

TOWN OF PEMBROKE  
APPROVED  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 7, 2023

Linda Peterson, Chairperson opened the meeting on Thursday, September 7, 2023 at Town Hall at 6:30PM. Also present were: Tim Landy, John Scholl, Sandra Beaton, Robert Kenney and Stephen Patt

**Absent:** Stephen Walsh, Liz Benotti

**Guests:** William Chenard, Town Manager

Bill reviewed the FY24 General Fund Expenses – they're doing well. He highlighted the following expenses:

- Town Landing – costs occur June/July, leaving the budget at 7.8%
- Debt Service – Principal – payment occurs at the beginning of the fiscal year, leaving budget at 15.12%
- Pension Assessment – The cost benefit is to pay all at once in July, leaving budget at 0.0%

**Updates:**

- Bill received four bids for multiple projects that range from 4.5% to 5% interest rate; it's a tight spread. A premium cost of \$7,100 would be paid to offset; higher than budgeted.
- Paying down debt – completed a full review, received very positive comments could be a AAA rating in three years.
- Safety Building – OPM finished, Legal Counsel reviewing. The Architect came in high at 12%; this rate is at the top of the State guidelines. Discussions are ongoing.
- Community Center Project going good, walls going up now. The wall and carpet colors have been selected. The furniture colors are being discussed and selected.
- Free Cash Certification came in today and looks good; 3.8M. Bond ratings want free cash at 4.66% of General Fund budget. Need to have adequate reserve to fund emergencies.
- Trash contractor was bought out by one company and then another; we're incurring hauling costs as dumping is now at SEAMASS. The travel adds another truck. There is no increase in tipping fees.
- "Free Cash History" grid was reviewed, Bill noted free cash would be spent on Capital.
- New Growth – estimated at \$390,000, came in \$150,000 short due to work not being done and State Aid Cherry Sheet. School funding went up but there was a shift in government minimum to small towns versus to cities. Chapter 70 funding increased and assessments went down.
- 98 Barker Street – Conservation Commission postponed hearing. There was a walk-thru last week; Conservation Commission to file an injunction and play out in the courts.

There are five fall Town Meeting Articles – Debt is over \$300,000; don't want to use free cash. Schools are requesting an additional \$77,000. Changing long term planning, General Fund receipts on the Cherry Sheet, except for Library.

**Article 1 – Balance the Current Year's Budget – General Operating**

This may include: Department of Municipal Inspections

**Article 2 - Balance the Current Year's Budget – Water Enterprise**

Solid Waste (additional truck cost)

<sup>1</sup>The Chairperson did not vote on this motion

### **Article 3 – Capital Item Funding Requests**

#### **DEPARTMENT PROJECT REQUEST FUNDING**

DPW – Highway Ms4 Stormwater Management Program Engineering \$53,500

DPW – Cemetery Building Repairs: Roof and Siding Replacement, Electrical, Heating \$50,000

Town Clerk High Speed Vote Tabulator System \$25,000

Library Paving \$11,000

**Total \$ 139,500**

Changes will be made to this article. Need to add engineering for Town Hall front steps and security camera's for Middle School - \$75,000.

### **Article 4 – Community Preservation Committee Projects**

All articles are town projects.

**Recommendation A** – to appropriate \$41,250.00 from the historic resources reserve fund for historic preservation purposes and that said funds be granted to the Town Manager for Bryantville Meeting House for septic installation, or take any other active relative thereto.

This building currently has a cesspool and it's failing.

**Recommendation B** – to appropriate the sum of \$124,175.00 from the recreational resources reserve fund for recreational purposes and that said funds be granted to the Town Manager for the town beaches and boat ramp(s) improvements, or take any other actions relative thereto.

Bill created a spreadsheet which includes all the details.

**Recommendation C** – To appropriate the sum of \$75,000.00 from the recreational resources reserve fund and that said funds be granted to the Town Manager for a parks and recreation Master Plan, or take any other actions relative thereto.

