

# Select Board

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January 4, 2022

Present:

- Select Board: Mr. Joseph Fisher (Chair) and Ms. Liz Klein, and Mr. Bill Ramsey
- Mr. Tom Mayo, Town Administrator
- Ms. Michelle Monsegur
- Mr. Art Robert, Assistant Town Administrator for Operations

## **6:30 PM: Call to order**

Mr. Fisher called the meeting to order and 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 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. “

Mr. Fisher asked if any participants were recording the meeting. He said that the Select Board members participating in the meeting were himself, Mr. Bill Ramey and Ms. Liz Klein.

## **Special One-Day License**

Mr. Michael Snowdale of Stellwagon Beer Company said that the Weir River Farm has been collecting Christmas trees and plans to hold a bonfire at the top of Turkey Hill, across the street from the location of the summer sunset picnics. They have already received a permit from the Fire Department for the bonfire. Stellwagon Beer Company plans to be there with their beer trailer and will have Tips-certified pourers. Mr. Snowdale said that they plan to abide by the same Covid-protocols that they do at their brewery. Mr. Ramsey asked for input from the Police Chief and the Fire Chief. Fire Chief Murphy confirmed that they have issued a permit for the bonfire and noted that, because they are a farm, they follow different regulations than residences. He said that they would require one fire truck and two firefighters be stationed at the event. Chief Murphy said that Weir River Farm held the same event two years ago, with no issues. Police Chief Jones said that he was been in touch with the organizers and has no issues with the event. He said that they would have a Police detail at the event as well.

**Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to approve the Special (One Day) Wine and Malt Beverages licenses to Michael Snowdale on behalf of Stellwagon Beer Company for New Year’s Bonfire at Weir River Farm to be held on January 9, 2022 with a rain date of January 15, 2022 from 5 pm to 8 pm. Ms. Klein seconded.**

**Roll Call Vote:**

**Mr. Ramsey: yes**

**Ms. Klein: yes**

**Mr. Fisher: yes**

**FY23 Department Budget Requests*****Community Planning***

Ms. Emily Wentworth, Community Planning Director, presented. She highlighted some principal actions of the department.

The Planning Department works with the Planning Board on permitting of

- Site Plan Review
- Special Permits for Parking, FRDs, and Common Drives
- Subdivisions
- Approval Not Required Plans
- Scenic Roads

The staff of the Planning Department offers guidance to applicants at the pre-application stage and they offer administrative support to the Board during its review process. Post-application, the staff also conducts site inspections and ensures compliance with conditions of approval. The Planning Department also supports the Planning Board on long-range planning efforts on projects such as:

- The Master Plan Adoption
- The Harbor and Downtown Sustainable Vision Study
- A Local rapid Recovery Plan
- A Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Zoning Amendments

Ms. Wentworth requested \$236,171 for Planning Department salaries in FY23. She explained that Town Meeting last year had voted to support an additional staff person in the department, bringing the number of staff to three. She felt that the additional staff member would allow the department to advance certain goals of the Town. She also requested \$24,205 for department expenses. Major expenses include \$11,000 for consulting services, \$3,000 for office supplies, \$2,500 for advertising services, and \$2,400 for printing services. She reported that expenses have remained flat for the past several years.

Ms. Klein asked how the additional staff member would enhance the productivity of the department. Ms. Wentworth said that the Senior Planner would focus mostly on permitting and the Director would focus more on long-range planning, grant opportunities, and management of particular projects. Mr. Ramsey noted that site plan review has almost doubled since 2020 due to a by-law change and asked if Ms. Wentworth felt that this adoption of additional site plan review had increased the department's workload. Ms. Wentworth agreed that it had contributed because it lowered the requirements for site plan review applications from 20,000 square feet to 5,000 square feet. She also said that additional site plan review due to Covid has also added to the workload. There was some additional discussion regarding administrative waivers that would allow staff to waive some site plan review making it easier for applicants and less burdensome on the Board. Ms. Wentworth advised that there is a pending Zoning Article, initiated by the Planning Board, which aims to revise site plan review and consider delegating certain review to department staff, among other changes.

