

Chappy Ferry Advisory Committee Meeting
November 21, 2022
5:00 pm

A meeting of the Committee was held on the above date and time via Zoom. Members present were: Rick Biros, Bill Brine, John Dropick, Peter Getsinger, Rick Schifter, Sally Snipes Dana Strayton, Tom Tighlman, Peter Wells and Town Administrator, James Hagerty.

Schifter explained that, in light of concerns expressed by non-Committee member participants at the September 15 meeting regarding a potential conflict of interest he had as a result of his involvement in organizing a potential purchase of Chappaquiddick Ferry, Inc., it was his intention to abstain from voting on and opining on a variety of matters, including issues involving the 2023 license renewal and the fare increase request.

The minutes of the meeting of September 15 meeting were approved.

Hagerty advised the Committee that Fuss & O'Neill had completed its field work in connection with the Chappy Ferry resiliency project and that a meeting regarding next steps would be scheduled promptly. It is expected that a meeting to elicit public input on this project will be scheduled for January.

The Committee discussed options regarding future ownership of the ferry operation and agreed that the Subcommittee appointed at the last meeting (Biros, Tighlman and Hagerty) should proceed with analysis of various forms of ownership, particularly as it relates to relative costs under each type of ownership structure. A motion to recommend to the Select Board retention of an independent third party to review various forms of ownership was passed unanimously. Hagerty agreed to bring to the Committee a proposed request for proposals for this engagement and thoughts on how it would be funded.

The Committee discussed some of the issues around the ferry license, which expires on August 17, 2023, although subject to automatic renewal "except for just cause." The Committee voted 7 in favor and 2 opposed (Schifter abstained) to create a Subcommittee to address these topics, including any legal ramifications of seeking changes in the license. Brine, Dropick, Strayton and Hagerty were appointed to the Subcommittee.

Wells explained the rationale for the request submitted to the Select Board for an increase of approximately 15% of all rates. A discussion ensued. The Committee voted 6 in favor and none opposed (Wells, Snipes, Hagerty and Schifter abstained) to recommend that the Select Board compel public disclosure of relevant financial records prior to making a determination on the fare increase request. The Committee then discussed a motion to recommend to the Select Board that a rate increase be approved, prior to a review of financial records, which rate increase for each fare level be equal to the increase in a selected Consumer Price Index from the last time that specific fare level had been increased through today. That motion received 3 votes in favor and 3 votes opposed (Wells, Snipes, Hagerty and Schifter abstained). A motion was then made to recommend to the Select Board that, assuming a review of the financial records determined that the requested fare increase was reasonable, then it should approve a rate increase for each fare level equal to the increase in a selected Consumer Price Index from the last time that specific fare level had been increased through today. This motion received 5 votes in favor and 1 opposed (Wells, Snipes, Hagerty and Schifter abstained).

The Committee entertained comments from nonmember attendees.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 pm.