



MANCHESTER-BY-THE-SEA

FINANCE COMMITTEE • TOWN HALL
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Minutes of the Finance Committee

February 3, 2022 7:00 p.m. Zoom Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Mellish, Chair, Mr. Creighton, Mr. Weld, Mr. Oldeman, Mr. Pratt, Mr. Twining and Mr. Nahatis

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Town Administrator, Mr. Federspiel, Finance Committee Clerk, Ms. Hunter, Town Accountant, Ms. Mainville, Harbormaster Pike, Parks & Recreation Director Ms. Marshall

GUESTS: CPC Co-Chair, Mr. Burke

- Call to Order – Ms. Mellish called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.
- **Review FY23 Operating & Capital Budgets: Harbormaster**

Operating Budget: Mr. Pike stated:

- Payroll for staffing is adequate when the Harbormaster staff is working until 7:00 p.m. Mr. Pike noted that Manchester Harbor is the only local Harbor staffed until 7:00 p.m. most harbors are staffed until 11:00 p.m.
- Training budget was increased to \$2K
- There is an increase in the boat expenses line to address additional costs of engine oil changes and fuel
- Mr. Twining asked about staffing. Mr. Pike stated the Department has one Deputy Harbormaster who is full time six months, one part time person who manages the pump out boat, a person who fills in as needed and 10-weeks of Police support, managed with a \$10K budget line.

Changes in Harbormaster enforcement capabilities are coming in the State the result of Massachusetts Police Council proposed changes for Harbormasters statewide. The changes will eliminate the Harbormaster's ability to enforce water safety laws. Once the changes are implemented only Police Officer's will be able to enforce the law. Mr. Pike has spoken with Chief Fitzgerald, and they have agreed that eventually two Police Officers will be needed to staff Harbormaster boats.

Mr. Oldeman asked what other communities are doing. Mr. Pike stated this is a major issue and Harbormasters are more than concerned. He is less concerned because he has a good relationship with the Police Department. However, this is major challenge for all coastal communities with harbors and the need to fund Police Officers on the water.

Ms. Mellish asked about the increase in professional services line. Mr. Pike stated that relates to the contract with the company that processes and collects fees for boats docking overnight at Reed Park. Ms. Mellish also asked about the postage increase from \$800 to \$1,200 and wondered why the actual for 2021 was only \$2.00. Mr. Pike stated there was an increase in postage and the \$2.00 was because he was unaware, he needed to allocate funds for postage and was significantly in arrears. He added, his objective is to move much of his correspondence to email and hopefully decrease the postage line.

Capital Budget:

The new Safe Boat for harbor patrols will be built and delivered in 2023. In the meantime, the pump out boat will be used as the Safe Boat. Mr. Twining asked about engines. Mr. Pike replied there is a Yamaha which is a 2009 engine and past usefulness and there are two Honda engines which have new parts and will be moved to the pump out boat from the retired Eastern Safe Boat along with the electronics.

Mr. Pike has a grant proposal for new engines estimated to cost less than \$50K. The \$30K grant is a Port Security Grant which Manchester qualifies for due to the draw bridge, boat launch and proximity to neighboring communities like Gloucester with a number of cruise ships and Salem with an active wind industry. The grant proposal is due on April 23, 2022 and Mr. Pike needs to provide a statement that he has allocated funds in the amount of \$10K from the Town in order to submit the grant. Mr. Weld proposed a reserve fund transfer in that amount if needed. There was no objection raised to that suggestion.

Pickup truck – the discussion around the need for a Harbormaster pickup truck was included in consideration with the proposed funding for electricity and water to the dock at Reed Park. The Committee decided following comprehensive consideration of both that the Harbormaster would have a new pickup truck and electricity and water for Reed Park would be postponed. However, the Finance Committee recommended the rate charged for overnight docking at Reed Park would be increased from \$3.00 per foot to \$5.00 per foot. The Harbor Advisory Committee will need to approve the recommended increase.

Mr. Pike is preparing to submit a grant for \$400K to the Seaport Economic Council to construct a docking facility for commercial fisherman. The commercial fishermen who work out of Manchester are getting older and the facility would help extend their careers as well as support the younger fishermen replacing them. Mr. Pike stated Manchester's fishing catch status is 19th in the State with an estimated value of \$6M. Ms. Mellish asked if the fishermen are from Manchester and if their catch is sold off the docks. The fishermen are from Manchester as well as other communities and the catch is sold in Gloucester. Ms. Mellish stated there is no direct revenue to the Town from the \$6M catch. Mr. Pike confirmed that was correct.

Mr. Pike pointed out the value for the Town in having a fishing fleet is in the Town's ability to receive Federal and State grants that support dredging and other large harbor related projects. Mr. Weld added it is important to the community to maintain our status with a working fishing fleet as it has a Town strong historic precedence and is endemic to the community.

Mr. Federspiel noted the construction for commercial facility for fishermen is in the FY24 Capital budget and will be accurately estimated and discussed in the FY24 Budget cycle.

