

TOWN OF PEMBROKE
APPROVED
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES
28 OCTOBER 2019

Linda Peterson, Chairperson opened the meeting of the Advisory Committee in Pembroke Town Hall at 7:00PM on 28 October 2019. Also present were Sandra Beaton, Patrick Chilcott, Tim Landy and Elizabeth Monks. Kelly Seifert arrived at 7:22pm

Absent: Stephen Walsh, Maria Karas, Matthew Norton

Guest: Michael Buckley, Town Accountant; Catherine Salmon, Chief Assessor; Kathleen McCarthy, Town Collector/Treasurer

Linda Peterson opened the meeting and welcomed new Advisory members to their first meeting, Sandra Beaton, Tim Landy and Patrick Chilcott.

Linda let members know that Elizabeth Monks submitted her resignation from Advisory effective October 31, 2019. Linda accepted her resignation and thanked Betty for service to Advisory.

Patrick asked if the other applicant would be interested. Linda said Advisory should consider someone with experience in town instead of someone who just moved to town. They would need to know a little but about the town.

- Linda welcomed Michael Buckley, Catherine Salmon and Kathleen McCarthy. Mike welcomed the three new members to Advisory and the budget discussion. We are short in reserves and new revenue. Linda asked "how short are we". Mike explained to all departments that next year will be very different; we're pushed to the max covering trash and water deficit. This has nothing to do with Snow & Ice. We can cover FY20.
- Mike explained that the Water Commissioners are scheduled to meet on November 21st to discuss raising rates. Mike is recommending a 25% increase. Linda said someone should be keeping track.
- Advisory will talk about what they should be doing as a committee in preparing for the Town Manager transition. The Town Manager Search Committee was hired one week ago. Mike said interviews may begin the first week of January and may have someone on board by April. Patrick said he spoke with Ed Thorne and he said someone should be hired by April.
- The new Town Manager will assume budget given to him and the warrant will already be printed. Patrick disagreed and said we should push the envelope referring to his discussion from his September 30th interview with Advisory. What does the Advisory Committee want to be; figure out what this board should be doing. If we take a step back we'll be in trouble. Linda noted she is not saying take a step back but he/she won't be on scene.
- Advisory has the most knowledge of people in the room. Don't worry about office supplies, animal control, etc. As an example, The Community Center; learn and push back and make a better product for the town. Linda said the Community Center Committee hasn't come before Advisory, we can't ask them if they don't share; we don't know what they want to do. Patrick said think about the town meeting bylaws in forming this committee, it changed when the Town Manager Act was put in place. We must figure out what we're going to do as a team; it's our job to get buy-in. Mike said to keep it as simple as possible. Patrick suggested standardizing the budget for department heads with a power point deck, a simple 5-6 slide deck with a revenue, and expense component. Every department head would come with the same template. Linda said it's the Town Manager that collects this information. Patrick said we can become more of a business partner with town departments and report out to the Board of Selectmen. We should have a communication meeting to bring these up. Patrick suggested putting together a team to include a member from the Town Manager's office, a representative from the Board of Selectmen and a couple members of Advisory and have a planning session with these folks. Linda said she is not against anything but it will take more than tonight; we need to know what the financial side of it is. We shouldn't borrow; we need to keep a lid on that.
- Patrick asked to describe FY21 Budget; how would we work best. Cathy Salmon asked "what is the process of this committee". Linda said Ed Thorne sends out request for budget to department heads and sends to Advisory mid-January late February. In the past Advisory would schedule budget meetings with all department heads but now concentrate on Fire, Police, DPW and School. Advisory

starts from the beginning, looking at what we have and what we can project for. Patrick said end of November or early December we should have revenue projections for next year. Linda said we get that from Ed and Mike.

- Mike said it will be different this year and going forward. Mike, Cathy, Kathleen, Kris and Sabrina have scheduled regular meetings to review spending and new growth. Also getting consensus on the Cherry Sheet, Free Cash, Land sales, etc. They should have this information together by November 18. They could present this to Advisory. Patrick asked about the annual fee discussion and what are the steps, how does it work. Mike said it should be looked at every year but it's not. Mike said after their meeting on November 18th they could be ready to present to Advisory on November 25th. Mike said they will then look at savings accounts such as OPEB and then debt budget and health insurance. Kathleen goes to every meeting with Mayflower and looks at loss ratios; our claims are lower. We won't have this number until March. Linda asked if we should consider leaving Mayflower, Mike said no, the last discussion with Mayflower was about what we should do with our surplus.
- Patrick asked if there was a deadline to submit general expenses. Mike said yes, November 18th. There are no contracts for this year and he thinks department heads can do it. Linda said it's a change year, we'll see how it works. Kathleen McCarthy asked what Advisory thought would be a realistic date. Patrick said he would expect they would give major expense categories, trends and projections for FY21. Priorities and how they're going to accomplish them. What they're worried about, for example postage and not planning for increase. Linda said one would know about a postage increase.
- Patrick asked about a timeline from November – April to have a more global understanding. Linda said Sabrina usually sends out a timeline. Patrick said for example the School will know who is presenting and what their deficit is, we don't have that. Linda said we're doing better than you feel we are. Patrick said he has run a lot of budgets in millions of dollars and knows "Best Practices". Kathleen McCarthy said when they meet on November 18th they can create a timeline for the meeting with Advisory scheduled for November 25th.
- Mike suggested Advisory stop nit picking or they won't have a good back and forth. Some departments don't want to meet with Advisory; they feel insulted. Kelly said we don't always have the details, for example the list of DPW trucks Advisory requested last year. We received a list of insured trucks from the insurance carrier. It was hard to understand the list.
- Mike suggested Advisory do some research on Town Warrants and how surrounding towns are preparing theirs. Sandra, Tim and Kelly volunteered to research some local towns "Town Warrant" process and report back to the committee.

Linda thanked Mike, Cathy and Kathleen for coming

- Linda said she's not sure how much we can denote from presenting the town warrant. A lot of information can be fed by us but should go out by the Board of Selectmen, they set policy. Revenue is down with very little excess. Reserve Fund is down to \$50,000; not a lot of leeway.
- Patrick said we have to listen to feedback; how do we change perception. Linda said the last few years Advisory's been upset how we've been treated by the Board of Selectmen.
- The letter received from the Board of Selectmen promoting greater collaboration and to create a better system of cooperation, support and partnership extended an invite to Advisory. Linda said Advisory created a list of discussion topics and can add more. This may be the time to say this is how Advisory wants to move forward. Sandra said maybe we list barriers and how we got past them.
- The committee discussed departments using a budget template. Linda said Mike is using a template and referred to page 6 of their handouts as an example. Department Managers submit these current budget templates to Mike and Ed.
- The committee discussed the meeting minutes of September 30, 2019. Linda suggested waiting until the next meeting to vote on the minutes. Patrick noted that the member making the motion and seconding the motion should also be included in the vote so their vote is documented.
- The Advisory Committee address list was distributed. Kelly's email address needs to be updated.
- Tim asked if committee members would be assigned a Town of Pembroke email address. He said any email sent to and from is subject to full disclosure. Patrick will ask if this is possible.

- The committee reviewed the email response from Mike Buckley answering Advisory questions regarding the FY20 budget through August 2019.
- The committee received the FY21 Advisory Budget Worksheet.
- FY20 Budget through September 30, 2019 was reviewed.
- Advisory received a letter from a Marshfield resident unhappy about the Physician Building built on the Pembroke/Marshfield line. The letter was forwarded to the Planning Board.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 4, 2019 at 7:00pm.

Advisory adjourned at 8:57PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Walsh, Clerk