



**Town of Swampscott**  
**Finance Committee Meeting Minutes**  
Wednesday May 5<sup>th</sup>, 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**

Sean Fitzgerald, Town Administrator; Ron Mendes, Asst. Town Administrator; Gino Cresta, Asst. Town Administrator, Amy Sarro, Finance Director/Town Accountant; Patrick Luddy, Asst. Town Accountant; Angela Ippolito, Chair, Planning Board; Jackson Schultz, Chair, Harbor Waterfront Advisory Committee

Meeting called to order 7:00 PM

**Approval of Minutes**

None.

**Public Comments**

None.

**Recommendations for Town Meeting Warrant Articles**

**Article 3 – Approve Transfer of Free Cash – CBAs**

Town Administrator Sean Fitzgerald commented that he was working with town counsel to revise the CBA agreements for the Police and Fire Unions to reflect the recently presented MOUs. The town finance team is working to update census information and calculate the most accurate cost related to this article for Town Meeting.

Mr. Fitzgerald elaborated briefly on the positive impact removal of minimum manning requirements and civil service requirements from the police and fire union CBAs will have on the town's ability to staff its public safety functions.

A recommendation on this article will be made the evening of Town Meeting once the dollar figure and other pertinent information is known.

## **Article 6 – Appropriation from Transportation Infrastructure Fund**

It was noted that the printed warrant erroneously states that the finance committee had recommended favorable action on this article.

A recommendation on this article will be made the evening of Town Meeting once the dollar figure is known.

## **Article 11 – Appropriation for Capital Projects**

### *Design for Harbor/Waterfront Development Plan Projects*

Jay Borkland was recognized by Mr. Dorsey and elaborated on the Harbor/Waterfront Plan for the committee. The elements in the harbor plan are concepts and they are not designs. The plan helps the town evaluate and assess its needs, leading to a prioritized list. The next step in the process would be to take each priority and go before the Seaport Council to pursue funding for permitting and design work and permitting for the items on the prioritized list.

The \$80,000 of grant funding the town obtained, plus the \$20,000 requested town match (a portion of the \$100,000 proposed in the capital plan) funds a feasibility study for the redesign of the pier. The existing pier is beyond its useful life and was identified for replacement due to the significant tidal activity in the harbor and other changing environmental factors which have led to significant wear on the structure.

The remaining \$80,000 of the \$100,000 capital request covers feasibility analysis for a living reef, which is a protective structure for the harbor. The information from this analysis could then be utilized to bolster the town's request to state agencies for permitting and design funding. The project transcends multiple state agencies because it relates to an end-water structure, and those agencies identified a need for feasibility work to be done before funds could be awarded for permitting and design.

Vice-Chair Mary Ellen Fletcher asked Gino Cresta, Director of Public Works to clarify who in town is responsible for the upkeep of the Pier. Mr. Cresta stated that he believed the pier fell under the jurisdiction of the DPW; it was his assessment that the pier was in decent condition, but that the floats needed replacement, and that more floats were required to accommodate demand. Ms. Fletcher asked Ms. Galazka if new floats tied into the grant funding that had been awarded. Ms. Galazka stated that the grant would perhaps encompass the floats, however the funding is strictly for permitting and design and so would not fund physical replacement cost of the floats.

Ms. Fletcher also asked for clarification surrounding grant funding opportunities for feasibility studies, and whether one could supplant the \$80,000 of town funding that is being requested for feasibility as a component of the \$100,000 Harbor Waterfront capital request. Ms. Galazka deferred to the HWAC and the Town Administrator regarding the most efficient use of town

funds, but she did take the position that presenting funding for these projects makes the town look more competitive for future grant opportunities.

Angela Ippolito was recognized in the meeting. She commented on the multi-faceted nature of the harbor and waterfront plan. She asked if it would make sense to concentrate a feasibility study on one aspect of the plan at a time, for example environmental impact. She also asked for clarification as to what the end-product of the study would be.

Jay Borkland commented on the feasibility study and associated deliverables:

- The seaport economic council has an established process for awarding funding for coastal projects. The town should have a Harbor and Waterfront Plan, for example. Mr. Borkland elaborated that the Seaport Economic Council likes to see comprehensive feasibility studies as opposed to piecemeal studies that focus on just one aspect of the project.
- The town can seek additional grant funding to cover the town matches that would be required for the Seaport Economic Council grant awards that the town could obtain in the future.
- The deliverable from the \$80,000 will be a 30% design (including baseline design and feasibility analysis), and a beginning to the permitting process which will adapt the town's design to environmental regulations. The permits are obtained at 60% design and would be a part of the next phase/request for this project.

Ultimately the \$80,000 is requested to provide the Seaport Economic Council with enough feasibility analysis to clarify that the projects can be supported to completion. At that point the town would likely be able to begin activating additional funding opportunities through the council for these projects.

Mary Ellen Fletcher asked Mr. Borkland if it made sense to focus on one project i.e. the pier as opposed to straddling two projects at once (i.e. pier and breakwater). Mr. Borkland responded that the breakwater and the pier interact functionally and therefore fit well into the Seaport Economic Council's program together. The breakwater protects the pier structurally, for example. Both projects are multi-year processes, and so delaying the living reef project leaves the pier and the living reef out of sync.

Cinder McNerney asked if an RFP was performed relative to the engineering work that has been done. Marzie Galazka commented that engineering services were exempt from procurement law. Town Administrator Sean Fitzgerald commented he would look into the matter further.

Ms. Ippolito asked for clarification as to what point the project would be subject to Chapter 91 requirements relative to public input. Mr. Borkland commented that Chapter 91 kicks in as part of the permitting process, and that process would start after feasibility and basis of design are completed.