Mr. Fisher asked Ms. Wentworth how she felt the Town is doing regarding development opportunities getting reviewed, considered and acted upon by various boards and committees. In terms of the Town's permitting approach to development, she felt that the staff takes a very customer-oriented approach, whether they are helping a developer, a homeowner, or a small business owner and also with abutters of properties. She felt that the second floor departments work very well together, but are always looking for ways to make the permitting process more efficient. He also asked for her opinion on areas where Hingham could take advantage of new growth and potential tax revenue. As far as development, Ms. Wentworth said that the Town is looking to encourage development in South Hingham, as it could be a good opportunity for increased tax revenue and job opportunities.

### **Land Use & Development**

Ms. Emily Wentworth, formally the Zoning Administrator, presented. The mission of the Land Use and Development department is to integrate land use regulation, affordable housing production, economic development, and planning functions so that the Town can better formulate and implement an overall growth strategy that reflects and enhances the character of the community. The staff supports the work of the Zoning Board of Appeals. She noted that they have seen a decreased number of variance requests as well as in the number of comprehensive permit applications in the past few years. Department staff also supports the Affordable Housing Trust.

Key initiatives of the department include:

- Continued oversight of projects approved by the ZBA
- Housing Plan/Administrative grants/Scattered site affordable housing
- Housing Choice designation
- Rapid recovery Plan
- Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Remote meetings
- New administrative staff
- Professional development

Ms. Wentworth announced that a new Senior Planner/Zoning Administrator would be starting next week.

Ms. Wentworth requested \$155,919 for FY23 salaries of two full-time personnel. She also requested \$7,375 for expenses, including \$2,000 for postage for abutters' notices and \$2,000 for legal ads for scheduled hearings.

Ms. Klein asked if Ms. Wentworth has found any efficiencies related to holding remote meetings and automating processes due to covid that we should continue in the future. Ms. Wentworth said that they are now posting all information related to meetings online so they are spending less money on mailings and all information is more readily available to the public. She also reported that the Zoning Bylaw has recently been updated to include hyperlinks. She said that they plan to implement more improvements in the future.

Mr. Fisher asked if Ms. Wentworth felt that the Town would continue to be above the 10% threshold for affordable housing in the future. She said that the recently adopted Housing Plan projects that the Town will retain a buffer cushion of approximately 30 units after the release of the 2020 census data at the end of 2022.

Mr. Fisher also asked if Ms. Wentworth had any suggestions on things the Town could be doing in order to help support the Town's restaurants and business get through the pandemic and potentially any permanent changes, such as more outdoor restaurant seating. She said that the current outdoor seating regulation are due to expire in April 2022 and that restaurant owners have been encouraged to reach out to staff as they navigate their next steps to making some Covid-related zoning changes more permanent. She said that the Town could look at revising some policies going forward. Mr. Ramsey added that he has been contacted by several restaurant owners who were asking for advice regarding continuing their special permits for outdoor table service. Ms. Wentworth reported that the Select Board office has reached out to all restaurant owners and would plan to again as a follow-up.

### **Building**

Mr. Mike Clancy, Building Commissioner and Zoning Enforcement Officer, presented. The Building/Inspectional Services Department falls under the Massachusetts Department of Public Safety. They enforce a series of 14 International Codes including the following:

- the State Building Code/Commercial
- Fire Code,
- Existing Building Code
- Mechanical Code
- Swimming Pool and Spa Code
- Energy Conservation Code
- Architectural Access Board for Disabilities
- Zoning Act Chapter 40A
- Zoning By-Law
- General By-Laws
- Plumbing and Gas Code
- Electrical Codes

Mr. Clancy said that Building officials are on call 24/7. The Building Department also works closely with the Police Department, the Fire Department and the DPW. He reported that the following building projects are under construction or nearing completion:

