

# Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

**Date: February 2, 2021**

**Place: Remote Meeting via Zoom**

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

***Absent:*** No one

**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 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.”

**Agenda items:**

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

**3. Police Department Request to repurpose a portion of FY21 Capital funds:**

Acting Chief Jones requested that \$25,905 in FY21 Capital Funds be repurposed. The funds were originally intended for renovations to the evidence room. However, with the possibility that a new Public Safety Facility will be constructed in the next few years Acting Chief Jones felt the money could be better utilized elsewhere. The Police Department has traditionally used borrowed gear for some officer training. While this has worked in the past, COVID-19 has made it impossible and some training has had to be cancelled. Acting Chief Jones proposes to repurpose the \$25,905 to purchase training gear and equipment for the officers. AdCom supported this action by a roll call vote of 14-0-0.

**4. Budget Hearings:**

**a. Bathing Beach Trustees:**

Dave Anderson presented this budget. Board of Trustee members Alan Perrault and Ed Johnson requested, and Mr. Anderson recommended, the following amounts:

Category	FY 22 budget request	\$ change to FY 21	% change
Salaries	\$26,832	\$2,273	9.3%
Expenses	\$11,450	\$3,392	42.1%
Total	\$38,282	\$5,665	17.4%

Mr. Perrault and Mr. Johnson stated that salaries are for the staff, consisting of a beach supervisor, a head lifeguard and two additional lifeguards. Expenses are for grounds upkeep, utilities for the old building and water for the outdoor shower.

Mr. Perrault and Mr. Johnson also stated that the Trustees were looking forward to a full year operation at the new Snack Stand. This facility is leased to Eat Well, Inc. under a 10 year lease (with 2 optional 10 year terms) and the lessee will pay the Trustees \$12,500 per year plus 6% of revenue over \$250,000. These funds will be used to reimburse the Town for \$350,000 used in the design and construction of the building. Included in the building is a community room which will be rented out for gatherings (20+/- people).

**b, c, d: Public Works, Landfill/Recycling, and Sewer:** These three budget hearings, all of which are under the responsibility of DPW Supervisor Randy Sylvester, were postponed until February 4<sup>th</sup> due to the snowstorm of January 31<sup>st</sup>-February 1<sup>st</sup>.

**e. Health:**

Brenda Black presented this budget. Executive Health Officer Susan Sarni requested, and Ms. Black recommended, the following amounts:

Category	FY 22 budget request	\$ change to FY 21	% change
Salaries	\$343,542	\$973	0.3%
Expenses	\$19,862	-	-
Total	\$363,404	\$963	0.3%

Ms. Sarni stated that the mission of the Department is threefold. First, it is responsible for prevention of health issues through social work, inspection of food establishments, testing of bathing beach water, communicable disease surveillance, and tobacco control. Next, it is responsible for issuing permits for a broad range of services and projects. Finally it is responsible for the enforcement of all regulations under the Board of Health’s control.

COVID-19 has affected the Department through various safety measures and Department staff has have assisted the Town in establishing both a COVID-19 testing and vaccination site.

Salaries increased due to longevity and step increases. Expenses are flat to FY21.

Members of the Advisory Committee expressed their appreciation to Ms. Sarni for the extraordinary services she has performed in answer to the COVID-19 challenge.

**f. Library:**

Andy McElaney presented this budget. Library Director Linda Harper requests, and Mr. McElaney recommends, the following amounts:

Category	FY 22 budget request	\$ Change to FY 21	% change
Salaries	\$1,559,866	\$8,779	0.6%
Expenses	\$369,200	\$22,936	6.6%
Total	\$1,929,066	\$31,715	1.7%

Mr. McElaney stated that the Library was incorporated in 1872, and is operated under a Board of Trustees which manages its Endowment and hires the Library Director. The Board also raises funds for the Library. The Board annually funds the Library’s program expenses (approximately \$20,000 per year) and annually provides \$210,000 for books and periodicals. Additionally the Library receives in the vicinity of \$33,000 in State aid.

Library Director Harper explained that COVID-19 had a dramatic effect on the library as all in-person activities were suspended in March 2020. Prior to then, the Library had been very busy with almost 166,000 visits, 287,288 books and other items loaned to patrons, and 43,976 inter-library loans. The library is also very popular with Town residents as 11,280 residents have active library cards.

After the March 2020, the Library quickly migrated to an electronic and on-line mode of operation. E-book usage increased by 33%. E-audio usage increased by 43%. Network collections and database usage increased by 101%. Through December 2020, the library offered 475 on-line programs viewed by 4,743 “attendees”.

Ms. Harper stated that salary increases are due to longevity and step increases. Expenses increased in part due to increased licensing fees for e-books and demand charges for electricity usage. The increase in electricity is somewhat mitigated by a decrease in gas charges which is due to the installation of more efficient gas fired boilers.

Ms. Harper stated that the Library is currently conducting a survey to help plan for the future. She also noted that parking remains an issue as well as building systems, space and flow which are related to the age and construction of the facility.

**5. Review of Open Meeting Law Requirements:**

Chair Curley introduced this topic and AdCom members discussed the circumstances under which a meeting and minutes needed to be posted in order to comply with Open Meeting Law requirements. Topics discussed included formal sub-committees versus informal groups, liaison meetings with Department heads to discuss budgets and the nature of quorums and deliberations. Chair Curley stated that he would review these items with Town Counsel John Coughlin for clarification.

**6. Review and approval of Minutes from Meeting of January 19:**

Minutes were approved, with revisions, by a roll call vote of 14-0-0.

**7. Warrant Articles update:**

Chair Curley announced that there will be 32 Warrant Articles compared to 38 last year. He also announced that a draft of assigned Articles had been distributed and asked if anyone had any issues or concerns. Hearing none, he suggested that new members review prior year Warrant Article Recommended Motions (especially for perennials) and that AdCom members should reach out to the sponsoring party to begin discussions on this year's Articles.

**8. Liaison Reposts:**

Mr. McElaney announced that the timeline for the Town Masterplan has been updated. The consultants are preparing a draft report for a February 24<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Committee with a presentation to the Planning Board scheduled for March 8<sup>TH</sup>;

Mr. Anderson noted that the School Committee is holding an open meeting on the proposed school budget on February 8<sup>th</sup>.

**9. Discussion of Advisory Committee housekeeping items:**

- a. Meeting times: Next meeting will be February 4<sup>th</sup>;
- b. Policies and Procedures Review: The informal working group (Davalene Cooper, Julie Strehle, Alan Macdonald) will meet and report back to AdCom as appropriate;
- c. Town Meeting and related deadlines: No update;
- d. Warrant Article editing procedures: Ms. Strehle announced that she would forward the style guidelines to AdCom members. She and Davalene Cooper then discussed the process by which Warrant Articles would be reviewed and approved for publication;
- e. Public comments procedures: Chair Curley discussed adding language to AdCom agendas that would seek to define the procedure for public comment. The proposed language is similar to that used by the School Committee. AdCom members discussed the need for this type of notice since historically AdCom meetings have few members from the public and public comments have not been a cause for concern. Chair Curley will review the proposed language and update the AdCom at a later meeting.

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

**11. Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:59 pm by roll call vote of 14-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

George Danis, Secretary

List of Documents Distributed for this Meeting:

Agenda

Minutes: January 19, 2021

Budget books

List of Warrant Articles

Warrant Articles AdCom member assignments

Approved on 02/09/2021 by roll call vote of 13/0/0