

**Cohasset Advisory Committee**  
**Thursday, March 25, 2021**  
**Virtual Meeting Zoom Video**  
**7:00 pm**

Pursuant to MGL c 30A Section 20(b), following Governor Baker's declaration of state of emergency in the Commonwealth arising from COVID-19 Pandemic, the Committee will meet virtually utilizing technology. **All votes will be taken by a Roll Call Vote.**

***This meeting was recorded***

***Documents Received:*** South Shore Vocational Technical School District Debt Authorization Article Presentation, 2021 ATM Draft Warrant, Cohasset Town Hall Johnson Roberts Associates, Inc., and eleven documents relating to February 2021 Financials from Tracey Connors.

Meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm

Advisory Committee Members in attendance: Jeanne Astino, Jean Healey Dippold, Lee Jenkins, Helene Lieb, Mary McGoldrick, Rob Hillman. Fran Collins joined the meeting at 7:53 pm

Guests: Chris Senior, Tom Hickey, Carolyn Coffey, Mark Cameron, Phil Lehr, Michelle Leary, Steven Kirby, Sam Wakeman

**Warrant Article Review – South Shore Votech**

Tom Hickey, the superintendent of the South Shore Vocational Technical High School (Votech), presented.

Chris Senior briefly introduced Tom Hickey. Mr. Hickey presented on the proposed warrant article relating to Votech:

- Cohasset's yearly share is approximately \$126,000.
- Votech is seeking a total authorization request of \$18.9 million, with Cohasset's share of this borrowing being .81%.
- Votech is proposing to use the money to do infrastructure repairs and building 10,000 sq. feet in additional space. Mr. Hickey presented a five-year snapshot of the repairs and projected borrowing phases during that time period. He noted Votech has been saving and has approximately \$1 million, in case they need to offset the borrowing.
- As to the authorization request, Cohasset's share goes from \$1,985 to \$12,452 over six phases from FY23 to FY28, with that number broken down by capital and debt from prior 2010 Votech roof and window project.

- Currently, Mr. Hickey is starting to reach out and notify applicable towns during their town meeting season about the debt authorization.

A brief discussion of the Votech warrant article and master plan occurred.

**Motion by Lee Jenkins that the Advisory Committee recommends to Town Meeting the approval of Article 20: Debt authorization for South Shore Vocational Technical High School. Second by Helene Lieb. All members present voted aye.**

### **Warrant Article Review – Town Hall Renovation**

Phil Lehr, Mark Cameron, and Carolyn Coffey from the Town Hall Building Committee attended, as did Steven Kirby from Veritech.

Mark Cameron presented the Cohasset Town Hall Project, including:

- Why the project is needed; added benefits to a new annex, total project budget (hard costs, soft costs, contingencies).
- The project cost is driven by the program. The programmatic design took all of the current seats and needs to determine how much square footage and special requirements that each department needs. They also considered space storage, including the safe for town hall, as well as designing with respect to forward-facing customer facing transactions.
- The project is still at the schematic design level and there are still unknowns.
- Brief presentation on public costs versus private costs for various trades.
- Escalation averages about 3% a year. If we do nothing now, the cost will climb for the same building.
- Designed options to seek funds now for design development, Spring 2022 is to do project bid and construction starts.
- The Committee is recommending \$700k to go from schematic to construction documents.
- The Committee also discussed other options to reduce square feet, eliminate auditorium, renovate and fix existing structure, phased construction.
- There may be possibilities for grants, however, they did not factor in grant money when building the budget.
- The goal is to get as much support as you can. They launched a FB webpage on the Town Building.

Questions from Advisory Committee members about:

- Whether there was any factoring in as to hoteling or rotation? No, the Select Board charge was to do needs assessment on the pre-Covid needs.
- Whether it was possible to fit the program into the historic structure? The program did not fit into existing historic town hall area.
- Whether there was more or less parking? There are five more parking slots.

- When was the Building Committee formed and charged? A year ago. In November, they hired a project management group to get started and received orders from the Select Board to hire a design group. Assessed space needs, too. They noted that there are items in the Annex – two stairwells, safe, and elevator – that even if they get the size down it doesn't affect cost due to those items.
- The Cohasset Historic Commission is pleased with the design.
- Asked about grants? They are looking at grants with National Grid and AEC.

Brief presentation from Sam Wakeman of Capital Budget as to:

- How the capital stabilization fund works and that the fund is provided with \$2 million,
- Currently they have \$200,000 for debt service, another \$400,000 for projects underway but not yet bonded, leaving approximately \$1.4 million each year. If the Town Hall project takes out \$700,000, there will only be \$700,000 left each year. And Capital Budget receives \$3 to \$4 million of requests a year. Mr. Wakeman also stated that we will need a new police & fire station in the future.
- Noted that they think CPC will pay \$4 million and the Town will need to pay \$10,000,000.