- The Amazon Distribution Center at 100 Industrial Park Road
- Continuous renovations at the Derby Street Shoppes including two new restaurants and a small addition
- Renovations of the existing space at Planet Fitness
- Continuous renovations to existing spaces at the Hingham Shipyard and renovation of the DCR Maintenance Facility
- Demolition of a building at 105 North Street and the beginning of a foundation for a new residential/commercial building
- Demolition and the rebuilding of several homes throughout the Town

Mr. Clancy requested \$262,791 for FY22 salaries for 6 full-time personnel and 6 part-time Building Officials. He also requested \$15,960 for FY22 expenses, including \$5,000 for in-state travel (inspections), \$2,678 for vehicle fuel, and \$2,500 for codebooks. The Building Department Revolving Fund is credited with all plumbing, gas, and electrical permit fees and is used to pay inspectors.

There was some additional discussion on how the Building Department interacts with the Commission on Disabilities. Mr. Clancy said that he is an appointed member of the Commission on Disabilities, which provides him with a unique perspective to his approach to the Architectural Access Board for Disabilities.

Mr. Clancy attributed a rise in cost for Clerical Services to salary changes resulting from the Town's recent Wage Classification Study.

Mr. Robert highlighted the important contributions the Building Department makes in protecting the public safety. He reported that, after the recent storm, the members of Mr. Clancy's team were out checking buildings for damage, checking electrical connects, etc. to ensure safety around town.

### **Trustees of the Bathing Beach**

Mr. Ramsey abstained from participating in the following discussion. Chair Ed Johnson presented. The Bathing Beach is operated by a Board of Trustees who manage the property, "as a park, bathing beach or playground for the benefit of the people of Hingham." Their FY23 budget request is \$40,672, which includes:

- Life guards
- Repair and maintenance of the grounds
- Increased water for an outdoor shower at the new beach house, which opened in September 2020

Mr. Johnson reported that he anticipated needing additional sand to cover the beach at some point because the existing sand has moved during storms. He also said that the old bathhouse bathroom facilities have been closed to the public for the past two years due to Covid concerns and to non-compliance with ADA requirements. The public is welcome to use the bathroom in the new bathhouse. Mr. Alan Perrault, Trustee, said that the new community room has not opened for use due to Covid, but he anticipates that it would be a good source of revenue in the future and could offset some of their expenses. He said that he plans to work with the Town Administrator's Office to get the room up and running. There was some additional discussion regarding the State's potential renovations to the boat ramp. Mr. Johnson anticipated that the renovations to the boat ramp might increase activity in the area.

### **Fire**

Fire Chief Steve Murphy presented. Also in attendance were Deputy LaChance, Deputy Levanson, and Captain Becker. Chief Murphy reported the department's mission and services as follows:

- To save lives, protect property, and support the community
- Provide the best possible customer service through professionalism and pride

- Promote fire prevention, public education, and risk reduction
- Provide pre-hospital care/transportation and fire control
- To show fiscal responsibility and strategic planning for Hingham's future needs
- To be a one-stop agency for any emergency, non-emergency, or when someone does not know who to call

Chief Murphy noted that he was very pleased that the Town was able to negotiate a three-year agreement with the Firefighter's Union, which also increases their budget. He also said that Covid has increased expenses, delays and materials increases, for example sterile gloves. He also reported a shortage in staffing levels, which has increased overtime expenses.

Deputy La Chance announced that, while call volume was down slightly in 2020, 2021 was the busiest year ever for Hingham Fire. He said that both call volume and hospital transports continue to increase. He attributed this somewhat to Hingham's aging population.

Key initiatives for the Fire Department are:

- Continue working to fill open vacancies (nationwide shortage of EMT's and Paramedics)
- Public Safety building Project
- Officer development
- Increased fire training for all members
- Create more training for all members
- Create pre-fire Inspection program
- Emergency management-continue supporting other departments through Covid-related issues
- Review of all SOPS and polices

The Fire Department's FY23 budget request included \$6,554,825 for 57 full-time personnel and \$616,943 for expenses. Major expenses include \$81,570 for vehicle fuel, \$75,000 for the repair and maintenance of buildings and \$75,000 for vehicles. Two additional FY23 budget requests include:

- \$39,800 to send two EMT's to Paramedic School (new hires)
- \$356,026 to hire four new firefighters (This includes salary items and expenses and will allow the HFD to increase to maximum staffing levels and decrease overtime coverage.)

