

Cohasset Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday March 29, 2023

Virtual Meeting-Zoom Video Call

7:00 pm

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, Section 20(b), following Governor Baker's declaration of a state of emergency in the Commonwealth arising from the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Advisory Committee will meet virtually utilizing remote technology. All votes will be taken by a Roll-Call Vote.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Rob Hillman at 7:02 pm. Present-Jeanne Astino Present – Mike Barclay, Present- Patrick Kennedy, Present – Mark Maggi, Present- Ellen Maher, Present – Mary McGoldrick, Present- Meg Wheeler, Present – Rob Hillman

Absent: Fran Collins

Guests: Chris Senior, Town Manager, Jennifer Mullen, Director of Finance

Chair Hillman welcomed Mrs. Lenora Jenkins from the Water Commission to present the Budget. Revenues are forecasted +2% and expenditures are forecasted to meet the revenue numbers at \$5,639,168. Driving expenditures are +54% in Sludge Removal due to increased transportation and disposal costs and Engineering/Legal at +213% for W&C Treatment Plant analysis and Capital Plan. Mrs. Jenkins advised that she did not vote affirmatively for this budget. In response to Chair Hillman as to why someone from the Commission who did vote affirmatively was not presenting, she indicated she was the one available. Mr. Kennedy commented that through half of the fiscal year, revenues are at 53% of forecast and was the rate increase higher than it needed to be? Mrs. Jenkins responded that abatements had not yet been posted and they will be on the next quarter billing. Retained earnings are at \$1,500,000 which is \$250,000 less than plan due to December 2022 STM expenditures. Mr. Barclay inquired as to the anticipated deficit at the end of FY 23. The Beechwood project had a few irregularities in the bid project such as the absence of flow tests. Mrs. Jenkins commented that the current debt service is from the last century and should be satisfied by 2032. Mrs. Mullen also commented that there are timing issues with receipts and expenses and a month-to-month look can be misleading. The expenses for the South Main Street water main break also have not moved yet to Capital per STM. Mr. Senior commented that presently there are no new projects for Sewer or Water. Chair Hillman thanked Mrs. Jenkins for her attendance and overview of the Water Budget.

Mr. Senior began an overview of the FY 24 Town Budget:

- Schools came in at 2.6% with support from Free Cash to fund \$300,000 for tuition free Kindergarten. Ms. Mullen reviewed with School Director of Finance & Facilities, Sue

Owen with Mark Abrams the resulting increase in Chapter 70 money in FY 25. This increase will support continued tuition free Kindergarten

- ARPA funds will support the requested School new curriculum needs in 6-12 Math and K-12 Arts
- Mr. Kennedy asked if the ARPA funds were still held by the county and if so, was a petition to release still required? Would there be any chance the county says NO? Mr. Senior commented that he didn't think there would be any issue as the funding is revenue replacement for expenditures the municipality made for Covid related expenses
- Mrs. McGoldrick commented that despite having requested the line-by-line budget detail, it still has not been received. With the addition of 8.5 FTEs, is this budget sustainable over time?
- Mr. Senior advised that for the first time in 4 years there is a significant increase in Health Insurance, yet the Town was able to negotiate 1 percentage point off that increase. Pension outlays will drop somewhat, helping to offset the health insurance increase.

Chair Hillman thanked Mr. Senior and Ms. Mullen for the overview and hard work on the budget.

The Committee moved to review of outstanding Warrant articles:

Article 4 Operating Budget. A motion was made by Mrs. Astino, seconded by Mrs. McGoldrick to recommend adoption to Town Meeting the Operating Budget as presented in Appendix A in the March 29, 2023, draft Warrant. Roll call vote Aye-Jeanne Astino, Aye – Mike Barclay, Aye-Patrick Kennedy, Aye – Mark Maggi, Aye- Ellen Maher, Aye – Mary McGoldrick, Aye- Meg Wheeler, Aye – Rob Hillman

Mr. Senior advised that the motion on Town Meeting floor for **Article 5 Unpaid Bills from Previous Years** will be to indefinitely postpone, so the Committee took no action.

