MINUTES BOARD OF SELECTMEN MARCH 3, 2022
Town Hall, 130 Main Street, Sandwich, MA 02563
7:00 p.m.

Present:  D. Sampson, M. Miller, B. George, S. Hoctor, C. Holden
          G. Dunham, Town Manager; Heather Harper, Assistant Town Manager
Others Present: Chief of Police, Peter Wack; Deputy Chief, Jason Keene; William Jennings,
               Director of Finance

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Mr. Sampson moved to approve the minutes of February 17, 2022. Seconded by Mr. Holden.
Approved with one member missing.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

1. Mr. Dunham reported that the next Finance Committee meeting is on March 8th; the
   Upper Cape Tech Superintendent will attend to talk about the budget. Dr. Gould, Jon
   Nelson, Schools Facilities Director, and consultants will be talking about the capital
   projects request. If Selectmen want to attend the Finance Committee meeting, then it
   has to be posted as such; no one expressed interest.

2. Ms. Harper told the Board that there has been an internal scoping session about the
   Boardwalk MEPA permit application, which is due next week. Any associated public
   hearings will be posted. Staff discussed possibilities for returning the planks that are on
   the recovered sections. There has been a site visit for the Deacon Eldred House.
   Proposals are due on March 28th. Seven toured the site. There is also a very interesting
   aerial video that is special.

3. Mr. Dunham is trying to find out from Town Counsel how ARPA funds received directly
   could be used. He was told if the amount is less than $10 million, there is flexibility.
   They can be used for wastewater or other infrastructure needs. John Gorgio will be
   attending the Cape manager meeting so all towns will be on the same page. The
   County reached out to the towns this week; it is planning to set aside 50% of ARPA
   funds it received (~$10 million) for all 15 towns to access. There will be a formal
   application and review process. Sandwich would like to use the funds for the
   wastewater project of connecting the High School with the Oakridge system.

Questions/Comments Mr. Miller commented that it appears the ARPA funds from the County
will be distributed in chunks and questioned how fair the process would be. The Assembly also
has to sign off on uses. There was a comment that the warning light at Oakridge is not working. Mr. George asked about progress on the Wing School development. Ms. Harper reported that the developers continue to invest and are planning to go for the next round of State funding. This is a long process, with the average time from start to finish being about seven years. The school department needs to have a back-up plan for the administrative offices for next fall. There was an onsite visit for the Village Green development with the development team and others. This was not productive, as issues remain that would prevent them from qualifying for State review. If anyone has questions about current valuations, they are available online.

CORRESPONDENCE/STATEMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Sampson reported that he had previously reached out to our State delegation regarding issues around the boardwalk. On Monday Representative Xiarhos and Senator Moran attended a meeting at Town Hall with him, Mr. Dunham, Ms. Harper, Alan Pepin, Sam Jensen, Brendan Brides, Paul Tilton, and Dave DeConto to give them an update and some history about the project and the path forward. The purpose is to see if they can do anything to expedite the permitting. They seemed relatively enthusiastic. Senator Moran suggested pushing our federal delegation on the Section 111 project. Mr. Sampson told them what had already occurred and was transparent about the disappointment in their general response about that issue. This is something that is in process and there will be follow up. Mr. Sampson reported having toured 100 Rte. 6A; there is terrific progress, and the building is in great shape and close to completion except for a couple of issues related to a subcontractor. So people can see what it is like inside, Mr. Sampson, Ms. Harper and Tim Sawyer the architect will be making a video. Mr. Holden would like to thank Ms. Harper and Marie Buckner for welcoming the groups Sandwich Stands and Sandwich for All to Town Hall with the goal of becoming better informed on the issues, to discuss and to listen and emphasize the Selectmen support and statement on diversity. Mr. Holden also attended the opening session of the Citizens’ Police Academy after a two-year hiatus from Covid. Fifteen people were welcomed to the class. The Superintendent Search Committee met last night and is making progress. The School Safety Committee met this morning and is making progress. Stewart Parsons from the library will be retiring after 24 years and Saturday is Stewart Parsons day; we wish him many years of happy retirement. Mr. Dunham said we reached out to the Base in case the federal delegation could take a tour of the whole project that is included in the 111. Woods Hole Group did come out to measure after the recent storm; 13,000 of the 15,000 cu yds received from Bourne and placed on the beach is gone. People at the Base had a couple of suggestions.

