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From: **Nancy Civetta** <[Nancy.Civetta@wellfleet-ma.gov](mailto:Nancy.Civetta@wellfleet-ma.gov)>

Date: Tue, Jun 20, 2023, 1:38 PM

Subject: WSD updates from your last meeting (6/8/2023)

To: Shellfish Advisory Board <[SAB@wellfleet-ma.gov](mailto:SAB@wellfleet-ma.gov)>

Cc: Board of Selectmen <[BoS@wellfleet-ma.gov](mailto:BoS@wellfleet-ma.gov)>

Dear SAB members (and FYI to Selectboard members and Town Administration copied here):

I heard some concern about the Shellfish Department's time when I watched your last meeting this weekend, and I wanted to provide you with some information so you can better understand our current operations. I also wanted to give you an update on other agenda items you discussed regarding our work.

There has been no Principal Clerk in the Town since Jeanne MacLauchlan retired in March of 2022. The Principal Clerk is responsible for selling shellfish permits, drawing up grant licenses for renewals, transfers, extensions, etc., advertising all grant-related public hearings, and processing annual grant reports and all payments for grant fees, among other shellfish-related tasks. The Shellfish Department has taken this on as best we can, but it is stretching us thin, and required us to reprioritize our work this winter. Since the spring, the Principal Clerk duties were put aside to accommodate our large propagation efforts, such as the quahog relay (more than two weeks every day to Fall River and back and then planting them) and cultching (again more than two weeks daily for 4-6 hours/day), plus getting our farm together, etc.

Also, this is the first year since 2018 that we do not have spring help in the form of a full-time seasonal deputy (first Drew, then Jordan). We also are short a part-time seasonal deputy (Anna), which we had for 2021 and 2022. These positions started in mid-May and really contributed to dividing up the propagation and admin work load, in addition to allowing us to have dedicated coverage of recreational shellfishing. Unfortunately this year, we have not had any applicants until this past week, so Johnny and Chris and I have been doing it on our own. And although Johnny and Chris have been incurring overtime, we have not had to tap into our seasonal budget since we had no applicants, and therefore, I am making sure that we will not go overbudget for our total budget line 179. I do not get overtime, but I have been working between 50-60 hours a week since the beginning of March.

RE our propagation budget

As Johnny mentioned, we did get grants from SPAT. The first was in 2018 for seed, and the second was in 2019 to bolster recreational shellfishing. During COVID, in 2020 and 2021, we received grants from

Woods Hole Sea Grant and Mass Oyster Project to purchase 3+” oysters from farmers to stock in recreational shellfishing areas. We have \$6,000 in our budget line 180, and we spend that each year. We also have the Shellfish Revolving Fund for Propagation, from which we have been authorized to spend \$40-\$60K a year (depending on the year) since July 1, 2019.

RE our time

The dredging mitigation work has taken up considerable time with research and planning, document review, working group and Army Corps meetings, Selectboard meetings, etc., plus we have had jam packed Selectboard public hearings for grant renewals, transfers and extensions, which all require research and verification, thoughtful discussions between us at the department, and then producing memos with our recommendations for the Selectboard to review.

To your request about an update on the lottery of the deep water Indian Neck grants, I can tell you that we simply have not had the time to set these up. Once we hit May, we decided that we would wait until the fall because shellfishermen are too busy in the summer, and we did not feel it was fair to do it now. Being new grants because they are moved into new locations will require a lot of paperwork, so any lottery winner would not have been able to farm them this season anyway, and doing it in the fall will allow lottery winners the winter to work on the necessary permits and certifications. We have had only two inquiries about the lottery, and we explained the above reasoning to them, and they agreed with us.

I hear your desire for agenda item information to be delivered to you 48 hours prior to your meeting. I admit that this spring I have fallen behind on getting things to you in a timely way. It was not always like this in the past when we had help. I will work hard to respect your request for items with this lead time. Please know I am doing my best. I appreciate your patience with me and open discussions about this. We all want the best for our community decision-making.

As you make your decisions about the new SAB role to handle your communications, you should add to that person’s responsibilities the need to assemble all of the documents that come from different individuals into a packet and forward it to Tomas, the media services person, to post on your SAB web page.

I thought Diane made a good suggestion about sending a survey out to the WSD list I shared with SAB. Maybe one of you on SAB would know how to set this up, or SPAT has done this in the past and might be able to help you set it up to send from one of your email addresses. Perhaps at your next meeting we can discuss the questions to ask in the survey. It can be done anonymously as well.

I have found the discussions at your two recent meetings to be very enlightening as to the challenges with regards to regulating business entities being named to shellfish grant licenses. I am also curious about how license holders can protect themselves from liability. I agree that it would be a good idea to bring in a lawyer to speak with you about this. It is my intention to provide you with a memo from the Shellfish Department's perspective by your meeting at the end of the month given what we have learned to date. Please advise when that meeting date has been confirmed, so I can work toward the 48-hour in advance deadline.

I look forward to continuing to work together as a team to make the best recommendations for the overall well-being and continued success of Wellfleet's vital shellfishing industry. Preliminary numbers from the state for 2022 again show Wellfleet as first in the state for town-managed shellfish landings with an incredible \$9.5M in value.

Thank you for reading this.

Sincerely,

Nancy

Nancy Civetta

Shellfish Constable

Town of Wellfleet

O: 508-349-0325

C: 617-901-7193

E: [nancy.civetta@wellfleet-ma.gov](mailto:nancy.civetta@wellfleet-ma.gov)

300 Main St.

Wellfleet, MA 02667

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