

**TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES
BUDGET/MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
November 9, 2020, Monday**

Present: Michael Molisse, Chairman
Pascale Burga, Councilor
Christopher Heffernan, Councilor
Maureen Kiely, Councilor

Not Present: Jane Hackett, Vice Chairman

Also Present: Joseph Callanan, Town Solicitor
Richard Swanson, Town Auditor
Mary Ellen Schloss, Conservation Administrator
James Malary, Director of Finance
Robert Luongo, Director of Planning
Matt Ladewig, ESS

Recording Secretary: Mary Barker

Chair Molisse called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Town Clerk Deree called the roll with one member absent. Vice Chair Hackett was absent due to a work conflict.

20 110-Reserve Fund Transfer-Unpaid Bills

Solicitor Callanan was invited to present the measure. These funds are to pay the outstanding legal bills for outside experts, Miyares & Harrington, in the compressor station fight. These bills pay the shortage from the last appropriation to pay bills from April, May and June of the last fiscal year. He is expecting additional bills through this past week to close out their work in this fiscal year. Miyares & Harrington are slow to get bills in.

Auditor Swanson confirmed he reviewed the bills and they are accurate as stated.

A motion was made by Councilor Kiely to forward measure 20 110 to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action and was seconded by Councilor Heffernan.

A roll call vote was taken: Councilor Burga- Yes, Councilor Heffernan-Yes, Councilor Kiely- Yes, Chair Molisse- Yes. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

20 111-CPA Funding Request for Consulting Services for the Management Strategy of Whitmans Pond

Conservation Administrator Mary Ellen Schloss was invited to present the measure with Matt Ladewig, ESS Group. Community Preservation Committee voted to forward the measure with a favorable recommendation to the Council at their meeting on October 1, 2020.

She reported that several other measures have come before the Council that pertain to the pond, and she greatly appreciates their support. Council President Mathews sent a letter in August that was shared with several departments regarding his concerns with the state of Whitmans Pond and what they are doing or could do. The Mayor put together a meeting with several departments to discuss what was done and what action could be considered. A Vegetative Management Action Plan was put together by ESS in a 2013 report and it was discussed. The pond is a complex site with multiple competing uses. Many strategies have been implemented, including the purchase of the weed harvester, herbicide services, feasibility study winter lake level drawdown, etc. There are a number of other strategies that haven't been pursued, such as dredging, which is a big ticket item that needs more study. In the August meeting, there was interest in pursuing that and the herbicide option. Herbicides cannot be applied until late in the season because of the herring fishery, and it's not as effective at that time.

After the meeting, Chief of Staff Langill asked whether they could pursue a proposal to look at things in detail, on a time and materials proposal. ESS submitted a proposal that was approved by the CPC. A measure was put forward, and then revised to include a full price proposal.

Mr. Ladewig added a few more details. This is not intended to be another study or to collect any new information. They were to take what ESS and other firms have already collected, with new analysis based on newer available technology, to assess cost and what needs to happen over the next five years and what it would cost to get a handle on excessive vegetation in areas that are most important to the town for recreation and water supply. The goal is to devise a plan that's easy to read, and easy to use, with a pathway forward that everyone will buy into for the success of the pond going forward. It will include several meetings; the first to kick off the project, then at the midpoint to present options, and then a final plan and presentation. Assuming the kickoff occurs in December, he anticipates work will be complete something in March, 2021.

Ms. Schloss reported she had spoken with Councilor Harrington who is interested in the swim ability of the pond. Swimmer's itch is a problem there, but this isn't to look at that issue; however, if they can learn anything about it through this project, they would want welcome it.

Councilor Burga asked what are the real priorities to managing the excess vegetation on the pond? Is it the water source, recreation, or herring life cycle?

Ms. Schloss responded that Council President Mathews concerns focus on aesthetics and recreation. The pond looks terrible, it's clogged with weeds, and people have trouble taking their boats out. She expects that is what is mostly driving his interest and it impacts fisheries. The invasive weeds are not good for the environment, so anything they do would hopefully help, not harm the water supply.

Auditor Swanson confirmed the balance in the CPC unreserved fund is adequate for the measure.

Chair Molisse commented that recreation and the presentation of the pond is probably the most important. He is happy to see this measure. The committee received the revised amount – \$17,990 to \$18,750.

A motion was made by Councilor Kiely to forward measure 20 111 to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action, as amended, and was seconded by Councilor Heffernan. The Town Council will conduct a public hearing at its meeting on December 7, 2020.

A roll call vote was taken: Councilor Burga- Yes, Councilor Heffernan-Yes, Councilor Kiely- Yes, Chair Molisse- Yes. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:23 PM, there being no further business, a motion was made by Councilor Kiely to adjourn and was seconded by Councilor Heffernan. A roll call vote was taken: Councilor Burga- Yes, Councilor Heffernan-Yes, Councilor Kiely- Yes, Chair Molisse- Yes. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Respectfully Submitted by Mary Barker as Recording Secretary

Approved by Michael Molisse as Budget/Management Committee Chairman
Voted unanimously on 7 December 2020