STAFF MEETING

Police Chief Peter Wack and Deputy Police Chief Jason Keene – Recommended FY ’23 Police Operating Budget

Chief Wack described the makeup of personnel in the police department as well as two positions shared with the fire department. There are 11 specialized assignments, such as resource officers, instruction and training, among others. Currently four officers are out sick, one pending retirement, and one about to enter the police academy. Important issues currently being addressed include mental health and well-being of the elderly. Chief Wack also presented call statistics, breaking out those that are most important to businesses and residents; other
calls are included in the totals. He is requesting additional funds in four areas: repair and maintenance of equipment, equipment, cruiser replacement, and office supplies; these are related to the new larger square footage, additional maintenance agreements and the communications center. Four cruisers are replaced annually but because car models differ from year to year, current equipment cannot be used in replacement vehicles. There are no additional capital requests.

Questions/Comments Mr. Hoctor asked whether hybrid vehicles are being considered, especially if we apply for Green Community status. Chief Wack said that they are much more expensive, and they do not hold up as well during use. The Town annual report lists all 911 calls; these have increased due to inadvertent dialing from cell phones.

Deputy Chief Keene presented the request for a new dispatch manager. Currently, the supervisor is a full-time dispatcher, but also is responsible for more than a dozen other duties such as 24-hour staffing, evaluations, scheduling, budgeting and quality assurance, among others (list is in the agenda packet), for which he is paid a stipend. He also handles emergency calls. He has reported that he is overwhelmed; he has been performing several of these duties on overtime. The new position would be a Monday to Friday schedule and all the responsibilities listed would become this person’s job; additional responsibilities would include setting up the emergency operations system, being the lead on 911 grant applications, handling complaints, hiring, updating records, collaborating with the fire department and handling off-duty calls. Staying certified in dispatching is required in case fill-in is needed.

Questions/Comments Mr. Miller asked about retaining dispatchers. Deputy Chief Keene responded that the situation has somewhat stabilized but that several of the dispatchers use dispatching as a stepping-stone to other positions or careers. There may be in-house interest in the proposed position. The position would be posted through the website and on various social media platforms. This is a civilian position. Mr. Dunham emphasized that this person would be very helpful relative to emergency management. He or she would be cross trained on both police and fire desks.

Assistant Town Manager Heather Harper and Finance Director Bill Jennings – Sandwich Hollows Golf Club Irrigation System and Equipment Project

Ms. Harper began by reviewing the history of the golf course property (slides are in the agenda packet), which was bought in 1999 as part of land purchase to preserve open space resources and prevent planned development. It is in the middle of a vast area of open space and takes up about 215 acres. The area provides many community amenities, such as walking and biking trails; the golf course itself runs programs for people of all ages, hosts high school golf teams, runs tournaments for several organizations and has the nationally known Jane Frost Golf School. There is also a well-used croquet field. The Clubhouse Grille, a locally owned business, serves the community, not just golfers, and contributes toward golf revenues. When the course was purchased, a report by the Golf Realty Advisors demonstrated that the course would be adequate for daily fee municipal play, and this is its market position. A major recommendation of the report was replacement of the irrigation system, which was 26 years old at the time. It is now obsolete and replacement parts have become difficult to find. Ms. Harper then reviewed the project details including replacement of the irrigation system, maintenance equipment
purchase, a small building to protect the equipment, turf, and assessment of the resiliency of
the well. The total cost, which was developed by a professionally experienced consultant, is
estimated at $3.5 million. This would be paid for by funds in the golf enterprise fund and would
not be borne by the taxpayers. The overall goal is to improve playability through improving
course conditions; the course would be in jeopardy of deterioration if this is not done. This is an
opportunity due to factors that have increased the number of golfers and increased revenues;
we need to capture these and reinvest in the course. The property has been difficult to
maintain due to the problems with the irrigation system and a new system would use water
more efficiently, getting it where it needs to go on the course. The project would be done in
phases during the off season; the priority is the irrigation.

Mr. Jennings then described the funding mechanisms. The entire amount would be paid for
from the enterprise fund and bonded over 20 years. Currently, the fund has available retained
earnings of $750,000, there would be a minor increase in fees, and there will be savings of
approximately $55,000 annually from a proposed solar canopy over the parking lot. Interest
rates are currently low. The bond payback would be $225,000 annually (pending final interest
rate), which can be managed with low risk. It is not risk-free, but safeguards are built in:
$300,000 of the retained earnings will be set aside to cover a bad year or an emergency, the
original golf course debt will retire in FY ’30, and 50% of room tax revenues can be dedicated to
infrastructure improvements such as this. Any debt is Town of Sandwich debt, so if the fund
does not have enough in it in a given year, the course operating budget would be decreased
accordingly.

