



The Town of Barnstable

Comprehensive Financial Advisory Committee (CFAC)

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CFAC Committee:

Chair:

Lillian Woo

Members:

Vice Chair, Hector Guenther
Clerk, Chuck McKenzie
Jacky Johnson
Neil Kleinfeld
Chris Lauzon
Wendy Solomon

Staff Liaison:

Mark Milne

Councilor Liaison:

Paula Schnepf

MEETING MINUTES

06.12.2023

6:00 PM

Zoom Meeting: <https://townofbarnstable-us.zoom.us/j/89577370758>

Meeting ID: 895 7737 0758

Roll Call:

Chair Lillian Woo called the CFAC Zoom meeting to order at 6:00PM

Roll call and quorum verified by Clerk Chuck

- **CFAC Members Present:** Lillian Woo, Hector Guenther, Wendy Solomon, Jacky Johnson, Neil Kleinfeld, Chris Lauzon, and Chuck McKenzie
- **CFAC Members Absent:** none
- **Councilors Present:**
- **Staff Present:** Director of Finance, Mark Milne
- **Other Present:** None

Act on minutes:

No minutes to approve at this time.

Public Comment

None

Discuss development of an FY 2024 Financial Overview Report

Chair Woo requested opinion from the three newest CFAC members on their opinion of the report.

Chris: Major topics of the Town budget were covered. Community comparisons with other towns and contact information for departments, entities and staff could have been included.

Jacky: Found the report so condensed that not enough information could be obtained. More information is available through CFAC meetings. Layout details were presented efficiently for the school data.

Neil: Without knowing what residents want, identifying those assumptions is challenging. The best approach would be to think about how best to identify what the residents would want to learn about; make the document brief to draw in and engage the reader in addition to expanding the avenues of distribution.

Lillian: Asking who would be taking the lead on developing the next report, and sharing what information was contained in past reports to further build on new information to be added.

Jacky: When trying to respond to questions from residents and the knowledge gap, there is an opportunity to provide a better understanding of town finances. Unfortunately, scheduling would not allow her to take the lead in the development but co-chairing with Lillian will work.

Hector: A section regarding sources of revenue may be a valuable addition to give the reader a sense of context. Expanding information to include Chapter 70 and State aid.

In looking at the current report and space

- The first two pages hold appropriate and informative information; space could be created by removing the Covid part to make room for comparisons to other communities.
- Budget history overlaps somewhat with General Fund resources; combining them with the General Fund includes revenue funds and would remove redundancy. Expenditures may appear somewhat duplicated and may overcomplicate information for readers.
- Governmental structure is both important and informative and should stay.
- While the property tax page holds standard and helpful information, it may come across as both helpful and confusing and requires more discussion.
- Enterprise funds are straightforward.
- The Public education page has a long-term history more so than the other pages.
- CWMP narrative will need to be updated. The Q & A should be reviewed because the CWMP website holds many of the same questions. Septic system replacement for those properties not included in the CWMP would be a good addition to this Q&A section.
- Previous reports included Looking Ahead, Capital Improvement (2017), Economic Development, Fire and Water (discontinue around 2020).
- Lillian asks Neil, who has done much work comparing communities, to share the work he has done.
 - * In perusing the state website, finding data comparisons is difficult and making it not comparable to other towns. It would be beneficial to add the town of Plymouth due to its proximity and size to the Town of Barnstable. Data on income per capita seems to be fairly accurate, and while interesting its relevance to our revenue spending, breaking it out by villages would be more relevant if available.
 - * Departmental spending tends to be population drives with minor exceptions. Other communities fire departments are part of those towns. Data within the DOR database for Barnstable shows all fully allocated costs for Barnstable's Fire departments because they are independent districts and those expenditures direct

operating costs, debt service for capital facilities, employee benefits and more. The Finance department has never done an analysis of the independent fire district finances to identify cost-saving measures. The issue of fire department expenses has been a long-standing issue. Keeping tax rate information for fire districts in the report is beneficial. As opposed to a footnote, an asterisk identifying all other towns tax rates include fire department expenditures where Barnstable does not. For purposes of looking at what DOR has developed and using that against how other towns categorize their expenditures, finding meaningful comparisons will be difficult. The comparable information that can be used would be populations, total tax revenue, and per capita tax burden. Multiple-year tax levies are also available. Consensus is to keep the existing chart for the benefit of the average reader. State funds are tied to population size. Fire and Water, being the next largest to education holds value in bringing it back into the report; it speaks to the information that is sought most often from residents. Starting on page 45 of the Town Manager Office Updates Fiscal 24 Operating Budget summary there is an exercise illustrating this information.

Economic Development data would be beneficial to residents. Past reports brought out highlights of many of the major projects either approved or in progress. Some decisions made at the town level have included allowing Main Street in Hyannis to go up to four (4) stories; and the Local Comprehensive Planning is putting together a plan that would include some elements of development. Adding a "Looking Ahead" section speaking to specific projects and town decisions under discussion. CFAC does not currently have the capacity to include revenue information. Until building permits are filed and approved the possibilities are speculative.

Request for Mark to distribute last year's report in PDF form to members.

Page assignments for review, updates and changes are as follows:
Budget History and General Fund consolidation = Chris and Neil
Government Structure = Jacky
Education = Chuck and Lillian
Enterprise Funds = Chuck
Property Taxes = Wendy
CWMP = Hector and Lillian
Fiscal Accountability and Transparency will stay the same after COVID language is removed.

With CFAC moving into the summer schedule, the next few meetings will be as follows:

June 26th Agenda to include:
 Director of Assessing, Lane Patridge and
 Update on financing the CWMP from Mark Milne
 There have been no major changes. The information will be the same as was presented to
 the Town Council back in April. Mark would like to have CFAC hear the information
 and offer input to ensure nothing is missed.

 With the amount of funds being spent on the CWMP, it would be beneficial to have
 regular updates. No decision from DEP has been made on the CWMP Watershed Permit
 application. Innovative alternative systems pose timing and installation challenges too.

July 24th. Lillian requests that drafts be ready for this meeting for review.

August 21st Finalize report for September distribution.

Future meetings:

Consensus from members to continue meeting via Zoom until the fall and revisit the possible change in September.

Members asked to continue to think about recruiting new members.

A former CFAC Chair has submitted his application, and another former CFAC Chair is considering re-joining after his schedule slows down.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Hector, seconded by Wendy.

Roll to adjourn called by Chuck: Lillian, Hector, Jacky, Wendy, Neil, Chris, and Chuck

Meeting adjourned at 7:55pm

Respectfully submitted.

Theresa M. Santos

Attachments:

APPROVED