



Town of Swampscott
Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday April 5th, 2021 7:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Tim Dorsey (Chair), Mary Ellen Fletcher (Vice-chair), Eric Hartmann, Joan Hilario, Matthew Kirschner, Cinder McNerney, Gail Rosenberg, Jill Sullivan

OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT

Gino Cresta, Director of Public Works; Marzie Galazka, Director of Comm. & Econ. Development; Amy Sarro, Town Accountant; Ron Mendes, Asst. Town Administrator Admin & Finance; Patrick Luddy, Asst. Town Accountant

Meeting called to order 7:03 PM

Approval of Minutes

None.

Public Comments

None.

Department of Public Works Budget Review

Mary Ellen Fletcher asked for an update from Gino regarding the seawall repair work that is underway. Gino stated that section 5 will be complete by the end of May and the funding in the capital plan now would get the project through Section 9 (the stairs across from Philips St). The last section of the seawall that requires attention would be from the stairs on King's beach to Mission on the Bay for \$1.4M. Gino also stated that the Fisherman's Beach seawalls have been re-pointed recently, and some of the seawalls are also naturally protected by existing sand. There is additional work to be done on Eisman's beach in the future as well. Gino is hoping that the state's department of conservation and recreation would consider taking over the seawall once it is brought up to an acceptable state of repair.

There was discussion about the condition of the railings along King's beach, and whether DCR would require the town to repair or replace them before they would consider taking over the the shoreline. Mr. Cresta commented that he was unsure if DCR would require the railings to be upgraded; when previously discussed he was told that repairing the seawall and providing a one-time payment of \$180,000 would have been enough for the DCR to take over responsibility of the shore.

Asst. Town Administrator Ronald Mendes commented that if DCR were to take over control of the shore, then the shore becomes passive recreation land which limits the amount of modifications that can be made along the shore line by the town.

Mary Ellen Fletcher asked Mr. Cresta if he was expecting to purchase a leaf blower with the funds that were approved in the previous capital plan (the budget line is still open for this purchase).

Mr. Cresta explained that the \$60,000 appropriated only covers a vacuum, but not the box on the back of the truck that is also required. He recommended that this project be rescinded at this time and revisited in the future.

There was discussion surround the \$30,000 appropriation for part-time summer help in the DPW budget. Specifically, it appeared on recent reporting that no funds had been spent YTD. Gino clarified that funds were expended for summer help, but the charges were allocated to the incorrect line in the budget. An adjustment has since been made and the charges will reflect on future reporting. Mr. Cresta also stated his intention to expend additional funds through the end of the fiscal year out of this appropriation.

There was some discussion regarding the algae on the beach and the procedures in place to remove it. Mr. Cresta explained to the committee the process in place to mitigate the algae, however he did acknowledge that the algae reappears quickly and that mitigation is not simple.

Chairman Dorsey asked Gino about the updates to the cemetery bylaws that he had proposed. Mr. Cresta explained to the committee that he is suggesting that shrubbery be eliminated from the cemetery because of the maintenance associated with it.

Mr. Cresta also shared with the committee his desire to expand the adopt-an-island program. There was discussion regarding how the size of the signs was being regulated etc. Mr. Cresta stated that allowing promotional signage in exchange for maintenance of island was a good trade-off financially.

Additionally, Mr. Cresta summarized shade-tree planting initiatives his department has undertaken. There are plans to plant serviceberry trees along Fisherman's beach, which are salt-resistant and will not grow more than 40ft (they won't obstruct views of the ocean).

In the capital plan for FY 2021, \$40,000 for shade trees is being asked for from CIC, supplemented by an additional \$7,500 in the operating budget. The tree task force committee has been working with Gino on shade-tree matters, and the \$40,000 from the capital improvement committee would clear the waiting list for shade trees that exists.

Community and Economic Development Capital Projects Review

Marzie Galazka, Director of Comm. & Econ. Development briefly summarized recent grant funding she has secured for Harbor Waterfront projects:

- \$100,000 total funding requested in the capital plan for a feasibility study for redesign of the pier
 - o \$80,000 grant funded
 - o \$20,000 town match to grant
- Design and Construction phases would follow after the feasibility study is complete

Mary Ellen Fletcher asked Marzie to recap her existing capital projects that are in-progress:

Resiliency Beach Access - \$98,000

- Working with Kleinfelder Engineering for the re-design of beach entrances at Philips and Cassidy
- Handling critical environmental issues, state permitting, and abutter concerns.