- **Review Status of Rotunda & Long-Term Plan**

Christine Player and Scott Skuncik from Foth Infrastructure & Environment, LLC presented the status of the Rotunda project Phase I and Phase II

- Inspection in 2020 showed issues to gangway and to existing floats and was identified as Phase I to extend new piles to floats and gangway
- At that time Foth reviewed the condition of the Rotunda itself and associated piles and access points and determined the structure as a whole had an estimated remaining life span of only 1-5 years
- In 2022 the Rotunda is approaching a remaining expected life span of 1-3 years.
- Phase II options provide potential short-term repair to the pilings at the existing elevation; however, the Rotunda is seeing increasing water intrusion and associated damage at high tides and storm conditions.
- Solution is to replace the pilings and elevate the structure and access points approximately 5-8 ft. which could be expected to extend the useful life by another 50 years
- FY23 permitting process and preliminary design work
- FY24 final design with bid and construction
- Inspection this spring is necessary and due to confirm what was anticipated in Phase I and evaluate that everything that is "out there" is safe for pedestrian and public use of the Rotunda

The Committee had some discussion about what the Rotunda would look like and how it would be accessed. Ms. Player indicated that would be part of the design process. Mr. Weld asked who would be managing the process. Mr. Federspiel stated the project would be part of Facilities. Ms. Mellish asked for clarification if this would be part of the DPW budget or part of a future Facilities budget. Mr. Federspiel hopes to see this as part of a new long-term Facilities budget to be derived from the proposed FY23 engineering/feasibility study of all Town owned facilities.

Mr. Skuncik stated with the contractor coming to implement Phase I (new piers and gang plank) this was an opportunity to evaluate the status of the pilings and Rotunda and if possible complete some interim work to extend the life/safety of the pilings on a short-term basis.

Mr. Federspiel stated the full budget for the project engineering/restoration plan is estimated at \$106K and suggested budgeting the full amount in FY23 maybe a better plan given the condition of the Rotunda is approaching emergency status.

- **Review FY23 Operating & Capital Budget: Parks & Recreation**

The Committee had no questions on the Parks & Recreation FY23 Operating Budget.

Ms. Marshall introduced the need for Athletic Fields in Town stating there had been two assessments completed on field status. Both assessments concluded the Town needs additional playing fields to accommodate the needs of the community. The Manchester-by-the-Sea Athletic Fields Master Plan 2020 is available online.

The Parks & Recreation Committee has considered several options for increasing field availability. Lights at Brook St. which has been objected to by residents and concluded Sweeney Park is the best location for an improved athletic field. The project was ready to be presented when Covid put many projects on hold. This year the Parks & Recreation Committee became aware that the Pine Street (Old Burn Dump) site was available for a playing field and recognized that as an opportunity to increase the number of playing fields and create an additional playing field while Sweeney is under construction.

Ms. Mellish asked about the field at Masconomo Park stating it does not appear to get much use. John Hardin, President of Manchester Essex Youth Soccer stated the field was used every Saturday from noon to 5:00 p.m. and for practice most evenings during soccer season. Ms. Driscoll stated the Middle School Field Hockey team practiced on the field from September to November from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Ms. Marshall stated the field at Masconomo Park was originally an Olmstead Park, is part of the Town's Conservation land and is also used by the Town for passive recreation and summer concerts.

Mr. Weld stated he shared Sarah's concern that the field at Masconomo Park could be improved to create a safer playing field for the use it receives. Mr. Oldeman asked about the safety of playing on Pine Street given it was the burn dump. Mr. Federspiel stated the field is approved for playing and Mr. Desrosiers added the field will be built up if approved as a playing field.

Mr. Federspiel stated the Town will need to bond for Sweeney Park and for the Rotunda and taking advantage of CPC funding with the State matching CPC funds up to an additional 60% is a way to support the projects. Mr. Burke added the CPC could manage up to a \$2M bond. He noted that CPC funds could not be used for the installation of artificial turf or the bleachers at Sweeney Park.

- **Review Long Term Plans for Fields: Location & Funding**

The Committee had a lengthy discussion on possible funding for the Pine Street Field, Sweeney Park, and the Rotunda. The Rotunda and Sweeney Park funding is not included the FY23 Budget. However, funding for Pine Street Field is proposed for the FY23 Budget and to be fully supported through CPC funding. Mr. Burke indicated CPC is comfortable funding the construction of the Pine Street field and considering increasing the CPC surcharge to 3% to support bonding both Sweeney Park and the Rotunda. Both of those projects will be further considered when comprehensive estimates are available in FY24.

- Review Minutes

Mr. Weld moved to approve the minutes for December 14, 2021, January 13, 2022, and January 20, 2022; Mr. Twining seconded the motion. The motion passed with Mr. Twining (abstaining on 12/14), Mr. Weld, Mr. Creighton, Mr. Oldeman and Ms. Mellish voting affirmatively. Mr. Pratt exited the meeting and was not available to vote.

- Next Meeting Date & Subject

Next Finance Committee meeting with be with the Fire Chief.

- Other Business not anticipated by the Chair, discussion only

Mr. Creighton asked for Mr. Witten to rejoin the team as the Town works through the 40B process. Mr. Federspiel stated Mr. Witten is part of the team and Mr. Pucci has full access to Mr. Witten. Initially, Mr. Witten's schedule did not allow for him to him to be lead Counsel. Additionally, there are other issues with MassHousing that prevent him from being our lead Counsel. The Town has asked Mr. Pucci to be a more aggressive presence in the meetings. Mr. Federspiel stated this project is going to be a long process and will likely be tied up in court for years.

Ms. Mellish stated to date the Board has been laying the groundwork and next week the metal meets the road when the Peer Review report is discussed.

Mr. Creighton wants to be assured that the Town did the best job with the best people. Mr. Weld added if the Developer's proposed numbers remain unchanged, in his opinion there is likely no way the development is going to be built. He has confirmed that opinion with input from others in the real estate investment industry.

- Adjourn

Mr. Oldeman moved to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Creighton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.