There was some additional discussion regarding staffing levels. Deputy LaChance said that they are currently down 9 firefighters and are hoping to hire several new staff soon. Chief Murphy highlighted that staffing shortages increase staff overtime, and has seriously impacted their budget in the past year, mostly due to Covid-related absences and long-term staff injuries.

Additionally, Chief Murphy reported that he has submitted FEMA reimbursement requests through the end of last fiscal year and he is currently working on applications to continue them going forward. He said that they are eligible to receive and plan to continue applying for Covid-related reimbursements through the end of April 2022, which is the current cut-off date.

Mr. Ramsey thanked the Fire Department for all that they do and highlighter their participation in Covid vaccine booster clinics. He said that their participation is a great service to the community. He asked for

a status update on the roof at Central Fire Station. Chief Murphy said that he has put in a Capital request for funding to replace the entire roof. Mr. Mayo said that Town Administration is looking at the needs of the Fire Stations and evaluating what repairs could be made this year. He said that he would announce his recommendations in the upcoming months.

Mr. Fisher and Chief Murphy discussed additional topics such as increasing overtime, vehicle fuel, and heating oil costs. Chief Murphy asked for 10,500 hours of overtime, which is an increase from the 10,000 hours that he requested the previous year. He also told the Board that the Fire Department recently replaced all the lights on the apparatus floor of the Central Fire Station with more energy-efficient light bulbs and looking to do the same at the other stations. Mr. Mayo acknowledged Chief Murphy's aggressive pursuit of FEMA reimbursements as well.

### **Public Safety Utilities**

Fire Chief Murphy and Town Administrator Mayo presented. Chief Murphy explained that there are two categories of Public Safety Utilities: Emergency Water and Lighting. He said that Emergency Water is the water that the Fire Department would use if there were a fire in Town. It is also for Fire training. The FY23 Emergency Water Service budget is a flat fee charged by the Weir River Water System to maintain water in the 900+ fire hydrants in Town. The \$10,000 request for fire hydrants would cover the cost of emergency repair for 1 ½ hydrants. He added that Water Superintendent Russ Tierney is doing a great job developing a fire hydrant replacement process.

### **South Shore Regional Emergency Communications Center (SSRECC/Dispatch) (Tom)**

Town Administrator Mayo presented. This budget supports the SSREC located at Town Hall. SSRECC provides 911 call taking, emergency medical instruction, and Police and Fire dispatching services 24/7 to four towns: Hingham, Norwell, Hull, and Cohasset. It is staffed by an Executive Director, Deputy Director, 5 Supervisors, and 17 Dispatchers. In 2021, they received 67,865 call for service. Mr. Mayo requested at FY23 budget of \$974,510, based on a combination of Hingham's population and number of service calls. Mr. Mayo reported that call in Hingham have recently increased by approximately 5%.

### **Cardiac Monitors**

Fire Chief Murphy said that the Fire Department is requesting the replacement of two 10-year old cardiac monitors that would be used on a daily basis in the primary ambulances. Each of Hingham's four ambulances are required to have this type of cardiac monitor on board. The total cost for the monitors is \$63,767. Ms. Kathy Reilly, Procurement and Contracts Manager, added that the Town is able to purchase the monitors from a National Cooperative based in Colorado for a fair price. Delivery of the new cardiac monitors is expected in approximately 14 weeks.

