

Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

January 04, 2022

Remote Meeting via Zoom

In Attendance: J. Strehle, G. Danis, N. MacDonald, B. Black, D. Cooper, R. Curley, K. Dziergowski, M. Goulet, C. Kirk, A. Macdonald, A. McElaney, S. Melia, E. Sheehan, T. Sherwood, Town Accountant S. Nickerson.

Absent: D. Anderson

1. Call Meeting to Order

At 7:00 pm, Chair Strehle, read the following statement:

“This meeting is being held remotely as an alternate 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 Chairman 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.”

Chair Strehle asked if any participants were recording the meeting, no responses.

2. Comments from the Public Regarding Items Not on the Agenda

None.

3. Review and Approval of Minutes from December 7 and December 14, 2021

The minutes from December 7, 2021, were approved with revisions by roll call vote 12-0.

The minutes from December 14, 2021, were approved with revisions by roll call vote 11-0-1

4. Budget Hearings:

- a. **Sewer** – Vice Chair Danis presented this budget. Also in attendance was Assistant Superintendent of Hingham Department of Public Works Matt Cahill. Vice Chair Danis noted that the expenses for the sewer budget are entirely paid for by the users through usage fees set by the Sewer Commission. The salary request is \$402,077, an increase of \$19,340 (5.1%). Expenses are \$321,177, an increase of \$20,392 (6.8%). Capital will be reviewed at a later date. The Engineering Services budget is flat at \$10,000. There is an MWRA Assessment of \$2,439,758, an increase of \$159,610 (7%). The Debt Service request is \$70,784, a decrease of \$1,936 (2.7%). The intermunicipal Agreement with Hull request is \$459,245, an increase of \$13,376 (3%). Still to be determined are the encumbrances; for FY22 there were \$256,000. There are none at this point of FY23. The total Sewer expenses (minus capital and encumbrances) are \$3,703,041. There are no additional payroll adds this year. Expenses were primarily driven by building maintenance, utilities, and fuel. Mr. McElaney inquired about the Fuel and Utilities Worksheet; the FY22 Budget amounts are not filled in. Ms. Nickerson explained that the worksheet is generated by MUNIS and it was not filled in by the system. Vice Chair Danis indicated that the fuel budget for FY22 was \$9,949 and is up in FY23 to \$14,453; he noted that fuel costs are up in general and the increase here is reasonable. Ms. Cooper asked about the swings in the building maintenance budget. This year there is an \$8,000 increase. Mr. Cahill noted this is a function of the age of the buildings. Mr. Danis recommended the budget as presented.

Approved January 18, 2022

- b. GAR/Veterans/Celebrations** – Ms. Dziergowski presented this budget. Veteran Services Officer Keith Jermyn presented the Grand Army Hall (GAR) Mission and Services. GAR Expenses are \$24,187, a \$4,435 (22.4%) increase. Largest increase was for repair and maintenance for the building, mainly related to the elevator contract. The telephone bill was also up as the billing category changed from residential to commercial rates. Mr. Jermyn is looking into have this adjusted. Ms. Dziergowski recommended the requested budget amounts.

Mr. Jermyn presented the Mission and Services for the Veteran's Services Office. Salaries requested are \$115,194, an increase of \$3,494 (3.1%). This increase was due to reclassification and longevity. Expenses requested are \$7,067, a decrease of \$1,543. Mr. Jermyn explained that these expenses are controllable. Benefits that are paid out are not controllable, they are mandated by the State and 75% of the expense is reimbursed by the State under MGL Chapter 115. The benefits request is \$185,348, an increase of \$13,552. Total Veteran's Services expenses are \$307,609, an increase of \$15,503 (5.3%). Mr. McElaney inquired about the two funds that support Veteran's Services and asked about the sources for the funds and if there is enough money in the funds. Mr. Jermyn explained that there are two funds. 1) The Veteran's Benefit Fund, which currently has roughly an \$11,000 balance. 2) Veterans In Need Fund, which has roughly a \$30,000 balance. Hingham is a role model in the Commonwealth; the Town is generous through donations to this fund. Ms. Dziergowski recommended the requested budget amounts.

Celebrations – Ms. Dziergowski presented this budget.

Mr. Jermyn presented a summary of Celebrations. An expense budget of \$17,567 was requested, an increase of \$460 (3.4%). Ms. Dziergowski recommended the requested budget amounts.

- c. Information Technology** – Ms. Kirk presented this budget. Information Technology Director Bill Hartigan presented the Mission and Services and Key Initiatives of the IT Department. Salaries requested are \$312,046, an increase of \$10,716 (3.6%); technology expenses of \$321,092, an increase of \$44,378 (1.6%). Capital expenses will be discussed later. Ms. Kirk noted that the salary increases were due to the reclassification. The increase in expenditures was primarily due to the change in service agreements which are up 5-10%. The total department request decreased \$179,906 (22%). Mr. McElaney asked about the salary reimbursement from the schools and water system. Are the reimbursements roughly the same as the past few years? Ms. Nickerson said they are. The schools reimburse 20% of the Director's salary. Vice Chair Danis inquired about the school reimbursement - is it an appropriate amount based on the workload? Mr. Hartigan replied that the schools have their own IT staff for the schools; his budget just supports the offices in Town Hall. Mr. Curley inquired about physical space constraints - is it a problem for the department? Mr. Hartigan feels that they are working with what they have and that it works. Mr. Curley asked about security concerns and does the department have the resources necessary to keep our systems safe. Mr. Hartigan indicates it is a constant concern and they use multiple levels of tools to protect Town data. He is looking to bring in a desktop management suite in the future, which will be another \$15,000. Vice Chair Danis asked if there is opportunity to share costs with the School Department for things like bulk purchases, etc. Mr. Hartigan says the needs are very different. Schools also have access to discounts specific to schools that the Town would not be able to participate in. Chair Strehle inquired about the ability

Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

January 04, 2022

to retrofit the meeting rooms at Town Hall to allow for both in-person and zoom meetings. What would be the cost? Mr. Hartigan is looking into this and has met with vendors and is estimating \$15-25,000 per room. Ms. Kirk recommended the requested budget amounts.

d. South Shore Country Club – Mr. Goulet presented this budget.

Executive Director of South Shore Country Club Kevin Whalen presented the Mission and Services as well as Key Initiatives of the Club. The Club is projecting \$2,218,000 in revenues for FY23. Expenses are budgeted at \$1,988,015 - \$979,415 for salaries and \$967,600 for expenses. This is an enterprise fund. Mr. Goulet recommended the requested budget.

e. Community Planning – Ms. Kirk presented this budget.

Community Planning Director Emily Wentworth presented the Mission and Services. Ms. Wentworth requests \$236,171 in salaries which is an increase of \$1,302 (0.5%), \$24,205 in expenses (no change), for a total budget of \$260,376. Salary increases were based on the reclassification but offset by changes in staff. Mr. McElaney inquired about the new Senior Planner position. Ms. Kirk recommended the requested budget amounts.

f. Land Use & Development – Ms. Black presented this budget.

Community Planning Director (former Zoning Administrator) Emily Wentworth presented the Mission and Services. The department requests salaries of \$155,199, a decrease of \$1,993 (1.3%); flat expenses of \$7,375, for a total budget of \$163,294. Salaries were decreased due to the lower step of the new Planning Director. Ms. Black recommended the requested budgets.

5. Liaison Reports

a. Sustainable Budget Task Force

Vice Chair Danis reported that the Task Force continues to meet. Reports are being prepared for final presentation to the Select Board. Mr. Asher has made modifications to the financial modeling spreadsheet now allows taxpayers to put in their own assessed value for personalized numbers related to different debt borrowing or override scenarios.

b. ACES/Education

Vice Chair Danis reported that the School Committee will begin deliberation of the FY23 budget; will continue to discuss over the next four Thursdays - Mr. Ferris will present a portion of the budget each week.

c. Foster School Building Committee

Mr. Sheehan reported that the Building Committee has been discussing the design and site placement. The MSBA has released a document with comments and concerns. Mr. Sheehan recommends that the Advisory Committee, School Committee, and Select Board meet to get a joint presentation from the Building Committee. He believes there will an Article in the Warrant at Town Meeting in April. Mr. Macdonald discussed how the State calculates reimbursement rates per category. Ms. MacDonald asked if there is any thought on an alternate site. Mr. Sheehan noted that the Building Committee has in the past reviewed other sites but found no better sites. Ms. Cooper asked what is being done to socialize the significant increase in estimated cost before Town Meeting. Mr. Sheehan will ask that question of the Building Committee.

Approved January 18, 2022

Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

January 04, 2022

d. Planning Board

Mr. McElaney noted that the Planning Board had a Design Progress Report from the Public Safety Facility Committee and suggests that someone from that committee should be attending the Planning Board meetings. There is concern regarding the design of the exterior of the building and should be in keeping with other buildings at the Shipyard. Ms. MacDonald noted that the focus on the committee has been the interior of the building; the exterior design will be done as part of the next phase. Mr. McElaney reported on the three Warrant Articles being considered for Town Meeting: 1) An Article to adopt update their bylaws to reflect gender neutral language – the Planning Board voted to approve; 2) an Article to streamline permitting, this still being discussed; and 3) a Residential Accessory Uses Article. This is different from the Citizen's Petition put forward last year. The concern is running a business out of a home and what factors should be considered by the board.

6. Discussion of Advisory Committee Housekeeping Items

Chair Strehle discussed the next meeting agenda. Mr. McElaney asked if the date of Town Meeting has been finalized. Chair Strehle said it has not been finalized but tentatively an outdoor Town Meeting is being considered for Saturday April 30th. Mr. McElaney asked when the Warrant is officially closed. Chair Strehle confirmed the Warrant closes January 20th.

7. Matters not anticipated within 48 hours of meeting

None

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15pm by roll call vote 12-0.

Documents Distributed for this Meeting

- Agenda
- Draft Minutes - 12/07 Revised
- Budget Books (Electronic)
- Budget Review Schedule
- Citizen correspondence
- MSBA/Hingham: Foster ES Preliminary Design Program Review Comments

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy MacDonald
Advisory Committee Secretary

Approved January 18, 2022