

Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: January 21, 2020

Place: Town Hall

In attendance: Committee Members Victor Baltera, Bob Curley, Julie Strehle, Tom Belyea, Eryn Kelley, Eric Haskell, George Danis, Libby Claypoole, Evan Sheehan, Andy McElaney, Davalene Cooper, Dave Anderson, Nancy MacDonald, Kathleen Almand, and Town Accountant Sue Nickerson.

Absent: Ed Gaydos.

Chairman Baltera called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Comments from the public regarding items not on the Agenda None

Approval of Minutes from January 14, 2020 meeting

Minutes of the Meeting held on 1/14/2020 were approved with revisions by a vote of 9-0-3. Eryn Kelley joined the meeting after the vote.

Budget Questions Follow-up

- Elections - Davalene Cooper provided updated budget numbers for Elections. While the original request was based on the assumption that the Commonwealth would offer a week of early voting for both the Primary election on 9/1/2020 and the general election on 11/3/2020, the Commonwealth opted to offer early voting for the general election only. Therefore, in Salaries, the Clerical Services part-time amount is reduced by \$6,000 to \$26,042. The restated Elections budget request is Salaries for \$29,292, Expenses for \$18,345, for a total of \$47,637.

There is still an additional request in Elections Expenses for the rental of an additional voting machine, which is used to count early voting ballots on the evening of an election. However this request is reduced by \$3,500 for a total of \$3,500, since early voting will be provided only in the general election.

Ms. Cooper recommended the base amounts requested, noting that all additional requests would be held for consideration together at the end of the budget process.

Budget Hearings - Public Safety

- Police Department - Davalene Cooper presented this budget. Police Chief Glenn Olsson, joined by Deputy Chief David Jones, requests Salaries for \$5,758,049, Expenses for \$399,150 for a total of \$6,157,199

There are two additional requests. The first request is for a new police officer position for a total of \$78,209 in Salaries. This total is a combination of the following: Salary for \$60,212, Shift Differential for \$4,817, Educational for \$11,556, and Defibrillator/Stipends for \$1,624. As residential and commercial development expands in Town, there has been an increase in calls for service. In addition, officers continue to be committed for longer periods of time resolving service calls due to the complexity of calls (mental health, drugs, technology, fraud). Officers also spend time in case follow-up. Chief Olsson requests this additional position in order to meet these needs. This additional request has been requested and passed over during the past several budget cycles.

The second additional request is for an increase of Salaries Overtime for \$40,000. The overtime budget amount is exceeded each year, due to some of the following reasons: coverage for officers (who have retired or left the department, sick and vacation days, family medical leave act, and administrative leave); higher amount of calls involving social ills such as narcotics or mental health (which take longer than other types of calls); officers spending more hours at community events, training, and performing security assessments at public spaces such as houses of worship; the need for more security at public events; and weather events. However, since shift needs are constantly changing due to these factors, it would be difficult to solve this budget shortfall by adding more full-time officers to the force. The Town Administrator recommends only an increase in \$20,000 in Salaries Overtime.

Ms. Cooper recommended the base amounts requested, noting that all additional requests would be held for consideration together at the end of the budget process.

- Animal Control - Davalene Cooper presented this budget. The request is Salaries for \$67,986, Expenses for \$6,200, for a total of \$74,186. Ms. Cooper recommended the base amounts requested. Police Chief Glenn Olsson described how this position provides great value to the community, such as assistance in hoarding situations when animals are involved, or help during emergencies in homes with pets. When necessary, off-duty harbor masters can be used in part-time help. The uniform allowance expense increased because animal control officer uniforms wear out more quickly due to the nature of the work. Chief Olsson added that there may be a future increase in the training expense as this position becomes more professionalized, and also the methods for disposal of dead animals may have a higher expense.
- Harbormaster - Eric Haskell presented this budget. Harbormaster Ken Corson, joined by Head Assistant Harbormaster Joseph Driscoll, requests Salaries for \$198,204, Expenses for \$75,921, for a total of \$274,125.

Increased expense in R&M Vehicles is for service and repairs for older boats. Utilities Electric is decreased because lights at Town Dock will be charged to the Public Safety Utilities budget instead.

There is an additional request for Wages Part-time for \$4,000. This request is the estimated cost of a separation of duties of the Assistant Harbormaster and Pumpout Operator, so that the operators will perform pumpout operations, and Assistant Harbormasters will focus on public safety, enforcement, and on the water education. Therefore separate services will be able to be provided simultaneously. The Town does not charge a fee for pump out of waste from recreational boats, but the Commonwealth provides a 75% reimbursement.

