Present for the Board of Selectmen: Dave Sampson, Michael Miller, Robert George, Shane Hoctor, Charles Holden
Town Manager George Dunham, Assistant Town Manager Heather Harper
Others Present: William Jennings, Edward Childs, Marie Buckner, Kathleen Barrette, Cub Scout Troop 46

Mr. Sampson opened the meeting at 7:00 PM. He invited the Cub Scouts from Troop 46 to assist with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of 12/19/19 and 1/9/20 were reviewed. M. Miller moved to approve the minutes. Seconded. Unanimous approval.

PUBLIC FORUM

None.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

1. The next Finance Committee Meeting will be on February 4. They will hear the budget presentation as reviewed this evening. Next Thursday night, February 6, the Selectmen will meet, and both committees are likely to meet weekly during budget season.
2. On Wednesday February 12, there is the next military and community council meeting at JBCC.
3. 100 Rte. 6A – Legal ad for invitation to bid for renovations will appear next Wednesday. Actual bid specs and plans will be ready next Friday. Sub-bids due on February 8 and general bids on Friday March 6, in time to have firm numbers to bring to Town Meeting, if scheduled.
4. Center for Active Living – There have been five proposals for design services. They will be reviewed and rated, finalists selected, interviews conducted, and rated again. This will come back to the Board if it is over $1 million.
5. There was a conference call with the architect for the Library project this week. The contract will be finalized soon.
6. There has been communication with Town Counsel and the developer regarding disposition of the Wing School. Two legal documents needed before Town Meeting are getting closer to being finalized. Town Meeting vote is needed to be able to sign the documents. The School Department and Collaborative issues will be discussed later.
7. The Section 111 study has taken 2 ½ years, but the ACOE has come up with alternate recommendations. These have to be presented to the North Atlantic Division. Once approved, they have 60 days to complete the report. M. Riccio would like to give a presentation to the Board of Selectmen and public forum regarding the recommendations. Mr. Hoctor is concerned about the recommendations and hopes they will be positive for the Town. Mr. Dunham said there is likely to be a combination of recommendations that will be positive. The Federal Government is required to fund it, but they have a spending cap.

Mr. George asked a question about the Boardwalk project. Historic District Committee has commented. The Town is working with State regulators to see what they will approve. The recommendation will come back to the Board. It will take 12 to 18 months to acquire permits. Mr. Hoctor had a question whether there could be a waiver for a historic structure to go back to the original design. Requested that Town Council look at the issue again as cost would decrease significantly if railings were not required. Mr. Miller said he talked with Sam Jensen about a waiver possibility and questioned whether the Historic District Committee would support that. Mr. Dunham wanted to remind everyone that once costs exceed 50% of the value of the project, all codes including ADA must be followed. He will check about the waiver. Mr. Sampson said he shared concerns about the aesthetics, but different groups have different perspectives about what should be done. Not everyone will be pleased with the outcome. Mr. Holden had a question about environmental concerns; Mr. Dunham said that the State will look at everything related to habitat and other concerns.

CORRESPONDENCE/STATEMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENT

Mr. Miller suggested that the Board get back to the SEIC regarding its future.
Work on the skate park has halted for the winter.

STAFF MEETING

2021 Budget Presentation – Mr. Dunham began the presentation by thanking the central administrative staff who worked so hard to create it: Heather Harper, Assistant Town Manager; Bill Jennings, Treasurer; Ed Childs, Assessor; Kathleen Barrette, Accountant; and Marie Buckner, Human Resources. He also thanked Diane Hanelt for putting all the binders together. He announced that the full budget presentation is available on the Town website and encouraged the public to access it: www.sandwichmass.org. Icon link is at the bottom of the page. The presentation is detailed and factual. He emphasized that the budget follows the Selectmen budget instructions of level service at 3%. Additionally the staff took the opportunity to reallocate and reorganize departments where able. There are no new funding initiatives. The budget reduces two full time benefitted personnel to part time and eliminates future capital
requests related to the National Pollution Discharge requirements (put in engineering budget). The budget also includes a <$1 million capital requests.

Mr. Dunham has provided an in-depth financial history with projections and analysis (see Tab 2 in the presentation). He emphasized that people should remember that municipal budgeting is very different r/t revenues and expenses from the private sector, and that Sandwich’s budget has been consistently tighter than neighboring communities. A list of recommended capital expenses is included in Tab 3; some items on the list are items that were not able to be included from last year’s requests (e.g., DPW equipment, GIS digitizing), and some will be paid for out of ambulance fund transfers.

Mr. Dunham described the process for coming to the final recommended budget, which included many meetings with department heads. They considered new ways of providing services, such as estimating a smaller salary amount for new personnel replacing higher paid personnel who have left, and taking advantage of savings associated with reorganization opportunities. In Tab 4, he has provided a summary of significant budget changes (both less than and more than $10,000 change), along with rationales for the changes. Items of note include increase in the Veteran’s budget due to required medical expenses, and increase in the Sealer of Weights and Measures budget due to Barnstable (which provides the service) needing to replace equipment. There are illustrated charts throughout the presentation, some of which show to what departments the percentages are allocated. He stressed that in Sandwich all departments are included in the one tax bill, which may be different than other states, which separate out the school budget. He has also included a list of long-term prioritized needs for future budgeting.

