Present: D. Sampson, M. Miller, B. George, S. Hoctor, C. Holden
G. Dunham, Town Manager; Heather Harper, Assistant Town Manager
Others Present: Dr. Gould

Mr. Miller opened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Sampson moved to approve the minutes of January 27, 2022. Mr. Holden seconded. Approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Kevin Sereault – He is a member of the School Committee and wants to inform Selectmen that he supports the Superintendent’s budget, which comes in at 3%. This will meet needs of students this year, but there will be challenges going forward. An advantage this year is that older teachers are retiring, and newer teachers receive less pay. This situation might not be as good next year.

Ms. Candy Thomson – would like to thank Katie and Brian Stanton and Town staff for getting to the planks as soon as possible. More than 24 people scoured the marsh to find planks. The Friends will help in any way to return planks to their owners. The Town is rapidly approaching the four-year anniversary of the approval of the rebuild. No recent project has moved this slowly. The Friends have been engaged but are still waiting for progress.

Mr. Peter Barlow – says he walked the Boardwalk. He commented on the condition of nails and other parts of the Boardwalk. Sections have lifted up, but he thinks the Boardwalk can be repaired inexpensively.

Mr. Don Critchfield – He is offering a suggestion for a Plan B if the Boardwalk cannot be repaired. He suggests using a pontoon boat to go between the Boardwalk parking lot to the back of the dune of the beach. He knows issues would need to be worked out, but this is a way of transit that the Boardwalk would not be able to provide.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

1. Meetings: Tuesday will be the school presentation to the Finance Committee. The next Board meeting will be February 10. On February 15 the Fire /Police, and DPW will be coming to the Finance Committee and the Sandwich Hollows and School capital on March 1. He wondered if the Board was interested in meeting jointly or follow the presentations before the Finance Committee.
2. The shellfish beds reopened this week.
3. There was a meeting with the JBCC this morning. The multi-purpose machine gun range is going through a review of its effects on the sole source aquifer. The review should be complete by spring and there is a public comment period with the final report due 30 days later. Looking at spring.
4. The Section 111 was submitted from the Army Corps New England Division to the North Atlantic Division; they have 30 days to turn it around or deny it. We should know by March.
5. There was a conference call with DEP, Converge, Ms. Harper and Mr. Dunham to talk about wastewater efforts at JBCC – the key is its disposal capacity. The discussion was positive, but there is a long way to go. There will be quarterly meetings with towns and Converge; Converge does not take over until April or May.

6. Efforts for the regional community compact grant continue; Barnstable and others want to sign on. The deadline for submission is next Thursday. We are looking to outline strategy moving forward.

Mr. Miller asked if the funding is in place for the 111. Mr. Dunham responded that some funds may be in their budget for the canal dredging and Scusset. Hopefully they can do the full project and then we need the Corps to change its policy to capture the sand and put it on the beach. Mr. Miller asked what is needed to move forward with the wastewater. Mr. Dunham hopes the Board will be able to make the decision whether to go to JBCC or do the project locally. There will need to be a hydrologic study, then significant State and Federal permitting. Mr. George asked whether funding could be increased for the Section 111. Mr. Hoctor has been communicating with Senator Markey; they are looking for a funding vehicle as well as changing the Corps policy to dump the sand on beach. There was a comment that the Woods Hole group made this one of the easiest studies for the Corps because of how much the Town did relative to permits, surveys, etc. Because of the amount of sand lost in storms is it possible to move up the timeline? It is possibly feasible depending on financing; we need to work with our congressional delegation. We cannot get an increased amount of sand because the type of sand is important. The Corps would like to monitor the sand at Scusset and see how long it takes to fill in. The site permit is a one-time permit; there would need to be a follow up study before we could do it again.

CORRESPONDENCE/STATEMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Holden announced that Tuesday February 15 will be the initial meeting of the superintendent search committee. Mr. Hoctor would like to thank the people who found the missing Boardwalk sections, John Foye who helped to recover material and Candy Thomson for the Friends volunteering to step forward to help out.