Town-Wide Traffic Study - \$100,000

- Part of grant funding received this year; \$400,000 toward roadway improvements for Walker Rd.
- Looking to change the traffic flow on Walker Rd.
 - o Add'l traffic feasibility studies must be done.
- Swampscott Road, Oakledge Ave, and Farragut Rd./Banks intersection poses traffic and quality-of-life concerns.
 - o Possible candidate for a rotary solution
 - o Looking to increase safety for pedestrians and motorists alike, and to address parking (perhaps a one-way traffic pattern with multi-use sidewalks and clearly delineated parking)

Re-Design Fish House - \$35,000

- Grant-Funding to rehabilitate bathrooms at the fish house
- Recent bid opening; Select Board will be awarding a contract to rehab the bathrooms this Thursday
 - o Accessibility and climate control will be addressed
- Some funds will go towards parking lot re-design and possible design of Gazebo or other shade structure.

Sign and Façade Program

- Available to new or existing businesses
- Offers a one-time grant for new signage or an awning
 - o A match is required (50%) and maximum grant is capped
- Business must obtain at least two quotes for the signage or awning

Design for Windsor Ave. Playground

- Is completed; the consultant has not billed yet
- Grant has been received for Windsor Ave. park which doubles the value of the original \$40,000 project that was appropriated

Johnson Park Landscaping

- \$78,000 open within appropriation

- Still in design phase; additional survey work is being performed to ensure compliance

Train Depot Neighborhood

- Working with MBTA and transit realty
 - o Need to secure long-term site control in order to seek grant funding and bring the rail station into an acceptable state of repair
- Would like to restore the envelope of the building once site-control or a lease is established

Rail Trail

- Working to complete design and seek grant funding for construction.

Jill Sullivan asked for clarification surrounding the organization of the Community/Economic Development department. Marzie commented:

- Molly O'Connell: Long-term planning, grant writing
- Marissa Meaney: Part-Time support (20hrs a week)
 - o Addresses the demanding needs of the town's land-use boards.

Ms. Galazka conveyed her desire to expand the department and increase grant-writing bandwidth and partnership with the DPW department on a transportation plan.

Jill asked Marzie to comment on the grant funding opportunities that her dept has pursued this year compared with what they were able to obtain last year.

Marzie commented on the different factors that impact the town's ability to obtain grants, and/or maintain costs associated with programs that are implemented via one-time grant funds.

Cinder McNerney asked for clarification from Marzie regarding the density in town, and how that is being planned for. She asked more specifically when a true town-wide traffic study would be called for.

Marzie highlighted certain key discussions that have occurred relative to traffic relief

- Nahant rotary/Nahant traffic synthesis with Lynn;
 - o Conversations have occurred with DCR regarding traffic queuing at the rotary, however has been difficult to follow-up on since the pandemic began
- Vinnin Square/1A is a state highway; there is a plan to widen the roadway and improve traffic flow at the shopping mall

Tim Dorsey asked about the reduction to the contracted consulting line, and whether that will impact the department's abilities. Marzie stated that she would like to seek the full amount requested for this appropriation if possible because it helps provide additional support of a consultant for a variety of projects. Ms. Galazka also commented that there have been cost overruns in the legal advertising line in her budget and that may require additional funding for FY 2022.

Matt Kirschner stated that he would be interested in supporting or being involved with the Rail Station project.

Reports on Committees

Capital Improvement Committee

- Did not meet last week; will be meeting 4/7

School Building Committee

- Informal Project review with the planning board and the zoning board
- 3/21 schematic design cost estimates were finalized
- Next big deadline is 4/13 for project and budget update
- Will go before Open Space and Recreation Commission, and then schematic design will be finalized
- 6/23 MSBA will respond to what is submitted regarding eligibility etc.

Hadley Re-Use Committee

- Did not meet last week; will be meeting 4/6

Old and New Business

None.

On **MOTION** (Jill Sullivan) and **SECONDED** (Joan Hilario) it was **VOTED** by **ROLL CALL** to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 PM. **ROLL CALL:** Eric Hartmann (YES), Joan Hilario (YES), Matthew Kirschner (YES), Cinder McNerney (YES), Gail Rosenberg (YES), Jill Sullivan (YES), Mary Ellen Fletcher (YES) Tim Dorsey (YES).

True Attest,

Patrick Luddy

Patrick Luddy, Assistant Town Accountant

Minutes APPROVED by vote of the Finance Committee 6/28/2021