

Approved October 16, 2019

**Advisory Committee Meeting  
Juliani Room, Wellesley Town Hall  
Wednesday, September 25, 2018, 7:00 p.m.**

Those present from Advisory Committee included Julie Bryan, Todd Cook, Jennifer Fallon, Mary Gard, Neal Goins, Rusty Kellogg, John Lanza, Bill Maynard, Deed McCollum, Paul Merry, Lina Musayev, Patti Quigley, Betsy Roberti, Mary Scanlon and Ralph Tortorella.

Tom Cook called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

**7:01 p.m. Citizen Speak**

There was no one present for Citizen Speak.

**7:01 p.m. Department of Public Works (DPW)/ Enterprise Funds**

David Donohue, Chair, Board of Public Works (BPW), Department of Public Works (DPW) Director and Assistant Director, DPW

An overview of DPW was presented and the DPW mission statement reviewed.

Staffing/organization were reviewed – 5 divisions and 11 programs; overall 117 employees (FY19)

- DPW program and sub-programs were reviewed

Questions were asked about the RDF:

- How is a resident verified when using the RDF; license plates are reviewed
- How is the percentage of resident recycling calculated; it is based on tonnage – recyclables at the RDF versus trash
- Is there an increase in recycling; there is not change seen in residents' habits. There is a decrease in revenue coming in due to the low market for recyclables, however Wellesley produces clean and strong product in contrast to what is produced in single stream facilities
- What is the estimate of households participating in the food waste program; about 6,000 to 7,000 households participate
- Would trash collection for residents be considered; the RDF is a drop off operation and DPW is not set up for trash pick-up and this is not something being considered
- Will the RDF work with the high school to move from single stream to sorting; DPW would be happy to work with the high school
- The town partners with businesses to pick up recycling if they have enough volume and it is clean enough, the Linden Store and Roche Bros are examples. There is no mandated recycling for businesses. For areas in town that are single stream, the town might collaborate with the owners perhaps through the Board of Health
- Is education provided to people coming to town about the RDF and the recycling benefits; this fits with the goals for this year and a welcome package is being developed for new families moving to town
- The Baler was bought several years for cardboard and newspapers and money was set aside for the Baler replacement; the Baler Fund has now about \$800,000 in funds and is due to be replaced but it is in good shape so it is not being replaced
- What is the trend line for the declining revenue in recyclable goods; it is hard to tell as China was a big purchaser for a while

Water and sewer are enterprise funds were reviewed and discussed.

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- Is there a water shortage; there is plenty of water in the town and when wells are shut down during the summer, water is purchased from the MWRA
- Where are local wells; Morses Pond, Country Club area, north of Longfellow Pond
- Is there a risk of salt used for deicing getting in to the wells; yes, there is a risk but there is a program in place to reduce salt and the brine program is used to reduce the use of salt
- DPW is aware of a new concern and staff will be attending a seminar about the effects of corrosivity of water and lead
- Is there a routine program to test water and how often is this done; testing is completed on a daily and weekly basis
- Is the aquifer in good shape; yes, it is
- Does the sewer system go to Deer Island; yes
- Are the water test results publicly available; the results are published annually and, on the website
- Is the storm water filtered before it goes into the Charles River; Wellesley has infrastructure in place to filter what goes into the Charles River with storm water and it is a passive system by using a catch basin to catch materials
- Does Wellesley have the right capacity to prevent flooding from major storms; yes, but the system can't be designed for a 50-year flood and if the system is maintained then generally the system works
- What is different with Wellesley's engineers as compared to other towns; Natick is bigger and has more people, they are desperate for engineers and there are services they can't do in-house, so they contract out for those services at a higher cost. Needham is more comparable to Wellesley, so the engineers are about the same. Wellesley has the capacity for more engineers with the available work needs
- A suggestion was made to ask the public to clean out catch basins like the fire department asks residents to shovel out fire hydrants during snow storms

DPW's budget summary was reviewed for both the tax impacted DPW operating budget and the capital budget. Questions about DPW's budget summary:

- What is the cash capital comparison to prior years and are we within the range for what had in previous years; DPW works with Finance to have smooth cash capital. The top 3 items from cash capital are street resurface, equipment replacement, and either fields maintenance or storm water

The water and sewer enterprise funds were reviewed. Questions about the water and sewer funds were:

- If there is a surplus, is the money turned back to the town; the money stays in fund
- Where does capital come from; it is covered by the same source of funds- rate payers and state money

The strategic plan was presented and the balanced score card reviewed. The evaluation of performance, including targets and metrics, was reviewed.

DPW Benchmarking update was reviewed. This started is a municipal comparison of three towns – Wellesley, Natick and Needham. Franklin and Dedham recently joined the group. This is the fourth year of benchmarking and it was started in 2016. The towns are working together to learn and get a better value for the residents. There are 18 benchmarks. This is being used as a call to action to look at areas that are lagging and what can be done better. Benchmarks are the start of the conversation. Wellesley is more expensive but that's what the town wants. For example, there is higher staffing in the highway department. Fleet maintenance and highway are two areas being focusing on. DPW is trying to incorporate the level of service into the benchmark measurements and would like peer communities to do this as well. Another measurement is responsiveness by recording and tracking service requests.

