

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, November 14, 2017

7:00 PM

Town Hall – Selectmen’s Meeting Room

Members present: Brad Cote, Connie Benjamin, Ted Kirchner, Joe Myerson, & Brian Boyle

Members absent: None

Call to order: Chairman Cote called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM. The entire meeting can be viewed by going to:

http://new.townhallstreams.com/stream.php?location_id=75&id=13920

Agenda Item #1: Interview Advisory Committee candidates

- The committee interviewed two candidates, Ann Hurd and Patricia Gray, who applied to fill the vacant sixth slot. Each candidate presented information about their interest in, and qualifications for, the position. The candidates also responded to committee members’ questions. Chairman Cote thanked both candidates for their willingness to serve the community and explained that we would take a vote during our December 12, 2017 meeting.

Agenda Item #2: Discussion on additional daytime Fire/EMT staffing for January 1, 2018 through the end of the fiscal year (Fire Chief John Mentzer / Ambulance Director Margy Diaz)

- Chief Mentzer and Director Diaz stated that they believe there is a need to staff additional Firefighter/EMT positions to be present at the station during daytime hours. Chief Mentzer explained that currently the pool of people who could respond to a fire call during the daytime is very low. He observed that there is an insufficient incentive for call firefighters to block off time in their schedules to be locally available to respond during the day. As a result, our fire department has had to invoke the mutual aid resources of surrounding towns.
- In discussions with Town Administrator Don Lowe, Chief Mentzer considered adding two new 8-hour Firefighter/EMT shifts that would be staffed on a per diem basis, Monday through Friday. Chairman Cote asked whether these positions would be eligible for benefits, and Don Lowe explained that the positions might not be benefits-eligible if the staffing were drawn from a pool of people (i.e., not the same two people every day).
- For the period of January 2018 through June 2018, the proposed new staffing would cost \$44,304 (\$21.30 per hour x 2 firefighter/EMTs x 8 hours per day x 5 days per week x 26 weeks). For FY2019, the total cost would be approximately \$88,608.
- Due to the preliminary nature of the proposal, the Advisory Committee agreed that Chief Mentzer and Director Diaz should meet with their liaisons (Brad Cote and Joe Myerson) to craft a more concrete proposal prior to our December 12, 2017 meeting.

Agenda Item #3: Consideration of proposal for Town Strategic Planning and Master Plan update (Patricia Gray)

- Patricia Gray presented both the Advisory Committee and Board of Selectmen with a proposal about how to update the town's Master Plan. She envisions two phases. The first phase would include research on key issues, surveys to solicit public input and gauge opinion, and efforts to educate the public on topics relevant to the Master Plan. The second phase would involve analysis, writing the plan, and posting it on the town's website so that it could become a tool for the public.
- Ms. Gray said that the Master Plan raises several strategic issues that go beyond the traditional purview of the Planning Board. She is therefore advocating a broad-based approach to updating the Plan that would leverage the expertise of other groups such as the Selectmen, Advisory Committee, and Capital Planning Committee.
- In terms of a specific next step, Ms. Gray proposed that the Board of Selectmen or the Planning Board create a committee to lead the effort to update the Master Plan. Selectman Wysocki agreed that the Master Plan is due for an update. He explained that such a committee would need a charter with parameters defined by both the Planning Board and the Selectmen. Selectman Jonathan Keep suggested that there might be technical assistance grants to assist in the updating process.

Agenda Item #4: Presentation on Camp Virginia STM Article (Ken Troup)

- Ken Troup addressed the Citizen's Petition concerning the potential purchase of Camp Virginia by the town. Mr. Troup previously provided background information and financial projections to the Advisory Committee via email.
- Mr. Troup presented information concerning (1) acquisition costs, (2) ongoing operational costs, and (3) other start-up costs.
 - With respect to the acquisition costs, the STM warrant article would authorize up to \$1,050,000 for the overall borrowing and \$27,700 for closing costs. If the town were to receive a full \$400,000 PARC (Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities) grant, the overall borrowing would decrease to \$650,000. The town would then face principal and interest payments of approximately \$78,000 per year over ten years.
 - With respect to ongoing operational costs, the Camp Virginia working group estimated a total of \$43,000 per year, which would include such things as grounds maintenance, water and septic, driveway plowing and maintenance, building upkeep, lifeguard labor, and administrative labor.
 - With respect to start-up costs, Mr. Troup stated that certain types of recreation could be taken up immediately on the property, with minimal or no preparatory work. However, the trails would need to be cleaned up, potentially through volunteer labor. Chairman Cote and Selectman Wysocki suggested that there might be additional start-up costs that had been overlooked, including specific projects that could be triggered by the town's acceptance of the PARC grant.
- Mr. Troup noted that, depending on how the town decided to use the property over time, there could be some revenue-generating activities carried out on site, such as

family parties, company events, and weddings. He recommended that the Selectmen eventually set up a management committee for Camp Virginia that would determine and supervise the scope of activities on the property.

- Several questions were asked about requirements or restrictions contained in the PARC grant application. Selectman Czekanski noted that Bolton's PARC grant application appeared to commit the town to several conditions, including paved parking, paved trails, and walking access from the town's center to Camp Virginia. Mr. Troup agreed to follow up on these questions and to clarify the scope of the commitments in the PARC grant application.
- There was also some discussion about how the Camp Virginia land might be used if it is not conserved as park/recreation space. Some noted that if 10 or 11 single family homes were built, the school student population could potentially increase. However, there is considerable debate about the financial impact of single family home development. Selectman Czekanski cited a recent Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) brief that concluded that rates of housing production had no significant correlation with the rate of student enrollment change.
- Mr. Troup also informed the Committee that the Camp Virginia working group had met and shared information with several town boards and committees. There had been no formal recommendations from any of those boards/committees about whether to proceed with the Camp Virginia proposal.
- Chairman Cote thanked Mr. Troup for the Camp Virginia group's work and for his presentation to the committee.

Agenda Item #5: Advisory Committee Business

- Brian Boyle briefly mentioned new Open Meeting Law requirements related to meeting minutes. According to the new regulations, minutes must be approved within the next three meetings or within 30 days, whichever is later.
- The committee discussed the 2018 calendar. Chairman Cote mentioned that by front-loading our work this year, we can devote more time to pursuing best practices recommended by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA). The committee also discussed how liaisons could reach out to their assigned departments after the Thanksgiving break to discuss their proposed FY19 budgets.
- Ted Kirchner observed that a large component of the town's budget is devoted to labor costs. He asked whether we could obtain information about the town's salary and wage policies and perhaps invite someone to present on this topic during one of our budget meetings.

Items to be considered for next agenda

- Discussion and vote on the sixth Advisory Committee member.
- Follow-up discussion of the Firefighter/EMT staffing issue.
- Preliminary review of all FY19 budget submissions.

Adjourn: **MOTION.** Connie Benjamin moved to adjourn at 9:45 PM; seconded by Joe Myerson. **VOTING IN FAVOR:** Brad Cote, Connie Benjamin, Ted Kirchner, Joe Myerson, and Brian Boyle. **VOTED AND PASSED. UNANIMOUS (5-0).**

Documents Referenced

October 15, 2017 email from Ann Hurd to the Advisory Committee

November 8, 2017 email from Patricia Gray to the Advisory Committee

October 31, 2017 email and attachments from Ken Troup to the Advisory Committee

Draft of the warrant for the November 27, 2017 Special Town Meeting

Draft of the Proposed 2018/2019 Advisory Calendar

Draft meeting minutes of October 17, 2017

Approved by Advisory Committee 12/12/2017