Article 6 Supplemental Appropriation for Fiscal 2023. Mrs. McGoldrick inquired if the legal expenses were all related to settled contracts and they were. A motion was made by Mrs. Astino, seconded by Mrs. McGoldrick to recommend adoption to Town Meeting Article 6 Supplemental Appropriation for Fiscal 2023 as presented in the March 29, 2023, draft Warrant. Roll call vote Aye-Jeanne Astino, Aye – Mike Barclay, Aye- Patrick Kennedy, Aye – Mark Maggi, Aye- Ellen Maher, Aye – Mary McGoldrick, Aye- Meg Wheeler, Aye – Rob Hillman

Article 7 Stabilization and other Special Funds. Mrs. Maher asked Ms. Mullen about the tradition of allocating funds to PEB through this article and Ms. Mullen advised that the allocation is done within the budget and the PEB committee has been advised. A motion was made by Mrs. Astino, seconded by Mr. Barclay to recommend adoption to Town Meeting Article 6 Supplemental Appropriation for Fiscal 2023 as presented in the March 29, 2023, draft

Warrant. Roll call vote Aye-Jeanne Astino, Aye – Mike Barclay, Aye- Patrick Kennedy, Aye – Mark Maggi, Aye- Ellen Maher, Aye – Mary McGoldrick, Aye- Meg Wheeler, Aye – Rob Hillman

Article 8 Capital Improvement Budget. There remains an \$83,000 shortfall from what has been requested and the funding. The Capital Budget Committee did not vote on #5, School Smart Boards, #8 MS/HS sewer line repair and #9 IT data center upgrade. The CBC wanted to have further conversation with the Schools regarding the number of smart boards requested. The CBC was looking to see if #8 could be absorbed in the Sewer budget and they had additional questions for Mr. Menard regarding #9. Chair Hillman asked if there was any chance that the affirmative votes by CBC on 1-4,6,7, 10-12 would change and they will not. Mrs. McGoldrick commented we should have a review of the 3-5 year IT Capital Plan. A motion was made by Mrs. Astino, seconded by Mr. Barclay to recommend adoption to Town Meeting Article 8 Capital Improvement Budget except #5, #8, #9 as presented in the March 29, 2023, draft Warrant. Roll call vote Aye-Jeanne Astino, Aye – Mike Barclay, Aye- Patrick Kennedy, Aye – Mark Maggi, Aye- Ellen Maher, Aye – Mary McGoldrick, Aye- Meg Wheeler, Aye – Rob Hillman

Article 17 Stormwater Management Bylaw Revision was presented by Charlotte Pechtl, Conservation Agent. Ms. Pechtl advised that essentially the revision amends language to permits with a 3-year expiration and clarifies procedures for hearings. It also increases the penalty to \$300 /day from \$100 /day. Chair Hillman thanked Ms. Pechtl for appearing, but since the Advisory Committee does not have the actual Article language in front of them, the Committee will defer on making a recommendation.

Article 10 Allocation of Funds for One Time Costs A motion was made by Mrs. McGoldrick seconded by Mr. Barclay to recommend adoption to Town Meeting Article 10 Allocation of Funds for One Time Costs as presented in the March 2023,2023 draft Warrant. Roll call vote Aye-Jeanne Astino, Aye – Mike Barclay, Aye- Patrick Kennedy, Aye – Mark Maggi, Aye- Ellen Maher, Aye – Mary McGoldrick, Aye- Meg Wheeler, Aye – Rob Hillman