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Questions about DPW's Benchmarking included:

- What are examples of service requests; these would be calls for potholes; signs, high water meter reading, sewer back up. DPW receives a variety of service requests
- Does benchmarking give us any idea how Wellesley's fleet maintenance compares to other towns; it depends on the replacement policy and the benchmark communities have a similar replacement policy. There is an optimum replacement point and past that there are penalty costs to keep that vehicle as unscheduled down time kills productivity
- What is the variability of the benchmarking in terms of in-source and out-sourcing and has this been evaluated as to the most cost effective; yes, for example Wellesley does paving in-house but Natick doesn't have the capacity to do this, so they contract out paving. Wellesley contracts out sidewalks because we don't have the training. DPW will use contractors when it makes the best financial decision
- Where did the reduction from 121 positions to 117 positions occur – 2 were maintenance who transferred to FMD and DPW is using town hall resources for GIS services rather than hiring someone specifically to do this at DPW. There are many job vacancies now (included in the 117 positions) and it is a competitive market. There are about a dozen open positions. State wide and regionally it is a struggle to hire. Peer communities are experiencing the same
- What is the impact of the labor contract negotiations; openings are entirely on the production/union side

An update on road projects was provided. Natural Grid work impacts the timing of road work for the town. Questions about road projects included:

- Has there been a cost increase with the delay in the Grove Street project and will DPW need to ask for more money; it is not expected DPW will need money and DPW is conscious of the need for money and utilizes money left over from other projects to fund current projects if needed and available
- Has DPW talked to Tenacre and Dana Hall about Grove Street; yes
- Is the management of this project in house or contract; in-house
- With road projects design funds are in one year and the contract the next. If there is a multiyear delay, then a year is taken off of another project to allow for catch up. The urgency of Great Plain Avenue moved that project up. There will be a deeper understanding of the timeline when DPW comes back to review cash capital. There was a discussion of bonding and appropriations for these projects
- Does Finance come back to discuss these projects; Advisory can ask Finance to discuss this when they come back
- Are sidewalks being outsourced; a contractor was brought in because the sidewalks couldn't be completed in-house
- With street resurfacing there seems to be a delay between milling and actual paving, can this gap be shortened; there are many reasons why there was a delay in recent projects but yes it can be shortened. Chapter 90 funding is used for street resurfacing costs and there was a 4-week delay in authorization. What is standard time; usually mill and then the next week or two the contractor paves

DPW's Big Project status update was provided and there were the following questions:

- What was appropriated for the softball fields; \$1 million plus \$500,000 from CPC, \$200,000 from fund raising. The low bidder was 35% over what was appropriated as the two dug outs are unique. DPW is confident in the vendor. Lee Field will be completed now, and the multi-purpose field completed next summer. DPW will seek an additional appropriation from ATM as well as CPC
- What is the sidewalk cycle; there is no cycle, some last longer than others

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- What is the town's approach to Safe Routes to school and contiguous sidewalks; DPW is completing street prioritizations and will finish off connections that are missing segments. The next work in transportation will accommodate a full range of transportation needs and a wide spectrum than just cars
- What is the status of the building at the turf field; DPW doesn't have this budget but the containerized bathroom is being tested as a potential for team rooms
- What is the status of the lacrosse wall; it is a privately funded project and School Committee is working through this to determine the best location at the Sprague School and DPW is providing technical assistance
- What are the criteria for replacing the water meters; all water meters in town will be replaced. They are on a 15-year life cycle, but all will be replaced with an AMR meter which is an automatic reader with an automatic infrastructure system. There will no longer be a need to ride around town to read the meters and the new meters will provide a more accurate reading and more information for customers

The playground master plan was discussed and there was the following question:

- When playgrounds are replaced is the equipment donated; it is recycled but it is not re-usable because the equipment is not up to current safety standards. It only has a salvage value

#### **8:45 p.m. Liaison Reports/Administrative Matters**

##### HR/Jennifer Fallon

- HR is consolidating personnel policy guidebooks with non-substantive changes and the HR Board will review this. It is not certain if it will need to come before ATM. Currently there is a working draft 3 but there is no sense of timeline
- HR plans to use the new format for the budget

##### School/Lina Musayev

- October 1 key enrollment numbers will be available
- Advisory's Meeting on Tuesday, November 19 will be for the budget and will be a deep introduction to everything and the emerging issues. School Committee will come back in February with the final budget

##### NRC/Paul Merry

- NRC is sponsoring an effort to gather samples in the North 40

##### SBC/Mary Gard

- SBC is presenting the internal swing space to all the elementary schools and it is receiving a varying degree of enthusiasm or lack of enthusiasm. SBC is collecting questions and concerns and will meet again next week

#### **8:55 p.m. Adjourn**

Lina Musayev and John Lanza seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **Materials reviewed during the meeting**

*Department of Public Works, Overview Presentation to Advisory, Power Point Presentation, September, 2019*