

**Truro Select Board Meeting  
Tuesday, May 5, 2020  
Remote Work Session**

**Select Board Members Attending:** Janet Worthington, Chair; Susan Areson, Kristen Reed, Stephanie Rein, Robert Weinstein

**Attending:** Town Manager Rae Ann Palmer; Assistant Town Manager Kelly Clark; Beach Director Damion Clements; Library Director Tricia Ford; COA Director Mary Elizabeth Briscoe

Chair Janet Worthington convened the Select Board work session at 4:03 p.m.

**FISCAL YEAR 2021 BUDGET AND REVENUE IMPACTS OF COVID-19**

Town Manager Rae Ann Palmer had provided Select Board members with a one-page document from the Town Accountant showing Fiscal Year 2019 receipts and estimated revenue for Fiscal Year 2020. The Fiscal Year 2021 Budget planned for the Town Meeting Warrant was \$2.2 million dollars. Ms. Palmer said that the new estimate of \$1.5 million dollars anticipates decreased revenue. She stressed that the proposal is an estimate, subject to change. It will be the budget if Town Meeting is held in June, but it would change if Annual Town Meeting takes place in September.

Town Accountant Trudi Brazil gave a recap of revenue estimates. Some will remain the same: motor vehicle excise tax, rental of Town property, fines and forfeitures, Medicaid, recurring miscellaneous items and lost check fees. Expected reductions included: meals taxes, rooms taxes cut in half, Library cut by half, Recreation and Beach, licensing and permits and Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) cut by one third.

Susan Areson asked why revenue for FY20 was less than FY19s. Rae Ann Palmer said that was a function of the conservative estimates of the Town Accountant and which left the Town with an annual amount of Free Cash. She has been discussing Free Cash with Senator Cyr's office to see if there was a possibility of legislative relief for FY20 free cash transfers. It will only be possible to adjust and appropriate Free Cash to balance the FY 20 budget at Annual Town Meeting if it is held in June. The Municipal Relief Act allows the Town to carry forward money for FY21 expenditures, she said. This would not cover Fiscal Year 20 items like the Walsh Property interest, debt service on the Cape Tech School and tipping fees at the Transfer Station. If Annual Town Meeting is postponed until September, the Town will have time to evaluate summer revenues, but the Town will have to operate with a 1/12 budget approved in advance by the Select Board and the Department of Revenue (DOR).

Ms. Palmer turned attention to budget cuts for FY21, different from what was originally planned. Now she, the Town Accountant, and department heads have taken a realistic look at what can be cut. Although most budgets were reduced, some remained without cuts: Information Technology, Clerk/Treasurer/Collector. She reviewed in detail the proposed budget cuts. The

Select Board budget for Truro 400 was cut by \$3,000; another \$5,000 was cut for grants. In the Town Manager's budget, advertising could not be cut, but travel expenses and the Annual Town Manager Conference were removed. There were big cuts from the Capital account. Only two items were left: one police cruiser and one charging station. Since all capital requests for the Library and road maintenance were removed, Ms. Palmer reminded the Select Board to fund them in the Capital Budget next year. The mobile generator and interview room for the Police Department were cut from the Capital Budget.

There were extensive departmental cuts. The miscellaneous line and overtime were cut in Accounting. Assessors' cuts included leave and pay-outs for non-union staff. Fire Department cuts were for standby pay, overtime, Stowe Academy, training, hose replacement (in part), gear replacement, decreased clothing allowance and professional development. The line for Beach EMTs was reduced, but Ms. Palmer said that would require more consideration. The Police Department cuts included freezing the most recent vacancy, and Holiday pay was cut. Since gasoline prices are low, that line was reduced. There were travel cuts in all departments.

Town Accountant Trudi Brazil explained the new projections for the DPW budget. She said that snowplowing and streetlights remain the same. The Public Works vehicle parts line was cut. The gas line was reduced by \$4,000. A line of \$300 for food for drivers in storm time remained. The Transfer Station diesel fuel line was cut by \$5,000. Reductions for DPW encompassed: vehicle supplies, services of vehicles, \$200 out of office supplies, equipment, custodial supplies and \$2,000 from hand tools.

Other budgets are being revised. The Lower Cape Ambulance revised budget has been decreased. The School has been asked to reconsider its budget. The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budget will be discussed, Trudi Brazil said. There were cuts in the Health Department budget. Council on Aging Director Mary Elizabeth Briscoe outlined COA cuts in travel expenses, staff development, supplies, fuel and the lunch program. Rae Ann Palmer suggested placing the lunch program on the "maybe" list. Ms. Palmer said Beach and Recreation budget cuts would be handled separately.

