

# **Newburyport Harbor Commission**

Online Meeting

February 2, 2022

Minutes

## **1. Call to Order**

Chair Andrew Casson called a remote meeting of the Newburyport Harbor Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. In attendance were Andrew Casson, Bob Dow, Jamie Knapp, Adam Armstrong, Justin Dutcher and Jay Lesynski. Ron Thurlow was absent. George Sass is on a leave of absence. Harbormaster Paul Hogg was also in attendance.

## **2. Minutes**

Justin Dutcher moved to approve the minutes of the January 5, 2022, meeting. Jamie Knapp seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote (Andrew Casson, yes; Bob Dow, yes; Justin Dutcher, yes; Jamie Knapp, yes; Adam Armstrong, yes; Jay Lesynski, abstain).

## **3. Committee Reports**

### **a) Coast Guard City**

The board reviewing the application has recommended that the Commander approve it. The approval is expected in the next month.

### **b) Dredging**

GZA has provided a proposal for permitting a supplemental dredge of the area outside of the federal channel. The quote of \$54,000 is for 1,500 yards of material. The cost could be lowered by \$14,000 if the Army Corp. survey to be used and the elimination of a sediment survey could further reduce the permitting cost to around \$30,000. The City Council Budget and Finance Committee is meeting on February 3 to approve the transfer of the funds for the permitting phase from retained earnings.

The Salisbury Harbor Commission has indicated it is willing to pay for half of the cost of the permitting and half of the cost of the dredging, but its funds would not be available immediately. KP Law is drafting an agreement with Salisbury.

The area to be dredged would extend from a triangle just north of the federal change to the jetty. This is a small but important area. Some Commission members were concerned that such a small area would fill back in too quickly. A discussion took place on the permitting of a larger area and the use of the beach fund for the permitting costs. Paul Hogg said it is important to have the work done in conjunction with the project to dredge the federal channel that is to be put out to bid in March. The funding and permitting must be in place in order for the supplemental area to be added to the project. He does not want to risk causing a delay that would require the Harbor Commission to dredge the area on its own, which would double the cost.

An additional \$2.5 million in funding has been received this year to supplement the money that was not used last year, when the only bid received was prohibitively high. The project could be divided if the bids are higher than anticipated. It is expected that the bid

would be awarded in June. The addition of the area to the Army Corps five-year maintenance plan was discussed at the recent MRBA meeting.

The placement of material from the dredging of the Piscataqua River off the shores of Salisbury and Newbury has begun.

**c) Finance**

Justin Dutcher reviewed charts he prepared showing the financial activity of the past year. The largest source of income is the mooring and slips, followed by the Plum Island parking lot. Total revenue has increased significantly over the past few years, due in part to the raising of the rates and the increased use of the beach during Covid. Operating expenses were down last year, primarily due to the lack of lifeguards.

Covid has led to an increase across the marine industry as a whole. The business, however, is seasonal and cyclical. Big dips in revenue occurred in 2009, 2013 and 2019.

**d) Public Relations/Community Outreach/Marketing**

No update. George Sass will be able to start attending meetings in March and work on the website will resume.

**4. Market Landing Park**

There have been no new developments with the plans for the expanded park.

**5. Harbormaster's Report**

Paul Hogg reported that:

- demand letters for 266 unpaid excise tax bills will be sent out next week. A total of \$68,982 has been collected so far.
- The City is working to improve its website. The information from the kayak safety classes should be included on the Harbor Commission page.
- The FY23 budget process is beginning.
- Extensive preparations had been made for the recent snow storm.
- He is currently involved with two large projects, the bulkhead repair and dredging.
- The contract and grant money for the new patrol boat are in place. He expects to receive the boat in the late fall.

**6. Other Business**

The next kayak safety class will be held on March 31.

**7. Public Comment**

City Councilor Mark Wright explained the rationale behind the possible splitting of the dredging project into two sections. The current plan is to dredge the federal channel up to the Chain Bridge. The sand must be piped onto Reservation Terrace, which would add expense to the project. Splitting the bid would allow different types of equipment to be used for the nine-foot channel and the 15-foot channel. The material from the 15 foot-channel would be

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put on the beach, while the material from the 9-foot channel would be placed in the near-shore disposal sites.

**8. Adjournment**

Bob Dow moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 p.m. Justin Dutcher seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote (Andrew Casson, yes; Bob Dow, yes; Justin Dutcher, yes; Jamie Knapp, yes; Adam Armstrong, yes; Jay Lesynski, yes).