

Select Board

January 20, 2021

Present:

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

6:03PM: 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. No one indicated they were recording.

He said that the Select Board members participating in the meeting were himself, Mr. Bill Ramey and Ms. Liz Klein.

Approval of Minutes

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to approve the minutes dated January 4, 2022, as amended. Ms. Klein seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Fisher: yes

Amend Special One-Day License: New Year's Bonfire at Weir River Farm

Mr. Fisher explained that the Board would consider amending their previous vote regarding the issuance of a Special (One-Day) Wine and Malt Beverages license to Michael Snowdale on behalf of Stellwagon Beer Company for New Year's Bonfire at Weir River Farm. The date of the event has changed from January 9, 2022 to February 12, 2022.

Vote: Ms. Klein made a motion to amend the vote regarding the issuance of a Special (One-Day) Wine and Malt Beverages license to Michael Snowdale on behalf of Stellwagon Beer Company for New Year's Bonfire at Weir River Farm by changing the date from January 9, 2022 with a rain/snow date of January 15, 2022 to February 12, 2022 with a rain/snow date of February 19, 2022 from 5 pm to 8 pm. Mr. Ramsey seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Fisher: yes

Select Board sponsored Warrant Articles for 2022 Annual Town Meeting

Mr. Mayo explained that the Board's vote tonight would be to allow submission of the following Warrant Articles, without any indication of support.

Article A: Hannah Lincoln Whiting Fund/Trustees of the Bathing Beach

Mr. Ramsey noted that he would abstain from the discussion and vote on Article A.

The Hannah Lincoln Whiting Fund identifies a person who is responsible for sitting on the 3-person Board that governs the distribution of money that was set aside in a trust by Hannah Lincoln Whiting to be given to those in need in South Hingham. This year's designee is Laura Boyle who is pleased to serve in this capacity. Town Meeting would also vote on a person to fill a vacancy on the Trustees of the Bathing Beach. Adrienne Ramsey has been designated to fill a recent vacancy.

Vote: Ms. Klein made a motion to recommend favorable action of Article A. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Ramsey: abstain

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Fisher: yes

Article B: Assume Liability for DCR on Rivers, Harbors, Etc.

The DCR, as a matter of policy, requires the Town to assume liability if it is to perform any type of work within the Town. In accordance with statute, the Town would assume liability for all damages to property sustained by any person as a result of such work performed by the DCR.

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to recommend favorable action of Article B. Ms. Klein seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Fisher: yes

Article C: Reports of Various Town Committees

Article C allows the Town to accept the annual report of various Town Meeting-formed committees.

Vote: Ms. Klein made a motion to recommend favorable action of Article C. Mr. Ramsey seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Fisher: yes

Article G: Transfer from the Stabilization Fund, Pursuant to the Town Meeting vote

Mr. Mayo respectfully asked that the Board consider postponing action on this article to a future date. He noted that he and Ms. Monsegur would like to do some research into the stabilization fund and its requirements. He would like to make sure that the Town is maximize the benefit from that service.

The Board took no action.

Article H: Disbursement of Electric Light Department Receipts

This is a PILOT Agreement, a payment in lieu of taxes that HMLP pays to the Town every year. The amount of the payment is not to be less than \$450,000 per year and generally comes in around \$500,000. Mr. Fisher added that he has discussed the payment with Laura Burns and asked why the amount does not keep going up each year with inflation. He had learned that residents and businesses are taking steps to be more energy-efficient, resulting in a reduction in revenue that the light plant is taking in.

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to recommend favorable action of Article H. Ms. Klein seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Fisher: yes

Article I: Building Department Revolving Fund

The Building Department Revolving Fund is credited with all fees from plumbing, gas, and electrical inspections performed by inspectors. These funds, not to exceed \$350,000, pay for the salaries of plumbing, gas and electrical inspectors, 50% of the salaries of two Administrative Assistants and 50% of the salary of the Building Commissioner. These funds also offset the cost for part-time inspectors and miscellaneous expenses, including trucks for the inspectors, fuel costs, office supplies, etc.

Vote: Ms. Klein made a motion to recommend favorable action of Article I. Mr. Ramsey seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Fisher: yes

Article L: Acceptance of Easements

This Article would allow the Select Board to accept all easements during the coming year so that a Special Town Meeting would not be needed to accept easements during the course of the year. Mr. Fisher clarified that, while the Article allows the Select Board to accept easements, it does not require them to accept all easements. They may deny acceptance of an easement if they feel that it is not in the best interest of the Town.

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to recommend favorable action of Article L. Ms. Klein seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Fisher: yes

Approval of Updates to the General By-laws for Gender Neutral Changes

Mr. Ramsey and Ms. Klein requested additional time to review the changes to the By-Law.

Mr. Mayo explained that the prior Town Meeting had authorized the Town to update its By-Laws so that it reflected gender-neutral language. He noted that one change was to change the “Board of Selectmen” to the “Select Board.” Mr. Fisher added that there is specific language that would need to be incorporated, according to the Town Meeting vote.

COVID-19 Update

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

“The Massachusetts DPH data through January 19 shows that the State’s 7-day average of confirmed cases was 9,403, which is down significantly from a peak of 23,000. Regarding local data, the Town has not reported new data since the last cycle and that was reported in Tuesday’s report.

Regarding the testing site, I will reread some of what I said on Tuesday. Hingham continues to operate a regional Covid-19 drive-through testing site that is being done in partnership with Cohasset, Hull and Scituate. It is being held at 335 Lincoln Street. On January 19, the vendor reported completing 95 tests at the site and has reported 297 reservations for a test for the next two days so it sounds like the public is utilizing the site appropriately. We are working with the vendor to improve turnaround times for PCR test results. The testing center will be open on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays from 7:00 am to 4:00 pm. Rapid antibody tests are available. Rapid antigen tests are not available at this time. There is a PCR test available at no cost to the patient. Resident and employees of the four communities will continue to have priority appointment access from 7:00 am to 11:00 am. Online pre-registration is required. No tests will be administered without an appointment. All participants will be notified of test results by email.

Please continue to take precautions to protect yourself and others. As we all know, vaccination, wearing face coverings, practicing social distancing, and frequently washing hands, among other measures, will help protect all of us from Covid-19.

On January 7, 2022, the Board of Health issued a health Advisory strongly recommending the use of face coverings by all patrons, visitors, and employees within any indoor space that is open to the public in Hingham.”

Mr. Fisher added that, in addition to Hingham’s testing site, testing is continuing to be offered by CVS and other drug stores.

Appointments

For a list of Talent Bank Applicants, please visit <https://www.hingham-ma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/12984/Talent-Bank-vacancies-and-applicants-102121>.

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to appoint Sarah Smithson to the Council on Aging to fill an unexpired term ending June 30, 2023. Ms. Klein seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Fisher: yes

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.”

Town Administrator/Select Board Reports

Mr. Mayo announced that today was the deadline for receipt of Articles for the Annual Town Meeting, to be held at the end of April. He thanked the boards, committees and one citizen who submitted Articles.

Ms. Klein reported that she attended the latest meeting of the Hingham Affordable Housing Trust. She was very impressed with Chair Amy Farrell and the whole group and felt that their commitment to creating housing opportunities in Hingham is remarkable.

Mr. Fisher reported that he attended the latest meeting of the Hingham Public Library Board of Trustees. He acknowledged the impressive work being done by their Chair, Lucy Hancock, and the entire board.

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 6:33 PM.

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