STAFF MEETING

Superintendent of Schools - Dr. Pam Gould FY '23 School Budget Presentation and Related Matters

Dr. Gould began by saying that this year was one of the easiest budget years because of the severe resignations of older faculty and replacement faculty being at lower salaries. She then talked about how Covid had affected the school system. Expenses associated with Covid included the purchase of protective equipment supplies; sanitizing buildings; addressing air quality, especially at the high school, and addressing learning loss. The schools received significant funding from the State as well as the Federal government beginning in June, 2021. The Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funding (ESSER) came in three phases, with the third phase beginning in December of 2021 and going to September of 2024. They are presently in Phase Three and plan to use all of the money. She presented a chart of how each phase was spent; they used the funds mostly to provide appropriate staff and make sure the children were safe. In addition to the expenses previously described, these efforts included salaries, summer programming, support for the school for early learning, moving costs, a tent for the high school classes, air filters and fans. Expenses in the current phase continue the summer and after school academic programming, ventilation systems and the Forestdale playground.

School enrollments are leveling off. Dr. Gould presented a table illustrating per pupil expenditure comparisons with other Cape towns. At $18,326, Sandwich is average in comparison. She then showed a staffing summary for certified and non-certified staff, that illustrated changes in staffing over time. There are no additions in this budget. She then showed a chart of the FTE/100 students over time. Schools have lost 13% of leadership positions and staffing. They have concentrated on decreasing staffing without impacting the Town on unemployment. Looking at a district overview relative to per pupil expenditure, Sandwich has more students with economic and disability challenges than many others. Mr. Hoctor asked how we compare to other towns if we were to add back the money we spend on school tuitions and assessments. Dr. Gould thinks
it would be relatively equal. We are now sending fewer students to charter schools. Mr. Miller commented that money for tuition is paid for out of the general budget and not out of the school budget. Mr. Dunham said that the charter school enrollments are down, but the assessment is higher for some reason. The State is supposed to reimburse towns but has not lived up to that obligation—it hasn’t funded even 1/3 of what it owes. Dr. Gould said that school choice does bring money into the Town.

Looking at the overall budget, it has remained steady because of salary reductions due to retirements, less expensive special education placements; custodial and technology have increased. The proposed budget for level services is lower than the recommended 3%. As far as capital goes, they are continuing with the 15-year capital plan. The budget has no added programs. Dr. Gould thinks the schools are in good shape for a couple of years.

Questions/Comments from the Board Mr. Dunham said that the ARPA funding can be used for direct costs related to Covid; they can be used to address the wastewater repairs at the high school. If there are more ARPA funds, they will be put toward connections from Oakridge and Forestdale as well as the high school. Mr. George asked about the boilers, as salaries are such a large part of the budget, the boiler repairs are not in the operating budget. They are in the capital budget. Mr. Miller wondered what the system will look like in the future. The reorganization saved money as well as providing better education. There is a question about regionalization, but Dr. Gould believes we are not ready. Mr. Dunham reminded the Board that we are a lower wealth community, partly because 85% of homes are occupied year-round. Other towns have more seasonal second homes that don’t need the services. Mr. Sampson is concerned about the capital budget but thanked Dr. Gould for bringing this budget forward and for her contribution to the Town. Mr. Miller said the presentation was honest and up front. Mr. Dunham thanked Dr. Gould for her years with the Town saying she has been incredible to work with.

OLD BUSINESS

FY’23 Budget Update
Nothing has changed since last week. The Governor has released the Cherry Sheet. A couple of revenues are up, but so are assessments. We are still waiting on other numbers. Mr. Dunham wanted to know how the Board would want to handle the four issues—double up or otherwise. Mr. Sampson said that the school capital is most important, as are DPW and the golf course. Mr. Miller would like to do two at once. The Fire overtime report will not be done until March. Mr. Miller thinks the large items should come before the Board. Mr. Dunham commented on the charter school assessments. These schools are public, but function like private schools. The assessment is up by 1,333% up since the program started.