**Vote: Ms. Klein made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the agreement with Stryker Sales, LLC to supply the Town with two Cardiac Monitors-Lifepak 15 V4 Monitor/Defib in an amount not to exceed \$63,767.92 with a timeline extended four months. Mr. Ramsey seconded.**

### **Roll Call Vote:**

**Mr. Ramsey: yes**

**Ms. Klein: yes**

**Mr. Fisher: yes**

**License agreement with MobileMed, LLC**

Mr. Fisher said that the Board would consider an agreement with MobileMed, LLC for a temporary Covid testing site at 335 Lincoln Street. Mr. Mayo said that the community has requested a Covid testing site in Town and they have settled on a solution that would allow one to open next week. Ms. Monsegur added that the Town is again collaborating with Hingham resident Jackson Stone to provide testing services. The drive-up testing site will be open on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 7:00 am-4:00 pm, with priority access from 7:00 am to 11:00 am for residents and employees of the partner communities, Hingham, Hull, Cohasset, and Scituate. PCR testing would be covered by insurance with no out-of-pocket cost, however visitors would be charged for rapid antigen tests. She added that the Town plans to pay for the testing site through a regional grant from the Department of Environmental Protection, with additional funding through ARPA funds, if needed. Mr. Jackson Stone added that the site would provide pcr, rapid and antibody testing. Sgt. Jeffrey Kilroy advised that the entrance to the site would be behind the Fresh Market on Essington Drive, with a detail officer on-site. Visitors should make appointments online prior to arriving at the testing site.

**Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to execute a License Agreement with MobileMed, LLC for a temporary COVID-19 testing site at 335 Lincoln Street, Hingham, MA in the form attached hereto subject to the registration of MobileMed, LLC with the Massachusetts Secretary of State under M.G.L. c. 156C, § 48.” Ms. Klein seconded.**

**Roll Call Vote:**

**Mr. Ramsey: yes**

**Ms. Klein: yes**

**Mr. Fisher: yes**

**Covid-19 Report**

Mr. Mayo gave the following update on the Covid-19 crisis:

“Across Massachusetts, according to DPH, we are seeing a large surge in new COVID-19 cases. The 7-day average of new cases across the state is now 11,800, compared to a 7-day average of about 4,400 new cases one month ago. Hingham is also experiencing a significant spike. DPH is reporting 234 new COVID-19 cases in Hingham during the 14-day period reported on 12/30/2021, compared to 167 cases over the two-week period reported two weeks ago on 12/16/2021. It is also important to note that many residents are now taking home-based testing which is most often not reported and therefore not in these statistics. As a result, we are assuming that the actual number of positive cases is much higher than these statistics show. The overall vaccination rate for Hingham is now 81% (for fully vaccinated individuals). If you look at only vaccine-eligible individuals in Hingham (people age 5+), the percent of fully vaccinated eligible residents is 86%. According to DPH, about 53% of Hingham residents ages 5-11 are fully vaccinated at this point.

The Town held a successful vaccine booster clinic on December 28, 2021 at the South Shore Baptist Church. Led by a team from our Health, Fire, and Police Departments, the clinic was able to provide 120 Moderna booster shots to eligible residents. On Thursday, January 13, 2022, Hingham will partner with

Cohasset, Hull, and Scituate to host a second booster clinic at the South Shore Baptist Church from 9am to 1pm. The regional clinic will be available to residents of Cohasset, Hingham, Hull, and Scituate only. The clinic will provide 300 doses of the Moderna booster to residents age 18 and older. Those who received their second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine more than six months ago are able to receive a booster. This will be a drive-up clinic. Those receiving a booster will not need to exit their vehicles in order to receive their shot. Members of the Hingham Fire Department and Cohasset Health Department will be administering the doses. Those wishing to receive the vaccine at this clinic must [Pre-register for the Vaccine Booster Clinic](#). No walk-ins will be accepted at the clinic. More details and instructions on how to pre-register are available on the [Town of Hingham website](#). Booster shots are also available at the Hingham Center Pharmacy and local CVS and Walgreens locations.

As we announced this evening, the Town is partnering with MobileMed LLC and Covid Clinic Inc. to open a temporary COVID-19 testing site at 335 Lincoln Street in Hingham. The testing site will be open on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays from 7am to 4pm. Priority access will be given to residents and employees of the Towns of Hingham, Cohasset, Hull, and Scituate. We are partnering with those other communities to offer this as a regional testing resource. Testing options at the site include PCR tests, rapid antigen tests, antibody tests, and other options. The testing site will be operated as a drive-through facility and testing will be offered by appointment only. I want to stress this point – walk-ins will not be accepted at this site. Anyone who does not have an appointment for that day will be turned away. We will have testing staff and detail officers on site to enforce this rule and keep traffic moving. We are aiming to open the testing center mid next week. More details will be posted on the Town of Hingham website shortly.