Susan Areson asked about cuts for training in the Select Board budget. There is money left for a few Select Board members and the new Town Manager to attend the MMA conference, Ms. Palmer said. In every department, there is some money left for training and in-state conferences; out of state conferences were cut across the board, she said. At Chair Worthington's request, Ms. Palmer explained that the Town Manager's budget covers salaries including three support people, advertising, meeting expenses. Trudi Brazil said the wage and personnel line is \$400,000. The Town Manager's budget also includes medical and compensation for Medicaid reimbursements, employee training, advertising, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) monitors, printing and mailing, office supplies, small equipment, in-state travel, membership and dues, insurance premiums for the Town Manager and the taxes for people in the tax work off program. Their taxes are not charged to them.

Other department heads explained their situations. Police Chief Jamie Calise said his department is down by three officers. One is going to another agency, one is in training and one has moved on to a new job opportunity. That position is frozen as of Monday. At the Library, the summer clerk position remains just in case the Library does reopen. There have been service cuts in landscaping, play group supplies, materials and postal expenses. Library Director Tricia Ford said there have been cuts for the database and fees wherever possible, but it's hard to know what will happen this year. She said the Friends of the Library can help with programming, but she can look elsewhere for help if needed. The biggest cuts were for materials. She said that she took out whatever she could. Ms. Palmer said she will keep an eye on what happens at the Library. Harbor Master Tony Jackett had made cuts, but Rae Ann Palmer said she will have further discussion with him about salary, particularly in the winter months.

Without a summer Recreation program, Recreation/Beach Director Damion Clements has prepared suggested cuts. He analyzed Beach projections for reduced beach usage or no beaches for the season. Rae Ann Palmer said it would be important to get beach attendants out early this year. There is thought about not offering day passes or another way of handling them so that there is no money exchange at beach entrances. Ms. Palmer said she and the Select Board need to have a policy discussion about the beaches. Damion Clements said he has not yet received any guidance from Red Cross about lifeguards. It will be important to have procedures in place for gate keepers to limit numbers at beaches. It would be hard not to have lifeguards for safety at the beach at Head of the Meadow with the sharks. In response to questions from Kristen Reed on beach fees, Mr. Clements said he had increased beach fire permit fees, but he had not raised the beach sticker fees, which are in line with other communities.

Susan Areson recommended an in-depth discussion on Beach and Recreation, but at another meeting. Rae Ann Palmer agreed because there has been no guidance yet on recreation programs. It could also be a topic for the Reopening Task Force, she said. Ms. Palmer reminded everyone that the budget cuts were a first pass. Most department heads left the meeting as the Select Board continued with other agenda items.

## **BUSINESS LICENSING FEES AND SUSPENSION OF FEES**

*Kristen Reed recused herself from the discussion and any future voting at another meeting.*

Chair Janet Worthington said that the idea to waive business licensing fees came from the Chamber of Commerce. She said she is not sure that it's the best thing to do considering the reduced budget. The Select Board had received in their meeting packet a list of revenues from licensing fees. Robert Weinstein noted a divide by businesses that have paid their fees and the others who have not. He said that he did not want to lose sight of the two categories. He was looking at the larger fees paid for alcohol licenses and noted that the other fees seem relatively nominal to any business enterprise. He feels they should direct their attention to the more burdensome fees. Unless things change, he stated, you can't have take-out alcohol. Ms. Palmer said take-out alcohol is now allowed for restaurants. She stated that it is the annual licenses that are paid; the seasonal ones are not paid yet. Stephanie Rein expressed her concern about equity

of those who have paid and the ones that have not yet paid. She believes any decision should be equitable for all businesses.

Susan Areson said that fees are based on the value of the licenses. Alcohol brings in more money, so those licenses are higher. She said she is in favor of helping business community, but licensing fees totaling \$28,000 could help the Town budget. She also considered a possible extension of the payment period for those businesses that have not yet paid their fees. She said she was reluctant to cut the whole fee for businesses. It is too early to know how the season will go, even for liquor stores which are open.

Town Accountant Trudi Brazil said that the fees all relate to seasonal businesses, restaurants and campgrounds. There are other permits like electrical, gas and health inspections. She questioned where to draw the line on who to help. Susan Areson said that Town fire, health and electrical inspectors go out to the various businesses as part of the licensing. Janet Worthington suggested that fees could be collected later. Stephanie Rein asked if there could be a time frame set for licenses this year since some businesses will have a shorter season. Licenses might be cut according to the amount of time they were time open.

Rae Ann Palmer said that licenses run for the whole year. She said she would find out if a portion of alcohol fees go to the state. She acknowledged that seasonal businesses might not be able to pay fees up front. Ways to deal with postponing fees and alcohol licenses could be topics for the Reopening Task Force, she said. If any business that was granted a delay in paying in advance still didn't pay, they would have to catch up next year, Ms. Palmer suggested.