Overall budget concerns are:

1. Retaining excess levy capacity reserve made available through the PILOT agreement with NRG. This is money that will be set aside and not spent.
2. Adding money to the Stabilization Fund.
3. Addressing capital needs, although a significant number of large capital needs have been addressed.
4. Increasing contributions to the OPEB liability trust fund.

Mr. Dunham stated that the greatest budget concern remains the tuition assessments for charter schools and out of district schools. This is an expense that was formerly in the school budget, but the State moved it to the general municipal budget with a promise for reimbursement. The average annual increase in this expense has been 9.07% per year, but the State pays less than 1/3 of the required reimbursement amount, resulting in an annual loss of more than $1 million in revenue. This is an expense that is out of Town control (see the chart provided).

The presentation includes detailed projected FY ’21 Revenues and Expense information, along with an estimated effect on taxes: on a house of average value of $454,000, with this budget the tax bill would increase $3 – from $6,220 to $6,223.
Finally, Mr. Dunham provided an update on the 100 Rte 6A renovations. A December 2019 construction estimate was substantially higher than an earlier one due to increases in local public bidding costs, including increased prevailing wage requirements. The HVAC and electrical systems were assessed earlier, but an engineering review by experts identified additional needs in regard to the HVAC system and electrical and communication systems. Meeting with staff and architect resulted in reducing the scope of the work, identifying work that could be done in-house, looking at any parts of the project that could be done less expensively than the general contract estimate, and identifying potential removal of work from the project’s scope (deduct alternates), if needed. Mr. Dunham described an action plan that would not increase taxes by using one-time funding sources including existing free cash certification, tax title monies, health insurance budget reallocation and sale of Forestdale fire station (only if needed). General construction bids with accurate numbers would be due in early March and a possible Special Town Meeting scheduled for late March. Awarding the contract would be subject to Town Meeting approval of the plan. Mr. Sampson cautioned that the current estimates are not the actual numbers; the action plan is anticipatory, in case the bids come in high. Mr. Dunham included a spreadsheet that illustrates revenues and expenses taking into account the Rte. 6A renovations. He also cautioned that these estimates are subject to change due to pending decisions from the State and other influences. Updates will be provided to the Board and the Finance Committee at every meeting until finalized.

Questions: There was a question about the tax levy and assessment. Mr. Childs said the tax levy is about $300,000 higher than last year. The growth is about 4.5%, based on 2019 sales. Mr. Hoctor asked whether the damaged tractor-trailer had insurance coverage. There is some, but it was not a new vehicle. Mr. Miller asked what sources are used to determine the assessment. Mr. Childs said he uses actual prices on sales, talks to realtors, and patterns identified by GIS. The State requires certification every five years, but it is updated annually. Mr. Miller also asked how many square miles of non-taxable property is in Town. Mr. Childs responded that this is the second highest tax category; he will check the numbers. Mr. Hoctor asked about the status of the request for PILOT agreements from non-profits. Mr. Childs responded that all have been contacted, some have been interviewed, but no one has volunteered to set up an agreement.

OLD BUSINESS

Selectmen Meeting Schedule: Some meeting dates might have to be changed in March depending on whether there is a Special Town Meeting Scheduled.

Other Old Business: None.

NEW BUSINESS

Donations: The list of 4th quarter donations was reviewed. The Sanger family has donated a large sum to the library. Mr. Miller moved acceptance of the donations as listed. Seconded. Approved unanimously.

Board of Selectmen January 30, 2020
Appointments:
Local Emergency Planning Committee – George Russell
Conservation Commission – Cameron Murphy, Associate Member
Zoning Board of Appeals – Chase Terrio, Alternate to Full Member
Historic District Committee – Jackie Munsell, Alternate

Mr. Miller moved to approve the appointments as listed all through June 30, 2020. Seconded. Approved unanimously.

Vendor Warrants: Mr. Sampson and Mr. Miller both signed warrants. All were in order.
Other Matters not Reasonably Anticipated for New Business:
Mr. Miller attended a Rotary Club meeting with the topic being the Healing Community. The focus is on substance abuse. He questioned what happened to the Town Substance Abuse Committee and said a joint committee with Bourne might work better.

Mr. Dunham said there has been encouraging news about the opiate lawsuit – may receive some funding.

Mr. Holden attended the School Committee budget meeting. They are going to request a 3.75% increase.

Mr. Hoctor asked about the Forestdale intersection. The lights have been re-timed, but Mr. Dunham will check for more information. Mr. Hoctor also talked about a sump pump issue and wondered whether there should be a by-law change.

PUBLIC FORUM

None.

CLOSING REMARKS

Mr. Hoctor said it was good to see the Cub Scouts at the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Miller moved to adjourn. Seconded. Approved unanimously.
The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Coggeshall

Board of Selectmen January 30, 2020
Supporting Documents:
1. Town Manager Recommended FY21 Budget Presentation 1/30/2020 (42 pages)
2. FY21 Budget Projected General Fund Revenues and Expenses FY21 (2 pages)
3. FY21 General Fund Operating Budget Total (2 pages)
4. FY21 Cherry Sheet Receipts
5. FY21 Cherry Sheet Assessments
6. Index of Potential Warrant Articles March 23, 2020 Special Town Meeting
7. Board of Selectmen Meeting Schedules Fall 2019 – Winter 2020