**Recommendation D** – to appropriate the sum of \$47,000.00 from the recreational resources reserve fund, and that said funds be granted to the Town Manager for parking drainage ballfield and playground improvements at Magoun Baseball Field, or take any other actin relative thereto.

**Recommendation E** – to appropriate the sum of \$10,000.00 from the open space resources reserve fund, and that said funds be granted to the Town Manager for engineering, assessment and preliminary plans for bathrooms at Large Preserve and birch Street Playground, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Recommendation F** – to appropriate the sum of \$100,000.00 from the recreational resources reserve fund, and that said funds be granted to the Town Manager for the fencing and field improvements at Howard Bezanson Field at 128 Center Street, or take any other actions relative thereto.

The plan is to make this a multi-use field

<sup>1</sup>The Chairperson did not vote on this motion

**Article 5 – Acceptance of Provisions of M.G.L. chapter 59, s.5N; Reduction of property tax obligation of veteran in exchange for volunteer services**

To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of G.L. c. 59, Section 5N whereby the Select Board may establish a program to allow veterans, as defined in clause Forty-third of section 7 of chapter 4 or a spouse of a veteran in the case where the veteran is deceased or has a serviceconnected disability, to volunteer to provide services to that city or town. In exchange for such volunteer services, the city or town shall reduce the real property tax obligations of that veteran on the veteran's tax bills and that reduction shall be in addition to any exemption or abatement to which that person is otherwise entitled; provided, however, that person shall not receive a rate of, or be credited with, more than the current minimum wage of the commonwealth per hour for the services provided pursuant to that reduction; and provided further, that the reduction of the real property tax bill shall not exceed \$1,500 in a given tax year. It shall be the responsibility of the city or town to maintain a record for each taxpayer including, but not limited to, the number of hours of service and the total amount by which the real property tax has been reduced and to provide a copy of that record to the assessor in order that the actual tax bill reflect the reduced rate. A copy of that record shall also be provided to the taxpayer prior to the issuance of the actual tax bill. The cities and towns shall have the power to create local rules and procedures for implementing this section in a way that is consistent with the intent of this section. Nothing in this section shall be construed to permit the reduction of workforce or otherwise replace existing staff. The amount by which a person's property tax liability is reduced in exchange for the volunteer services shall not be considered income, wages or employment for purposes of taxation as provided in chapter 62, for the purposes of withholding taxes as provided in chapter 62B, for the purposes of workers' compensation as provided in chapter 152 or any other applicable provisions of the General Laws. While providing such volunteer services, that person shall be considered a public employee for the purposes of chapter 258 and those services shall be deemed employment for the purposes of unemployment insurance as provided in chapter 151A. A city or town, by vote of its legislative body, subject to its charter, may adjust the exemption in this clause by: (i) allowing an approved representative for persons physically unable to provide such services to the city or town; or (ii) allowing the maximum reduction of the real property tax bill to be based on 125 volunteer service hours in a given tax year, rather than \$1,500.

Linda thanked Bill for these updates.

Upon motion moved by John Scholl and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tim Landy to approve the meeting minutes of July 13, 2023 as written.

**VOTED<sup>1</sup>:** To accept the meeting minutes of July 13, 2023 as written. John Scholl, Tim Landy, Sandra Beaton, Robert Kenney and Stephen Patt supported the motion.

Linda accepted Kristi Cullinane's immediate resignation from the Advisory Committee and acknowledged her contributions and wished her well. The Select Board will accept Kristi's resignation at their next meeting Wednesday, September 13, 2023, at that time the vacancy will be posted on the town website.

<sup>1</sup>The Chairperson did not vote on this motion

The committee discussed a date for the next meeting and agreed to Thursday, October 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm. We will check with Bill Chenard to be sure he's available.

Advisory adjourned at 8:00PM.

Respectfully submitted

Stephen Walsh, Clerk

<sup>1</sup>The Chairperson did not vote on this motion