Update on Current Building Projects
Ms. Harper reported that the library only has 2 items left but it will take a few weather cycles to observe their function. Rte. 100 6A—the challenge is the slow to respond HVAC subcontractor. She is concerned that their pace is slowing the project down. A strong correspondence will be going out to them shortly. Lack of response is the issue; if they perform, we are in good shape. We will have the final punch list within the month. CAL—continues to go well. The building fared well. In the storm. As we move into 100 Rte. 6A, we can focus more on the CAL.

Pilgrim Nuclear Power Plant Decommissioning Issues
Mr. Dunham, at the request of the Board, did some follow-up on the letter written by the Federal delegation about decommissioning the nuclear power plant. He searched fact-based information from a variety of sources. Mr. Dunham received an email from Duxbury; The company is coming to the Duxbury Board of Selectmen; this is a zoom meeting on the topic, and anyone can come. The consistent message from the company is that there will be no disposal in 2022. Mr. Holden doesn’t see harm in supporting the Federal delegation letter. Mr. Dunham said they only have three disposal options. One third of the product has already evaporated. The other options are to move the product to another place, dispose of it in the Bay, or let it all
evaporate. Mr. Sampson said that when you look at the history of the plant and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission – no one cares what we think. The company knew what they were getting into. We know the consequences of Yakushima, why would they think of dumping in the bay. Mr. Sampson moved that the Board oppose discharge of any radioactive water or other associated materials into Cape Cod Bay, specifically as part of the decommissioning process by Holtec Corporation, in alignment with the Federal Delegation and other local communities. Seconded by Mr. Holden. Mr. Miller wants to be sure we know what they are actually proposing to do; there is no good option.

Other Matters Not Reasonably Anticipated for Old Business
None.

NEW BUSINESS

Blizzard Follow-up
Mr. Dunham said that this was a really bad storm. The DPW did as good a job as possible with their resources. Some of the normal trucks got stuck. We needed help, so we were fortunate to get one marked piece of apparatus from the State. Tomorrow afternoon there will be an internal after-action meeting to prepare for the future. JBCC had a joint meeting today; the person who is the head of the Army National Guard suggested the possibility of a mutual aid agreement. Eversource had a high-level person in the emergency centers to help. The Fire Department had extra staffing, but the call volume was low. Flooding occurred in the usual spots; there was some erosion near Amaris. The power was restored quickly. Mr. Holden compliments Eversource as well. Bill LaPine has done a great job in the Emergency Operations Center. The schools helped as well with plowing to get access to the golf course for fuel. The DPW generator failed; they will get new generator with dedicated money for emergency management from the Canal.

Mr. Sampson wants to identify how to solve the private contractor problem. Small trucks just aren’t able to do the plowing and there is an ongoing lack of private contractors. Feedback history is that we call the contractors in late, potentially destroying their equipment because there is more snow depth. We need to look at ways to solve the problems and improve public perceptions of the DPW. Mr. Dunham said that we do not have personnel compared to other towns. Mr. Sampson said we need to allocate the funds to address this and have a robust contractor list. Mr. Hoctor wants to remind people that there is twice as much road to clear because plows can only do half at one time. There are training opportunities available for updated approaches. We also need to assess equipment purchasing to be sufficient for the needs we have. Pay is low as well. We should try change policies to attract contractors, but there is also a problem of wear and tear on the trucks. Mr. Miller said that a lot of this is perception by the public and not necessarily factual; the after-action report will be important.