Further discussion occurred as to:

- whether this would be an override or debt exclusion and noted that the last vote did not pass. Further discussion that an override is forever, a debt exclusion is for the length of the time period of the bond.
- the proposed warrant article of \$700,000 would take us through design development and construction documents. We don't have final number yet. There was an additional request for more information on funding.
- The Advisory Committee deferred a decision on the Town Hall request until a future meeting once we have a warrant.

### **Warrant Article Review & Vote:**

Article 7: Supplemental Appropriations– Fees from Verizon/Comcast must be formally moved to Cohasset TV \$183,725.

**Lee Jenkins moved that Advisory Committee recommends to Town Meeting the approval of Article 7. Seconded by Jean Healey Dippold. All members voted aye.**

Article 8: Stabilization and other special funds.

Chris Senior described the funds transferring into different funds, like Capital Stabilization, OPEB Trust Funds, General Stabilization, Special Education Stabilization, Sewer Capital Stabilization. Budgeted money comes from tax revenue into the Capital Stabilization fund- that is baked into the annual budget. Every year, once free cash is

certified, we look at what is left and put the free cash into the capitalization stabilization. Because we had more free cash, we put the free cash into capital stabilization.

Free cash typically injected into the capital stabilization fund varies. It was \$300,000 last year and the prior years were about \$400,000 to \$500,000. Clarification that “when debt rolls” or when the bond is retired, or if the non-excluded debt was decreased by any amount, that amount would go to capital. The free cash is all certified and ready to go.

**Helene Lieb moved that Advisory Committee recommends to Town Meeting the approval of Article 8. Seconded by Mary McGoldrick. All members voted aye.**

Article 10: Departmental Revolving Funds – Annual Spending Limits

**Mary McGoldrick moved that Advisory Committee recommends to Town Meeting the approval of Article 10. Seconded by Jeanne Astino. All members voted aye.**

Article 11: Allocation of Funds for One-Time Cost.

Description of each purpose and fund:

- \$100,000 for consulting services
- \$25,000 for TM Contingency, need to do a survey
- \$50,000 for Contract settlements
- \$28,350 Sandy Beach Parking Lot Management
- \$75,000 Maintenance and Equipment upgrades

***(Jeanne Astino dropped off)***

- \$25,000 for Teen Center – for windows, a door, and bathroom materials. The current plan is that Recreation will run it after school and do programming. Safe Harbor will help plan this and they are working with the schools on this. There was a good response rate from the surveys. Noted that there was never a good hangout for a Teen Center.
- \$20,000 for Tennis Court Study – Lot of participation in the JV/Varsity sports. Would study existing restoration. Locations that could take more courts. Question about field study and whether to add that into the field study because it’s the same land. Decision to send this back to the Select Board with that question.
- \$10,000 Waterways Fund – Dock & other Waterways repairs
- \$1,000 Free Cash – South Shore Irish Heritage Trail

***(Jeanne Astino came back on)***

Advisory Committee will defer on this article and asked Chris S. to follow-up with Select Board on the Tennis Court Study.

Article 12: Chapter 91 Liability

**Helene Lieb moved that Advisory Committee recommends to Town Meeting the approval of Article 12. Seconded by Jeanne Astino. All members voted aye.**

Article 13: Annual Real Estate Exemptions.

**Lee Jenkins moved that Advisory Committee recommends to Town Meeting the approval of Article 12. Seconded by Helene Lieb. All members voted aye.**

Article 6: Unpaid Bills.

Rob Hillman exited the discussion.

**Lee Jenkins moved that Advisory Committee recommends to Town Meeting the approval of Article 6. Seconded Helene Lieb. All members present (Helene Lieb, Jean Healey Dippold, Fran Collins, Lee Jenkins, Jeanne Astino, Mary McGoldrick) voted aye.**

### **Recurring Articles in Upcoming Meetings:**

- March 30<sup>th</sup> Joint Meeting with the Select Board was pushed to April 6. This may involve a high-level summary of the budget.
- April 1<sup>st</sup> is Water & Sewer. We should get snapshots from them on Tuesday.
- April 8<sup>th</sup> is the Planning Board – zoning bylaw changes – two large ones. We will put together materials for them and be prepared to deliberate and vote. On April 8<sup>th</sup>, we should try to complete deliberations on the Town Hall Warrant article.
- April 15<sup>th</sup>, we should be prepared to vote on the entire budget and any lingering odds and ends.

### **Minutes**

***March 18th Minutes: Motion to approve by Lee Jenkins. Second by Fran Collins. Rob Hillman, Jean Healey Dippold, Lee Jenkins, Mary McGoldrick, all voted aye.***

**Motion to Adjourn by Lee, Second by Helene. Fran Collins, Jean Healey Dippold, Lee Jenkins, Jeanne Astino, Helene Lieb, Mary McGoldrick, and Rob Hillman voted aye.**

Adjourned at 9:42p.m.

/s/ Jean M. Healey Dippold