Article 13 Community Preservation Committee. Ms. Mullen advised that CPC did vote to approve \$1,000,000 to the Town Hall Building Committee Project and \$119,000 to the Fields & Courts project prior to the Select Board meeting deciding to push these items off to a new STM in the early Fall. The article as it presented in the March 29, 2023, draft Warrant are administrative allocations required by MGL. Ms. Mullen confirmed Mrs. McGoldrick's question as to whether or not CPC took a vote, as it is a statutory requirement to do so. The CPC is not meeting before Town Meeting. Mr. Barclay asked if the CPC THBC allocation would be borrowed against future revenues and Ms. Mullen explained the mechanism for doing so. A motion was made by Mr. Kennedy seconded by Mrs. McGoldrick to recommend adoption to Town Meeting Article 13 Community Preservation Committee as presented in the March 29, 2023, draft Warrant. Roll call vote Aye-Jeanne Astino, Aye – Mike Barclay, Aye- Patrick Kennedy, Aye – Mark Maggi, Aye- Ellen Maher, Aye – Mary McGoldrick, Aye- Meg Wheeler, Aye – Rob Hillman

Article 18 Publication of Building Permits Issued. The existing by-law provides for publication in a local newspaper and since we no longer have a local newspaper the change to the by-law allows for posting of new issue building permits on the Town's website. A motion was made by Mrs. Astino, seconded by Mr. Kennedy to recommend adoption to Town Meeting Article 18 Publication of Building Permits Issued as presented in the March 29, 2023, draft Warrant. Roll call vote Aye-Jeanne Astino, Aye – Mike Barclay, Aye- Patrick Kennedy, Aye – Mark Maggi, Aye- Ellen Maher, Aye – Mary McGoldrick, Aye- Meg Wheeler, Aye – Rob Hillman

Chair Hillman advised the Committee that at the previous nights' Select Board Meeting, they voted 3-2 to move THBC, Fields & Courts, School Feasibility Study and Special Stabilization Fund initiatives to a NEW Special Town Meeting in Early Fall. Mrs. Maher advised that one of the primary drivers in doing so, as discussed by the Vice Chair of the Select Board, was that there was insufficient time until Town Meeting and between Town Meeting and the election to socialize and gain community input.

Motion by Mrs. Maher, seconded by Mrs. McGoldrick to approve the minutes of March 1, 2023. Roll call vote Aye-Jeanne Astino, Aye – Mike Barclay, Abstain- Patrick Kennedy, Aye – Mark Maggi, Aye- Ellen Maher, Aye – Mary McGoldrick, Aye- Meg Wheeler, Aye – Rob Hillman

Motion by Astino, seconded by Mrs. McGoldrick to approve the minutes of March 15, 2023. Roll call vote Aye-Jeanne Astino, Aye – Mike Barclay, Aye- Patrick Kennedy, Aye – Mark Maggi, Aye- Ellen Maher, Aye – Mary McGoldrick, Abstain- Meg Wheeler, Aye – Rob Hillman

Consensus was reached to schedule our next meeting on April 26. Mrs. McGoldrick asked if the changes to the Zoning Bylaw articles changed materially enough for us to relook and vote, and Chair Hillman advised they did not. He did ask for a confirmatory to vote. Mr. Barclay inquired / requested that informational summaries be done for the warrant as they will be helpful in getting the voters to understand the changes.

Motion to affirm our original votes of Warrant articles 20-26 on March 15, 2023, including any immaterial language changes (new Articles 19-24) since our vote by Mrs. McGoldrick, seconded by Mrs. Astino. Roll call vote Aye-Jeanne Astino, Aye – Mike Barclay, Aye- Patrick Kennedy, Aye – Mark Maggi, Aye- Ellen Maher, Aye – Mary McGoldrick, Aye- Meg Wheeler, Aye – Rob Hillman

Motion to adjourn at 9:06 pm by Mr. Kennedy, seconded by Mr. Barclay. Roll Call Aye-Jeanne Astino, Aye-Mike Barclay, Aye-Patrick Kennedy. Aye-Mark Maggi, Aye-Ellen Maher, Aye-Mary McGoldrick, Aye-Meg Wheeler, Aye-Rob Hillman