Ms. Harper reported that about 200 feet of the Boardwalk were lost during the storm – a 150 foot and a 40-foot section. Large sections were found yesterday in the marsh. Icing was a factor. Today’s analysis – there is extensive damage, it will be expensive to replace, unlikely that it will be connected this season, as we cannot just lift and put back the sections. Alternatives are being driven by building code, conditions of the structure and public safety. They are looking at ways to reuse what is there and there is a possibility that parts of the boardwalk could be accessible from the beach side and the boardwalk lot side, but not connected. She is meeting today with consultants. She is asking the public not to take their boards off what is there. Mr. Miller asked if permitting can be expedited. It is not safe for people to be out there with the sections. We are going to look at ways to pull it out. It is on private property, so we will need a lease agreement, easements etc. The goal is to store it on public property. There has not yet been any public communication; that will happen tomorrow. The things people can do are support the approved project and access updates on the website; people will be notified as things are happening. The preliminary design was approved in December and plans will be ready next week. The MEPA filing process changed on Jan 1 and MEPA personnel are trying to adapt.
They are working via Zoom, so the permitting process is backed up. We need to meet new minimum standards before submission; this is ready to go. A spring bid is a possibility, but probably not with permits in hand, which is a risk for the Town. We are doing what needs to be done to be in the position to go if permitted earlier. There is no foundation for expedited permitting. Mr. Dunham said that the appeal of the building commissioner’s decision for the rails was submitted last Friday – no hearing date set. All permit plans are to be submitted next Tuesday. Mr. Hoctor asked for a description of what the Town has already tried to approach the situation. Mr. Dunham said that MEMA does a damage assessment and requests information from the Town about expenditures for such items as public safety overtime, DPW overtime, and equipment damage. We put in for the DPW generator, the full Boardwalk cost estimate, and other costs, but the whole region needs to be considered, even though we have heard from other towns that our infrastructure issues are higher than theirs. This will not be a quick decision, but even if it were, we would not see money for three to five years. Everything we possibly can do has been done. According to the report, engineering evaluation of everything suggests that none of what is there can be reused, so it cannot be put back up. It will be a time intensive effort both to remove the sections and to remove individual planks. If over 50% of the structure is damaged than codes are activated; this can happen even if less than 50% if substantial reconstruction is needed. Mr. Sampson stated that four years ago after storm damage to the boardwalk the Board recognized the potential for this situation and recommended replacing the structure. This plan was supported at Town Meeting and at the ballot box and initial plans were available in the fall of 2019, but it has taken two years beyond that for everyone to agree on a design. Despite the fact that there are some that still object to the new design, codes still must be followed, and the design is more robust and makes the Boardwalk more accessible. The best thing anyone can do at this time is to lobby the appropriate legislators to expedite the permitting process to make it happen. We need to make the bridge section safe for use this summer and move the construction process forward. The Town is committed to returning the planks through an appropriate process, but this is not the most important thing that needs to happen. Mr. Miller reminded people that the planks were a donation to the Town, so even though there is a commitment to return them to the people who donated them, they are actually Town property. We are committed to returning the planks, but it is a major cost, and people should not be going down to tear their planks off the existing Boardwalk. Mr. Hoctor said that going down to the marsh to retrieve planks not only puts yourselves at risk, but also our public safety personnel at risk.

Heritage Museum and Gardens Annual Entertainment License
Mr. Hoctor moved to approve the Annual Entertainment License for Heritage Museum and Gardens. Mr. Holden seconded. There was a reminder that the liquor license is limited to specific areas; if there are plans to have events on other places, they must apply for a one-day license. Approved unanimously.

Sandwich Historical Commission – Carolyn Crowell from Member to Alternate
Carolyn has asked to be changed from a full member to an alternate member. Mr. Hoctor moved to accept the request of Carolyn Crowell to change from member to alternate on the Sandwich Historical Commission. Seconded by Mr. Sampson. Approved unanimously.

Other Matters Not Reasonably Anticipated for new Business
None.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

CLOSING REMARKS
With very mixed emotions Mr. Sampson has decided not to run for Selectman at this time. With support over the years, he believes the Board has moved the Town forward and accomplished more than he thought
possible in that relatively short time. This role requires fairness and commitment to service. Currently Mr. Sampson needs to concentrate on a number of personal and professional initiatives. He will continue to be an active member of the community and participant on the Board and reserves the right to change his mind about running again. It is likely he will run again in the future. He thanked the Board members, the Town staff and the community. The Board members thanked Mr. Sampson for his service and expressed sorrow that he is not running again. Mr. Holden wanted to compliment the CERT Team for a fine job during the storm; in particular, Heather Gallant was a trooper through the whole thing.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Holden moved to adjourn. Mr. George seconded. Approved unanimously.
The meeting adjourned at 9:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan James

Supporting Documents:
Minutes (7 pages)
School Documents (8 pages)
Budget (5 pages)
Power Plant (23 pages)
Boardwalk (3 pages)
License (1 page)
Appointment (1 page)