

**Advisory Committee Meeting
Zoom Video Conference
Wednesday, February 24, 2021, 6:30 p.m.**

Those present from Advisory Committee included Shawn Baker, Julie Bryan, Tom Cunningham, Jake Erhard, Jennifer Fallon, Neal Goins, John Lanza, Jeff Levitan, Bill Maynard, Deed McCollum, Corrine Monahan, Patti Quigley, Mary Scanlon and Doug Smith.

Julie Bryan called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

6:30 p.m. Citizen Speak

There was no one present for Citizen Speak.

6:30 p.m. Planning FY22 Operating Budget

Catherine Johnson, Chair, Planning Board (PB); Patty Mallet, PB; Kathleen Woodward, PB; Jim Roberti, PB; Tom Taylor, PB; Sheila Olsen, PB; and Don McCauley, Director of Planning were present. An introduction of the Planning Board, the definition of planning, and Planning's responsibilities were provided. Planning's FY22 budget and Planning sponsored ATM articles were presented and reviewed.

Questions and Discussion

- To whom do you talk in terms of rectifying the issues of staffing and workload, and how do you to address these needs, both the urgent ones and the ones for the future? Are there other solutions such as shifting responsibilities to other departments? What have been the conversations about fixing these larger problems?
 - We have had some but not enough of those conversations. It's become a crisis in the last ten days with Valerie, the senior planner, deciding to leave. Planning is working with HR to change Lynda's position, but the situation has been precipitated. People are hired and then they can't handle the job or the job is too much for them and they leave.
 - Many things need to be re-evaluated. Planning tends to be the stand-in for other departments. The level of work is extraordinary. During COVID there has been an increase in residential activity.
 - With respect to benchmarking, it is not only how much planners in other towns are paid but how much relative on the expected workload.
 - Planning is trying to give level service but it's not where it needs to be because of what is incoming now.
- A comment was made that it is not clear what Advisory can do on this front. However, a long-term plan to alleviate the pressure Planning is under should be developed. Maybe it includes more people in the Planning Department.
 - Planning in a suburban community is the hardest thing a community can do. In the suburban culture, a puzzle piece is taken out and then a newer and bigger piece needs to fit back into the space while preserving the character and moving forward.
- Should electronic permitting be pulled forward to pay dividends now?
 - The expectations are to be more efficient in the future. Electronic permitting streamlines the process to make it faster and to make things more sustainable.

- A comment was made that the details taken on by the Planning Board are overwhelming, and that it is a huge risk to the town if the job is not done well. In addition, the presenters were asked to clarify Planning's position on the Citizen's Petition.
 - Planning supports it with a tweak -- to not zone the entire lot Business but to include a 20-foot section as Single-Family A.
- A comment was made that it was thought the property was currently split Business and Single Family.
 - It is currently one-third Business and two-thirds Single Residence. The new configuration would be 80% Business and 20% Single Residence A which allows for parking for a business but not a business structure.
- Have other town organizational charts been reviewed to see what they do and, if Planning tasks were to be broken out into other departments, to see if there could be a way to divide up the workload?
 - There are a few factors in the discussion and Planning has taken steps to benchmark, but it's complicated and involves various factors.
- Isn't electronic permitting already being done?
 - The Building Department has electronic permitting, but there is still a lot of catching up to do. Electronic permitting would improve collaboration between the various departments – Building, Wetlands, Planning etc. Electronic permitting would build upon what Building has already done.
 - With COVID we are accepting more items electronically and posting more on the website. We are making steps forward in that way. There is an enormous amount of historical information that's critical to have when you need it.
- Did we change zoning to put the condos up, and did 2 Edgemoor get caught up in not getting changed?
 - Zoning initially adopted 100 feet north of route 9 as Business, and the line cut across lots and created split lots. The goal was to create a small corridor as Business, while beyond that would be single family residential. The goal was to keep some degree of separation between the business area and the residential area. The 100-foot line splits 2 Edgemoor between business and residential.
- Would it be effective and practical to have a person hired for \$75,000 take minutes?
 - When the Planning Department was fully staffed, it fell three years behind on minutes. This was solved by having a dedicated person to take the minutes.
- Is this person a staff member or consultant?
 - Consultant, and it started as a fill-in position and we haven't had to make it a full-time position.
- Do other departments have budgets for software and cell phones or do they go through IT?
 - It is an evolving process. We haven't looked at what other departments do. If we want people to be accessible, then we need to provide cell phones.
 - More broadly, in terms of technology, when we hire a new person into a modern progressive town we want to be able to provide a laptop. Laptops come out of department budgets. We need flexibility to work in the future.
- In terms of the \$25,000 budget line item, is it the responsibility of Planning to pay for the move during the renovation?
 - Part of the \$25,000 was used for collaborative studies. It is an operating budget item and if we don't use it then it gets turned back at the end of the year.
- Follow-up comment -- Isn't moving supposed to be capital if it is part of the renovation? Wasn't it built into the Town Hall renovation project?