Questions/Comments Mr. Dunham said that there have been recent improvements to the club
house and a new HVAC ductless split system is planned. The numbers for equipment purchase
are taken from the state bid numbers and are accurate. Mr. Miller commented that the course
has managed the system as well as possible for many years, but it is time to replace it.
Improving playability will bring in more golfers and more tournaments, which will increase
revenue. Mr. Dunham commented that play occurs year-round and people from off-Cape come
to play in the winter as the course is right over the bridge. Mr. George asked whether Town
employees receive a discount; they are eligible for a first-year membership rate. Mr. Dunham
emphasized that this will be funded within Proposition 2 ½ so will require a 2/3 vote from Town
Meeting, but not a ballot vote. He asked for suggestions for the presentation for Town Meeting
– Mr. Hoctor suggested more photos of the compromised areas.

OLD BUSINESS

FY ’23 Budget Update
We received number for the health insurance and the number has been dropped to
$11,900,000. This brings the budget balance closer to $500,000. Even with the requests for the
roads and fire overtime, we are still not touching excess levy capacity. The Town can afford
what has been recommended with the money we have. Property liability might change due to
adding large buildings; we will not know until we get the exact numbers. This has been a good
year for liability with decreased numbers of claims. Rates haven’t changed much but square
footage has increased; however with sale of buildings, that might decrease.
Annual Town Meeting – May 2, 2022
The goal is to have draft articles for next week. The deadline for petition articles was Monday and three were submitted. The first petition article wants to reestablish the ban on plastic water bottles under size of one gallon. The second article wants to undo the article passed at the special meeting in November that put a ban on jet skis at Peter’s Pond. The third petition consists of three articles relating to recreational marijuana. These have not been looked at yet by Counsel. Sandwich previously said no to recreational marijuana, so both Town and Zoning by-laws were passed by Town Meeting to ban recreational marijuana. This was before the Cannabis Control Commission was established. Opinion from Counsel is that petition articles can overturn ballot questions because of changes in regulations in the State. To change a Town by-law is majority vote, but zoning by-law is a 2/3 vote, so probably would need a 2/3 vote on everything. If it is overturned the number allowed would be 20% of the total number of year-round alcohol licenses, which could amount to three establishments; if the public wanted to go below the three a ballot question could be presented at a later date. One petitioner is the Town Moderator and he cannot conduct the meeting while this is being discussed.

Update on Current Building Projects
There is an upcoming onsite CAL meeting tomorrow, the first in a while because of the weather. After the regular meeting we will be talking about the owner’s requested additions. As mentioned previously, a video will be made on 100 Rte. 6A to be available to the public. The public will be able to see the progress, but also see there is a way to go. We are still working on some subcontractor issues. Hopefully relocation will be this summer. The lighting system at the library finally works; still working on the HVAC system. Pipes at the old sign at 100 Rte. 6A are going to be cut off.

Selectmen Meeting Schedule
Next week was scheduled if needed, but we don’t know if the schools are able to come; if not, it would be the 17th. Mr. Sampson asked if the plan has been formally approved by the school committee; they are having a meeting on the 16th. Mr. Sampson would like to see it officially approved before they come to the Board. There are several liquor license hearings scheduled for the beginning of that night. On the 7th there is a regional conference in Boston that Mr. Dunham needs to attend, and Ms. Harper is speaking at. Hopefully, the warrant will be resolved by then; if a meeting is needed that week, could it be held on the 5th? Votes on the ballot questions need to be taken by April 1st. Mr. Dunham thinks the plan is very complete; clicking on the blue links will bring you to the individual reports on each of the projects.

Other Matters Not Reasonably Anticipated for Old Business
None.

NEW BUSINESS

Other Matters Not Reasonably Anticipated for new Business
None.
PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

CLOSING REMARKS

Mr. Sampson commented that vehicles equipped with lights and sirens are exempt from the Green Community vehicle requirements; police vehicles must meet certain requirements unless not available at time of purchase. There are some concerns about reliability and liability of the hybrid vehicles. Mr. Dunham said that at CAL and the library there are conduits for electric charging stations. Emails to Selectmen with complaints are forwarded by Melissa to the right department to address. This should be done before Selectmen reach out. Contacts with department heads should be through the Town managers. Mr. Miller thanks for the tour of 100 Rte. 6A. Mr. Holden would like to keep people in eastern Europe in thoughts and prayers. Mr. Hoctor said there is a corn hole tournament at Sandwich Hollows and a raffle this week to raise money for the Little League to go to Cooperstown.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Sampson moved to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Holden. The meeting adjourned at 8:58 PM.

Note: Board of Selectmen meetings are recorded and available for viewing in their entirety on the Sandwich Community Television website: https://sandwichcommunitytv.org

Respectfully submitted,

Susan James

Supporting Documents:
Minutes (6 pages)
Police Budget (13 pages)
Golf Course (34 pages)
Budget (5 pages)
Petition Articles (11 pages)
Meeting Schedule (1 page)