Revenues from FY19 were \$340,066, most coming from mooring permits. While there were some fee increases, the harbormaster also initiated a late fee, in order to incentivize mooring holders to renew their permits in a timely manner.

The harbor dredging project in fall 2019 went well and was completed in less time than anticipated. Dredging was not conducted in the areas around marina docks, because the sediment was found to contain contamination (pesticides and byproducts of petroleum), and therefore unqualified for offshore disposal. The engineer used by the Town for the permitting of the dredging project was able to obtain separate permitting for these contaminated marina areas, so that the marinas will be able to perform their own dredging.

Mr. Haskell recommended the base amounts requested, noting that all additional requests would be held for consideration together at the end of the budget process.

- Fire Department - Eryn Kelley presented this budget. Fire Chief Steven Murphy, joined by Deputy Chief Louis Lachance, requests Salaries for \$5,592,549, Expenses for \$459,767, for a total of \$6,052,316. The Salary Wages are based on FY20 numbers because contracts are up at the end of FY20. Overtime-Community CPR is a new line item this year, previously included in general Overtime. It accounts for ongoing CPR training which is conducted by Fire personnel to Town employees.

Under Expenses, various smaller office expenses were combined under Office Supplies. In-State Travel is increased to pay travel expenses for new hires to commute Monday through Friday to the fire academy.

The department generates revenue from ambulance fees, which go into the general fund.

Hingham Fire Department operates out of three fire stations, with a minimum of 11 personnel on duty at all times, and 13 personnel assigned for work groups (which allows 2 people to be out sick or on vacation). Like the Police Department, HFD is working to determine ways to decrease overtime, including research on practices in other towns. HFD has determined that moving from a model of a 13 personnel work group to 14 (allowing 3 people to be out at the same time), would decrease overtime expenses.

There are three Additional Requests:

1. Additional Firefighter/paramedic for a total of \$74,055 (\$63,754 for Salary, \$3,436 for Shift Differential Pay, \$2,840 for Training, and \$4,026 for Uniform Allowance). This additional position would offset some of the overtime expenses by allowing one work group the flexibility of three members out at one time before overtime is required.
2. Emergency Management for \$10,000, to account for any expenses to address emergencies. This fund would also allow HFD to purchase equipment and supplies which will be used for training and actual emergencies, and host training classes. The Town Administrator recommends \$5,000.
3. Promotional Test for \$14,000, to pay the expenses to administer promotional examinations for both lieutenants and captains. HFD has had recent success using these exams, and wants to continue this process going forward.

Ms. Kelley recommended the base amounts requested, noting that all additional requests would be held for consideration together at the end of the budget process.

- Building Department - Eryn Kelley presented this budget. Building Commissioner Michael Clancy requests Salaries for \$233,938, Expenses for \$14,378, for a total of \$248,316, which is essentially level-funded from FY20. The building department has a revolving fund which receives all electrical plumbing and gas inspection fees, and is used to fund related inspectors, vehicles, and half the Building Commissioner's salary. Annual disbursements from the fund are capped this year (FY20) at \$350,000.

There is one additional request for Clothing Allowance of \$1,582, in order to outfit inspectors with clearly identifiable Hingham uniforms when visiting private property (to allay any security concerns.)

Ms. Kelley recommended the base amounts requested, noting that all additional requests would be held for consideration together at the end of the budget process.

- Dispatch (South Shore Regional Emergency Communications Center) - Julie Strehle presented this budget. The request is for \$946,460, a 5% increase, which is Hingham's share of the total SSRECC budget. The total SSRECC budget model is that all costs are included within its budget (technology purchases and maintenance, personnel, payment of utilities, and payments to Hingham for rent, payroll and financial services). The assessment for each town is based on a formula of usage (911 calls) plus population. Hingham is the busiest user of the system, therefore pays the most, 55% of the whole SSRECC budget. Ms. Strehle recommended the base amount requested.

SSRECC is actively trying to pursue other business, as the center's capacity is available to add 1-2 more towns. If another town is added, assessments would either decrease, or the extra funds would be used to purchase capital for aging equipment.

The Commonwealth has long been encouraging towns to regionalize dispatch, and has provided grant funding to SSRECC over the years for purchases of equipment and technology, such as \$400,000 for new radios, and the computers which are set up in every police cruiser and fire vehicle.