Approved 3/3/2021

- Clarification was provided that IT is looking into Adobe purchases. During COVID, laptops were purchased through CARES funds. As part of the transition of people working at home due to COVID, Brian has made changes and is splitting or reducing costs with departments.
- A comment was made that it is hoped that the Planning Department can be fully staffed and the urgency recognized.
- A comment was made that prioritization seems to be missing and that all things seem equally important. What is the process and who is involved to figure out the priorities and get a resolution? Is this a Select Board problem or does this need to be worked out by Planning?
- A comment was made that Advisory wants to focus on Planning's budget and won't be able to fix the staffing or workload issues.
- A comment was made that Planning's priority has been on the development of bylaws and policies and on the broad picture. There is a hiccup on permitting, and this varies year to year. We may know soon if a person won't take position because of salary, and then we will ask the Select Board to ask HR for a reclassification and/or higher salary range within the classification.
- A comment was made that it is not possible to moving Historical out of Planning. Planning is happy to have help from everybody.

Clarification was provided from the Citizen Petition sponsor agreeing to the change proposed by Planning. Once Planning has their Public Hearing, there will be an amendment to the Article at Town Meeting.

8:05 p.m. Board of Health (BOH) FY22 Budget

Shephard Cohen, Chair, BOH; Maria Testa Simonson, BOH; Linda Grape, BOH; and Lenny Izzo, Director, Health Department were present.

A review of public health was provided. Additions to the Health Department staffing in FY21, the FY21 base budget changes, and the new requested FY22 budget were reviewed.

Questions and Discussion

- Appreciation was expressed for all the hard work the Health Department does.
- Is it anticipated the Wellesley will administer COVID vaccines, and where would money come from to do this?
 - In the current year, the Health Department delivered vaccines to first responders. This was funded from the budget and some money came from the health trust fund and CARES. There is no charge for the COVID vaccine itself. Staffing has been public health nurses. The Health Department also has an extensive volunteer list of medical volunteers that has been vetted. The Health Department relies on volunteers as well as core staff.

8:20 p.m. Select Board (SB) FY22 Budget Refresh and Warrant Article Review

Meghan Jop, Executive Director; Amy Frigulietti, Assistant Executive Director; Sheryl Strother, Finance Director; Marjorie Freiman, Chair, SB; Lise Olney, SB; and Beth Sullivan Woods, SB were present.

SB Warrant Articles were reviewed:

- The Warrant will be reposted on Tuesday to reflect the addition of Article 36. The new article 36 is for the dispatch radio system replacement and has been part of the 5-year capital plan. This was inadvertently left off the Warrant.

- The SB and Executive Director will be back to Advisory on March 24 to review the Town Wide Financial Plan and to provide a detailed review of Article 8.
- Article 7 FY21 Supplemental appropriations were reviewed.
- Article 10 and 11 Stabilization Funds were reviewed.
- The SB Special Capital projects were reviewed in Article 17 and Article 36.
- Article 20 Uber/Lyft funds was reviewed.
- Article 21, a reduction in required seats for alcohol licensing, was reviewed.
- Articles 26 and 27 regarding the Affordable Housing Trust were reviewed.
- The SB's General Articles 31, 32, 33, 34, and 35 were reviewed.

