for the dispatchers salaries and benefits to the PCSD. These transfers have a net effect of zero.

Mr. Young motioned to approve Sub-Committee C. Mr. Lawlor second. Motion carried unanimously 13-0-0.

### **Sub-committee D**

Mr. Nick Faiella, Parks & Forestry Superintendent, advised that he is requesting an increase of \$10,000 to his budget for specialized graffiti removal services. Mr. Faiella showed pictures of the graffiti at the skate park but noted that it occurred all around town. Mr. Lee Hartmann, Planning Director, added that there is a town effort, through an internal committee, to report these vandalism's to town property and private property to the police, provide better lighting and security cameras, and not just to clean up the mess but minimize the occurrences. Ms. Butler asked if there were security camera's at the skate park. Mr. Hartmann said there were but they hoped to get more on private businesses around town utilizing monies from the Visitor's Center next year.

Ms. Barrett presented the Snow & Ice increase request. She is recommending the FY24 budget be increased to a level/average that previously has been spent from this line item. If the increased budget amount isn't all expended it flows back to free cash at the end of the year.

Mr. Rogers motioned to approve Sub-Committee D. Mr. Dunn second. Motion carried unanimously, 13-0-0

### **Sub-Committee E**

Ms. Barrett advised that positions had been cut from the library during the budget process but not this position. The

library director, Kelsy Casey, indicated in her memo that the upgrades to the Munis software caused significant problems when they were inputting their FY24 budget and multiple times their progress was erased and they had to start over. Unfortunately, a Library Technician position was excluded from the salary line item, though it was included for other benefit line items, and it went unnoticed. This was a clerical error and needs to be budgeted.

Mr. Hartmann advised that this line item, Consulting Services, got cut in 2010 and they are requesting to re-establish it. The consulting services will support numerous projects across all divisions of the Planning and Development Department. Mr. Hartmann provided a list of projects that would benefit from the technical services and expert opinions of professional consultants. Ms. Rogers asked for example of what a consultant would cost for a specific project. Mr. Hartmann said it varies but the work for the Historic District that they need would be approx. \$7,000 and the average would be \$5,000 to \$10,000. Engineering services would be higher. Mr. Cabana asked how they have been managing since 2010 without this position. Mr. Hartmann advised that they beg, borrow, and steal and have gotten assistance from the Old Colony Planning Council. Some things they have been able to do in-house and some things they have had to say no to.

Mr. Cabana made a motion to approve Sub-Committee E. Ms. Rogers second. Motion carried unanimously 13-0-0.

#### **Article 2B Supplemental Budget – Enterprise Fund**

Mr. Peter Gordon, Water Superintendent, is requesting a budget increase of \$100,000 due to increase in the cost of chemicals. Mr. Doug Pinard, Wastewater Superintendent, is requesting a budget increase of \$100,000 for utilities, \$156,000 for chemicals, \$100,000 for biosolids and \$200,000 for monitoring equipment rental costs. Both were available for questions. Ms. Butler motioned to approve. Mr. Zupperoli second. Mr. Howard asked if these costs would come from the Enterprise budgets. Both replied yes. Motion carried unanimously 13-0-0.

**Article 21 Amendment to April 2023 Annual Art 9 A38 – Funding Source** - Ms. Barrett advised that at Spring Town Meeting a Town Meeting member made a motion to change the funding source for Art 9 A38 to use an account on the Burke's Law report. The report indicated a balance of \$10,000 but the verified amount after Town Meeting was \$145, which left a deficit of \$9,855. This article is to fund the \$9,855 deficit from Sale of Lots and fix the motion. Our consultant was notified of the erroneous report calculations and the problem was rectified.

Ms. Richards motioned to approve Article 21. Mr. Pizarro second. Motion carried unanimously 13-0-0.

**Article 22 Amendment to April 2023 Annual Article 13 – Promotion Fund** - Ms. Barrett advised that this was just a cut and paste error and the recommendation of the Advisory & Finance Committee was \$1,246,406 but the motion that got voted was \$1,109,928. Mr. Lalley motioned to approve Article 22. Ms. Rogers second. Motion carried unanimously 13-0-0.

**Old/New/Other Business** - Mr. Zupperoli would like to discuss the Nip Ban. He spoke with a couple of businessmen in Town and he said that he wished he could change his vote because he was wrong and this is not the best way to reduce litter. Additionally, he feels that this bylaw change, if approved, would hurt businesses in town.

Public Comment – None.

Adjournment - Mr. Dunn motioned to adjourn. Ms. Richards second. Motion carried unanimously 13-0-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:51 PM.

Submitted by  
Jeanette White  
Budget Analyst