

Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: June 29, 2021

Place: Remote Meeting via Zoom

In attendance: Committee Members Bob Curley, Julie Strehle, Andy McElaney, Dave Anderson, Davalene Cooper, Kristin Dziergowski, Victor Baltera, Alan Macdonald, Tina Sherwood, Brenda Black, Libby Claypoole, Eryn Kelley, George Danis, and Town Accountant Sue Nickerson.

Absent: Nancy MacDonald, Evan Sheehan.

1. ***Call meeting to order:*** Chair Curley called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm and read the following statement:

This meeting is being held remotely as an alternative means of public access pursuant to an Order issued by the Governor of Massachusetts dated March 12, 2020 Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law. You are hereby advised that this meeting and all communications during this meeting may be recorded by the Town of Hingham in accordance with the Open Meeting Law.

If any participant wishes to record this meeting, please notify the chair at the start of the meeting in accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A, § 20(f) so that the chair may inform all other participants of said recording.

2. ***Comments from the public on items not on the agenda:*** None

3. ***Approval of Minutes from Meeting of May 25, 2021:*** Approved, with edits, by roll call vote of 10-0-1 (Tina Sherwood abstained, Alan Macdonald was absent for the vote).

4. ***Authorization of incoming Chair to approve reserve fund transfer requests, interdepartmental transfer requests and intradepartmental transfer requests not to exceed \$10,000 between 7/1/2021 and 7/15/2021:*** Approved by roll call vote of 11-0-0 (Alan Macdonald was absent for the vote).

5. ***Liaison Reports:***

Kristin Dziergowski and Davalene Cooper provided the following updates on the Hingham Affordable Housing Trust (HAHT):

- Amy Farrell was elected the new Chair;

- 499 Cushing Street is still under consideration for possible new affordable housing;
- HAHT would like to present the Housing Plan to AdCom in August or September prior to presenting it to the Select Board;
- Renovations to Rhodes Circle are on schedule to be completed by the June 30, 2021 deadline to qualify for State grants;
- The Housing Plan was presented to the Planning Board who found it to be consistent with the Town Masterplan;
- HAHT is seeking an additional source of funding beyond the Community Preservation Committee in order to pursue affordable housing opportunities;
- Hingham currently has 1005 affordable housing units (11.3% of total housing units). This total includes market rate units in Chapter 40B developments. The total excluding the market rate units is 349;
- HAHT is considering a public awareness campaign to highlight the need for affordable housing, is looking to insure diversity in the affordable housing stock (rental and owner occupied) and is exploring how to insure that existing stocks of lower cost housing remain so in the future.

Davalene Cooper provided the following update on the Hingham Development and Industrial Committee (HDIC):

- Policies and Procedures have been developed;
- HDIC is projected to have a key role in the development of South Hingham as outlined in the Masterplan;
- Possible three Warrant Articles for FY 22 Town Meeting:
 1. Expand the committee to 15 members;
 2. A proposed By-Law for short term rentals;
 3. A possible new South Hingham overlay district.

Brenda Black noted that the Hingham Municipal Lighting Plant (HMLP) review of the proposed sub-station location is looking positive. If the final site review is positive then there would be a Warrant Article at the FY 22 Town Meeting. Ms. Black also noted that HMLP has offered to coordinate a review of the roofs of town buildings (including schools) for possible solar panel installations. Ms. Black also noted that long time General Manager Paul Heanue is retiring and will be replaced by Thomas Morahan.

Dave Anderson noted that Superintendent of Schools Paul Austin has resigned for personal and family reasons and will be returning to Maine. A search is underway for an interim superintendent until a permanent replacement is found.

Kristin Dziergowski provided an update on the Weir River Water System (WRWS). The Water Commissioners approved a 10% increase in water usage fees. This increase is consistent with previously announced plans. Ms. Dziergowski further noted that the

WRWS was performing a cost of service analysis which would be used in future rate request filings.

Chair Curley asked if any discussion had occurred in regards to replacing the current Water Commissioners with either an elected or appointed board. Ms. Dziergowski stated that there had been no discussion on this topic.

Julie Strehle stated that the Community Preservation Committee is considering two grant extension requests. The Bell Tower renovation project has been delayed due to COVID-19. The Liberty Plain Cemetery headstone restoration project has requested a one month extension to complete its work. Ms. Strehle also noted that the committee will begin accepting new grant requests in August.

6. Approval of Interdepartmental, Intradepartmental and Reserve Fund transfer requests for FY 21: Town Accountant Sue Nickerson reviewed the transfer requests (attached). She further noted that all bills have been paid and the transfers are required to move funds to the appropriate accounts in order to avoid deficit spending. Chair Curley proposed that the transfer requests be read and that Ms. Nickerson would provide a brief explanation of the reason for the transfer. AdCom members could place a “hold” on any request and that request would be set aside for further discussion. Members would then vote on the remaining requests prior to discussing any held requests.

Libby Claypoole inquired about legal expenses and Ms. Nickerson noted that COVID-19 and Weir River Water System acquisition costs were responsible for the request. Ms. Nickerson noted the COVID-19 expenses should be reimbursed and that the Weir River costs were consistent with expectations. She further offered to provide Ms. Claypoole with a reconciliation of costs and appropriations for the Weir River Water System acquisition.

Victor Baltera inquired about litigation costs and noted that they were higher than expected. Ms. Nickerson noted that the costs related to a personnel matter and an on-going affordable housing case.

There were no held items and the AdCom approved the transfers by roll call vote of 12-0-0.

7. Discussion of Advisory Committee housekeeping items: Chair Curley noted that this was his last meeting as Chair and extended thanks to all members (including Sue Nickerson) for their support and hard work throughout the year. Chair Curley noted the contributions of Vice Chair Julie Strehle and Secretary George Danis to the AdCom this past year. In addition, he commended departing AdCom members Victor Baltera, Eryn Kelly, and Libby Claypoole for their many years of dedicated and conscientious service to Hingham and the Advisory Committee. Chair Curley further noted the difficulties of remote meetings, financial uncertainty and COVID-19 and praised the AdCom members for their cooperation and collegiality during this challenging period.

8. **Matters not anticipated within 48 hours of meeting:** None

9. **Adjourn:** Motion to adjourn at 7:58 by roll call vote of 12-0-0

Respectfully submitted,

George Danis, Secretary

List of Documents Distributed for this Meeting:

- Agenda;
- May 25, 2021 meeting minutes;
- List of transfer requests (attached)

Approved with revisions on 09/14/2021 by roll call vote 10-0-0 (New AdCom members Matt Goulet, Caitlyn Kirk and Sarah Melia abstained and Evan Sheehan and Nancy MacDonald had been absent from the meeting).