DPH recently updated its quarantine and isolation guidelines to align with revised guidance from the CDC. As of now, if you test positive for COVID-19, you must self-isolate for 5 days. You may resume public activities after day 5 as long as it has been 24 hours without a fever, without taking fever-reducing medications like Tylenol, and have experienced improvement in other symptoms. Guidance for close contacts has also been updated.

- If you've received a booster shot or completed the primary series of Moderna/Pfizer within six months or Johnson & Johnson within two months, you are now considered fully vaccinated. As such, fully vaccinated individuals who are identified as close contacts do not need to quarantine unless they have symptoms. Fully vaccinated individuals who are close contacts should wear a mask around others for 10 days, and test on day 5 if possible. As always, if you develop symptoms, get a test and stay home.
- Individuals who are not fully vaccinated and are identified as a close contact needs to quarantine at home for 5 days. If they cannot quarantine, they need to wear a mask for 10 days. Testing on day 5 is recommended if possible. Again, if you develop symptoms, get a test and stay home.

Please continue to take precautions to protect yourself and others from COVID-19. As we all know well by now, public health protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19 include vaccination, wearing face coverings, practicing social distancing, and frequently washing hands, among other measures. As a reminder, effective December 21, 2021, DPH advised all residents, regardless of vaccination status, to wear a mask or face covering when indoors (and not in your own home). Masks continue to be required in Massachusetts on public and private transportation, in healthcare facilities, and in congregate care

facilities. Our mask policy remains unchanged and in effect for municipal facilities. We are working with the Health Department to review the latest guidance and data and determine whether broader community measures may be recommended.”

Ms. Klein asked if Mr. Mayo would consider hosting another booster clinic since the first was so successful. He said he would be very interested in holding another. Mr. Mayo thanked the South Shore Baptist Church for hosting the clinic and said they have been a great partner.

### **Public Comment**

“The Hingham Select Board encourages community engagement and welcomes questions and comments as agenda items are discussed at the meeting. In addition, we have set aside up to fifteen minutes for public comment for items that fall under the purview of the Select Board and are not already on tonight’s agenda. If any guests wish to speak, please seek to be recognized. Once recognized, state your name and address and address your comments to the Chair. Comments will be limited to three minutes per speaker and must relate to topics within the scope of the responsibilities of the Select Board. Speakers are encouraged to present their remarks in a respectful manner and not to indulge in personalities. The Public Comment period is not a time for debate by members of the Select Board. The Select Board is not adopting or endorsing any of the comments made during the Public Comment period.”

There were no comments from the public.

### **Town Administrator/Select Board Reports**

Ms. Monsegur reported that the Town has submitted reimbursement requests for the full \$3.7 million that was allocated to Hingham through Plymouth County’s CARES Act funds. To date, Hingham has received \$2.8 million in reimbursements, with three submissions outstanding. She said that the Town would now focus on other funding, such as ARPA, etc.

Mr. Art Robert reported that Hingham has been awarded a \$45,000 grant from the MA Office on Disability that would allow Hingham to complete an ADA Self-Assessment and Transition Plan. He plans for both to be complete by the end of FY22.

Mr. Ramsey announced that the Naming By-Law Committee is meeting tonight. He expressed his appreciation to the Committee for listening to residents. He encouraged residents with questions or comments to contact the Select Board Office.

Mr. Fisher announced that the next meeting of the Select Board would be on Thursday, January 13, 2022.

**Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Klein seconded.**

### **Roll Call Vote:**

**Mr. Ramsey: yes**

**Ms. Klein: yes**

**Mr. Fisher:** yes

**The meeting adjourned at 9:32 PM.**

**Documents:** A complete meeting packet of supporting documentation is on file and available for public review in the Board of Selectmen's office