Questions and Discussion

- Is the authorization for disposal of property just to approve the disposal?
 - Yes, it authorizes the SB to put it out for sale.
- Has there been any discussion of the new minimum number of people required for liquor licenses?
 - Anywhere from 20 to 30, but additional feedback is needed. Local restaurant owners think a good target is 24 to 26 to support a good business model.
- Are members of the Affordable Housing Trust (AHT) appointed and not elected? Is there any controversy to appointing members to this?
 - These would be appointed positions that are two years. In the first round of appointments, terms will be staggered. Who knows if it would a controversial position, but it is a need in town that needs to be filled
- Who is the point person to work with Advisory on AHT?
 - Meghan Jop. Amy Frigulietti is the point person on the alcohol provision.
- Where does the number of licenses available come from – is that what the town has or is the state giving more?
 - This is what the town has – 29 licenses – ten are all alcohol and six are beer and wine.
- How much CPC money from the Housing Development Corp. goes back to CPC and then is voted to the AHT?
 - \$600,000
- What can be done with that money?
 - It must be spent on affordable housing. In past years, the CPC affordable housing money was used in many ways such as to purchase and resell properties. For example, these funds paid for the housing production plan and were used to purchase two market units and make them affordable, which then made all 36 units count towards the SHI.
 - CPC funds are for affordable housing projects but can be expended up to 100% of area median income.
- Would Article 7 for digitization replace money requested in Planning's budget, or is this in addition to Planning's budget?
 - This Article is for FY21 money and is to make digitization a capital item and to allow IT to pursue the digitation.
 - Separately, there are shared Adobe licenses. As more people are at home working, it became evident that the town didn't have enough licenses. This is a town-wide expenditure as opposed to the technology Planning has in their budget.
- Do other departments have laptops that Planning doesn't?
 - Historically, most departments have desktop models and a shared laptop. It became evident during COVID that more laptops were needed. Brian has revamped the model so that laptops can connect to the network.

Approved 3/3/2021

- IT is looking at operations and how to move forward particularly as people are working remotely. Laptops will be included as part of the replacement cycle.
- Is the money switched from personal services to other items in Article 7 in lieu of the money going back into turnback?
 - Yes

An overview of the integrated budget model was provided, and the SB budget guideline discussions were reviewed. Property tax assumptions on new growth, and the increase in state aid were discussed.

9:11 p.m. Administrative Matters/Liaison Reports/Minutes

Liaison Reports

Schools/Jenn Fallon– several items:

- The Schools' HR Director is leaving. An interim will be hired for the remainder of the year, and then a permanent replacement will be hired for July 1st.
- The COVID dashboard was approved in conjunction with the union, and it will go live Friday 2/26.
- The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education wants students in K-5 in school full time by April. DESE must present their plans to the Board of Education for approval, so the district will be waiting for more information but is currently doing all they can to get students back to school. Many kids with IEP's are already back to four days.
- The district is crafting a statement to the state to request teachers get vaccinated sooner than they are currently scheduled as well as to request that there be input from teachers on how best to facilitate teacher vaccinations.
- The School Committee voted to move ahead with the Hunnewell field bathrooms.
- A detailed Q2 overview was also provided at the recent School Committee meeting.
- Question -- Is there a motion to fund the high school bathrooms instead of whole field house?
 - With the CPC money, they are moving ahead with the bathrooms. Public access needs to be provided since CPC money is being used.

SEC/Deed McCollum– SEC voted to approve motion language proposing new sustainable energy goals and to change the name of the committee. This will be forwarded to Advisory.

Audit/Shawn Baker - Cybersecurity review was deferred due to pandemic, not because of budget cuts.

Minutes Approval

Mary Scanlon made and Corinne Monahan seconded a motion to approve the February 10, 2021 minutes.

Roll call vote:

Bill Maynard – yes
Patti Quigley – yes
John Lanza – yes
Mary Scanlon - yes
Deed McCollum - yes
Jennifer Fallon – yes
Jeff Levitan – yes
Corinne Monahan - yes

Approved 3/3/2021

Shawn Baker – yes
Doug Smith – yes
Jake Erhard – absent
Tom Cunningham – yes
Lauren Duprey – absent
Neal Goins - yes

Minutes were approved 12 to 0.

Administrative Items

Advisory warrant article:

- An update was provided about what other towns do in regard to electronic distribution of the Advisory Report. Arlington, Belmont and Brookline are all distributing their Advisory Report both electronically and by paper. These towns reported using tools to help make the electronic version easy to use.
- The Moderator wants to offer paper and doesn't want the electronic to be primary.
- Motion language will be distributed. The language is not intended to lock into any particular mode of distribution, but rather to provide optionality for Advisory Committees in the future to have people opt out of the paper.

9:20 p.m. Adjourn

Jenn Fallon made and Doug Smith seconded a motion to adjourn.

Roll call vote

Bill Maynard - yes
Patti Quigley – yes
John Lanza – yes
Mary Scanlon - yes
Deed McCollum - yes
Jennifer Fallon – yes
Jeff Levitan - yes
Corinne Monahan - yes
Shawn Baker – yes
Doug Smith – yes
Jake Erhard – yes
Tom Cunningham – yes
Lauren Duprey – absent
Neal Goins – yes

Approved 12-0.