Gail Rosenberg asked if a 30% design would be of a conceptual nature, and whether the public would have opportunity after that step to weigh in and make changes to the project. Mr.

Borkland responded that the public would have input on design throughout the permitting project i.e. typically between 30% and 60%, up to 90%.

Cinder McNerney asked Mr. Borkland for clarification about whether the replacement pier described in the concept Harbor Waterfront Plan would be the basis for the design. Mr. Borkland responded that the concept is added to the design process, but the design is essentially a blank slate for the town to add inputs and define its desires for a replacement pier.

Cinder McNerney asked Angela Ippolito for clarification regarding whether she felt the Harbor Waterfront Advisory Committee's approach to the development of the plan was appropriate. Ms. Ippolito explained the different approaches that could be taken to develop such a plan, and that some require more public input into the development of the plan than others.

On **MOTION** (Jill Sullivan) and **SECONDED** (Mary Ellen Fletcher) it was **VOTED** by **ROLL CALL** to **RECOMMEND** that the **DESIGN FOR HARBOR/WATERFRONT PLAN** project be **REDUCED** from **\$100,000** to **\$20,000**.

**ROLL CALL:** Tim Dorsey (YES); Mary Ellen Fletcher (YES); Eric Hartmann (YES); Joan Hilario (YES); Matthew Kirschner (YES); Cinder McNerney (YES); Gail Rosenberg (YES); Jill Sullivan (YES)

*[\$20,000 for grant-match for pier project, remove \$80,000 for living reef feasibility study]*

On **MOTION** (Mary Ellen Fletcher) and **SECONDED** (Jill Sullivan) it was **VOTED** by **ROLL CALL** to **RECOMMEND FAVORABLE ACTION** on **ARTICLE 11 AS AMENDED**.

**ROLL CALL:** Tim Dorsey (YES); Mary Ellen Fletcher (YES); Eric Hartmann (YES); Joan Hilario (YES); Matthew Kirschner (YES); Cinder McNerney (YES); Gail Rosenberg (YES); Jill Sullivan (YES)

*[Delete TH Basement Build-Out; Reduce Design for Harbor/Waterfront plan to \$20,000]*

## **Article 12 – Citizens' Petition Article – A New Roof for the Middle School**

Terry Lorber was recognized in the meeting. He briefly highlighted the citizens' petition regarding funding replacement of the middle school roof that was recommended for indefinite postponement. He discussed possible amendments to the citizens' petition that he will bring to the moderator, which include directing funds to replace windows at the middle school.

Mary Ellen Fletcher asked for clarification about whether an article of this nature could be amended; the Chairman stated his understanding, which was that amendments could be made but the extent and nature of changes would need to be accepted by the Moderator subject to applicable rules.

No further action was taken on this article.

## **Article 15 – Acceptance of Public Ways**

Mary Ellen Fletcher asked Angela Ippolito to clarify why the roads listed in the warrant article were private ways in the first place. Ms. Ippolito commented that she was unsure why they were private ways.

Jill Sullivan commented that there are at least two situations she was aware of where subdivisions would be private ways. Either the community plans to maintain those roads themselves, or there is a delay between when construction completes on a subdivision and when the private way is assumed by the town as a public way.

Town Administrator Sean Fitzgerald commented that acceptance of these roads as public ways indicates that the roads are up to the standards of the town. As public ways, these roads would factor into state funding that the town receives for roadway maintenance. He also stated that there are roads and subdivisions he has seen that he would not recommend for acceptance as public ways because they would require significant investment to be brought up to the standard of other roadways the town maintains, which would unfairly burden the other taxpayers.

On **MOTION** (Jill Sullivan) and **SECONDED** (Joan Hilario) it was **VOTED** by **ROLL CALL** to **SUPPORT ARTICLE 15**.

**ROLL CALL:** Tim Dorsey (YES); Mary Ellen Fletcher (YES); Eric Hartmann (YES); Joan Hilario (YES); Matthew Kirschner (YES); Cinder McNerney (YES); Gail Rosenberg (YES); Jill Sullivan (YES)

## **Read-Out on Committees**

### **Hadley Re-Use**

- Committee toured the new Machon Development (senior housing)
- Will tour Mill 58 (mixed-use space) on Friday
- Next meeting of the commercial re-use subcommittee will be next week

Mary Ellen Fletcher asked Matt Kirschner if the school committee had completed the traffic and geo-technical studies at the new school site. Mr. Kirschner was unsure and suggested Suzanne Wright come and provide an update to the committee on the project after town meeting.

## **Old and New Business**

### **Q&A**

There was discussion regarding the finance committee's ongoing desire to provide continuing education opportunities surrounding town finance to the public. Mary Ellen Fletcher suggested that the finance committee be available one evening before town meeting to answer any questions the public may have for committee members.

It was decided that from appx. 8p-9p on Monday May 10<sup>th</sup> the finance committee would hold a public Q&A session as a component of their regularly scheduled meeting.

On **MOTION** (Jill Sullivan) and **SECONDED** (Joan Hilario) it was **VOTED** by **ROLL CALL** to **ADJOURN** the meeting at 8:30 PM.

**ROLL CALL:** Tim Dorsey (YES); Mary Ellen Fletcher (YES); Eric Hartmann (YES); Joan Hilario (YES); Matthew Kirschner (YES); Cinder McNerney (YES); Gail Rosenberg (YES); Jill Sullivan (YES)

True Attest,

*Patrick Luddy*

Patrick Luddy, Assistant Town Accountant

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