- Public Safety Utilities - Julie Strehle presented this budget. Public Safety Utilities is made up of two budget categories: Emergency Water and Street Lighting Expenses.

Emergency Water is an Emergency Water Service Fee request for \$397,750, and Fire Hydrants request for \$10,000, for a total of \$407,750. Emergency Water Service Fee is a flat fee charged by Aquarion Water Company, paid quarterly, to maintain water in the 900+ fire hydrants in town. With the coming handoff of water ownership and operation from Aquarion to the new Weir River Water System, for now, any existing rates and fee structures will stay in place. But perhaps in the future this service fee may look different or not exist at all.

Fire Hydrants is for any necessary repair or replacement of broken hydrants, although this \$10,000 is a bit low, and would only replace fewer than two hydrants. In the Capital Budget Request for the Fire Department, there is a line item for \$36,000 for hydrant replacements.

As was noted in the BOS meeting last week, the RFP for the new water system operator included the responsibilities for inspection and painting of fire hydrants, and the annual replacement of 10 hydrants across the whole system (so a portion of that would be hydrants in Hingham).

Under Street Lighting Expenses, the request is \$105,000, which is a payment to Hingham Municipal Light Plant for the illumination of 2300+ streetlights in town. The amount in FY22 is expected to rise because the Town has added street lights, including the Town Dock lights (formerly in the Harbormaster's budget).

Ms. Strehle recommended the base amounts requested.

Warrant Article Process

Today was the deadline for submission of warrant articles, which can be viewed by Adcom members in hardcopy or electronically. Binders with hard copies will be prepared for all members. "Perennial" articles have been assigned and will be heard by AdCom next week. Adcom members should come to the respective hearings with the article and proposed comment and recommendation, and be prepared for questions.

Liaison Reports

CPC -Julie Strehle

Last Wednesday evening, the Community Preservation Committee voted to fund or partially fund 7 projects, leaving 2 unfunded, and 1 project withdrew from consideration before the vote. The CPC will also fund its debt payment obligations to the Lehner Property purchase from 2016 and Hingham Heritage Museum from 2014 (which was the final CPC payment for the Heritage Museum project).

1. HAHT Opportunity Fund - \$272,300 - out of \$877,000 requested
2. Benjamin Lincoln House - \$772,000 - out of \$972,000 requested, and also voted to bond \$495,331 of that award amount.
3. Canterbury Plain Cemetery - \$40,000
4. Second Parish Clock Restoration - \$32,030
5. Lehner Land Conservation Fence - \$8,000
6. PRS Tennis Court Refurbish - \$75,000 - out of \$80,000 requested
7. SSCC Pool Construction Docs - \$500,000

The Benjamin Lincoln House will be included twice in the warrant, as a project within the CPC article (\$276,669), plus its own article for the borrowing of \$495,331.

There will be a joint hearing with the BOS next Tuesday, 1/28/2020, for the presentation of projects from the Community Preservation Committee. Then AdCom will have its own hearing on CPC articles, potentially on 2/4/2020, but will not vote that evening. The Historical Society is opening the Benjamin Lincoln House for tours, and invites AdCom members.

Energy Action Committee - Bob Curley

EAC has filed a warrant article which was formulated in part with planning sessions similar to the Master Plan committee. The article requests that the Town achieve a reduction in carbon emissions by 80-100% by 2050 (mirroring the Paris Climate Accord), and authorize the formation of an energy action planning group made up of designees of various town departments, the Moderator and BOS, similar to the Master Plan Committee, to be overseen by the EAC.

Discussion of Advisory Committee Housekeeping Items

The ACES meeting with School Committee and School Department to review the proposed FY21 budget will be held at 1:00 pm this Sunday, and is open to all AdCom members. The CPC will present its projects to a joint hearing with BOS and AdCom on 1/28/2020. Kathleen Almand provided an AdCom party update, with the best date potential for the weekend of June 6-7. This event location and plan will be a repeat of last year, but very careful with costs. A Water Budget hearing date depends on what the BOS and Water Commissioners create and when.

Matters Not Anticipated within 48 Hours of the Meeting - None

Adjourn - 10:46 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Strehle, Secretary

List of Documents Distributed at this Meeting:

Agenda

Budgets as set forth in the Budget Books

Draft Minutes of Meeting 1/14/2020

Advisory Committee Calendar updated through 1/19/2020

Budget Scorecard updated through 1/14/2020

FY21 Budget Presentation Police Department

FY19 Revenues Harbormaster

AdCom approved 1/28/2020