#### **REVISED WARRANT AND ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

Rae Ann Palmer said the original Table of Contents for the Annual Town Meeting Warrant was provided in the meeting packet. Assistant Town Manager Kelly Clark revised the Town Meeting Warrant to contain only Articles approving the finances for next year and the current fiscal year, including transfers and leasing land for cellular towers. Petitioned articles must be included but could be postponed with a motion at Town Meeting until fall, she said. Trudi Brazil suggested postponement of the full CPC Article for Community Preservation projects. She said she did not want to include those until she knew the anticipated revenue for the fiscal year.

Ms. Palmer said the Truro Central School, with extra provisions for social distancing, was a possible place for a June Annual Town Meeting, but the decision didn't have to be made yet. She had checked with other towns to see what they are planning. Others are planning, as Truro is, for a June Town Meeting, but Wellfleet has moved the date until fall.

Susan Areson asked about possible legislative action on postponing Annual Town Meetings to fall without penalties on debt. Ms. Palmer said such a postponement is possible, with the Town continuing on a budget of one-twelfth of the size. If Town Meeting is postponed until after the start of the new fiscal year, Truro would need to make up around \$200,000-\$250,000.

Rae Ann Palmer said there was not support for mail-in Town Meeting votes. Holding a virtual Town Meeting might be part of the legislation, but Truro had rejected the idea because not everyone has Internet access. There is support for allowing a lower quorum number and for holding Annual Town in another town if there is an appropriate venue. Ms. Palmer said there is still time for a decision, but it has to be reached by June 9, 2020. She said that it is in the Town's best interest to wait until then to decide. She anticipates that the Warrant will be printed in-house.

Robert Weinstein thanked the Town Manager and staff for truncating the contents of the Annual Town Meeting Warrant. He recommended being proactive in choosing a venue that keeps public safe with consideration of best practices: not touching doors, wearing masks and social distancing. He suggested exploring Nauset Regional High School as another possible location with a large auditorium and classrooms with whiteboards that could be utilized. He questioned if 6-foot distancing accommodations for the Select Board, Finance Committee and Town Moderator would be feasible in the Truro Central School gym. He asked that the Town mark out spacing there and in the classrooms. Ms. Palmer said that they are working on floor plans for Town Meeting at the Truro Central School.

Stephanie Rein said she had apprehension about using the school. People cluster waiting to get into Town Meeting. She wondered how that would be prevented and how to stagger registration once people were inside. She has already received letters of concern about the large population of seniors and immune system-compromised citizens in Truro. She agreed, since everything is in flux, there was no need for an immediate decision on Town Meeting. Janet Worthington advised that the Board wait and see and keep working on possibilities since there is still time to think about it.

Rae Ann Palmer emphasized the concern for safety. She could also plan for a fall Town Meeting. Things will become clearer as we go along, she said. Susan Areson asked if there was any special legislative bill for Barnstable County with its large elder population. Ms. Palmer said Truro can't be the only town with the concern for its senior citizens. She continues to look for places where further budget cuts can be made, and she expressed confidence that the Select Board will make the best decision of what to do.

Robert Weinstein said the Town must think imaginatively to create a plan for getting people into Town Meeting. He looked at boarding procedures at airports but wondered if the school would be able to accommodate the Annual Town Meeting. In a small community, 300 people is a lot for Town Meeting, and, with the exception of Kristen Reed, the Select Board represents the population that they are trying to protect.

Kristen Reed asked about 300 people in attendance at Town Meeting, assuming that everyone complied with best practices. She asked how people who did not take precautions seriously would be handled – "policed," for want of a better word. Janet Worthington said that would be a

part of Task Force discussion. The Town will have to be proactive about those who don't comply with directives on masks and social distancing in any town setting.

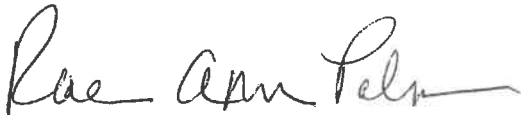
Before the meeting closed, Rae Ann Palmer reported that Executive Secretary Nicole Tudor had sent word that the Town does not have to pay the state anything for alcohol licenses. She also had learned from the Assistant Tax Collector that the Fiscal Year 2019 date in question on an item in the Consent Agenda was accurate.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Stephanie Rein moved to adjourn, and the motion carried 5-0.  
The meeting was adjourned at 5:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Rogers,  
Secretary



Town Manager Rae Ann Palmer  
Under the Authority of the Truro Select Board

#### **Public Records Materials for Work Session of 5/5/2020**

1. Worksheet on Revised Revenue Estimates and Reductions in Operating Budget
2. List of revenue from licenses
3. Annual Town Meeting Warrant Table of Contents

