

## **Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Date: February 13, 2020**

**Place: Town Hall**

In attendance: Committee Members Victor Baltera, Bob Curley, Julie Strehle, Tom Belyea, Eric Haskell, Eryn Kelley, George Danis, Libby Claypoole, Andy McElaney, Davalene Cooper, Dave Anderson, Nancy MacDonald, and Ed Gaydos.

Absent: Kathleen Almand, Evan Sheehan.

Chairman Baltera called the meeting to order at 7:32 pm.

***Comments from the public regarding items not on the Agenda*** None

### ***Warrant Article Hearing***

M – Community Preservation Act – Julie Strehle provided an introduction of the Article. Larry Lindner, Chair of the Community Preservation Committee (“CPC”) was present to answer any questions about the projects. CPC began its deliberation process this year with a budget of \$1,692,999. That includes local tax revenue from FY19 of \$1,081,374 and a State grant of \$152,625. It also includes \$459,000 of funds returned to the CPC from projects that were cancelled.

The CPC recommends approval of funding for seven projects for a total of \$1,203,999. Note that this Article seeks approval for six of the seven projects. The seventh project (Benjamin Lincoln House) is contained in a separate Article and requests the expenditure of current CPA funds (\$276,669 of the \$1,203,999 mentioned above) plus a bond issuance of \$495,331. An additional \$133,000 of CPA funds will be set aside in anticipation of debt payments for the Hingham Heritage Museum (this is the final payment), and \$356,000 of CPA funds will be set aside in anticipation of debt payments for the Lehner Property. The proposed funding of the 2020 projects will meet the required 2020 allocations for historic preservation, open space, and housing.

1. Hingham Affordable Housing Trust - Julie Strehle introduced this portion of the Article, which will provide \$272,300 for the Hingham Affordable Housing Trust (“HAHT”), to be placed in the Opportunity Fund, in order to take timely advantage of opportunities to acquire affordable housing units. The Town has placed \$1,257,511 in the Opportunity Fund since it was established, and the balance in the fund as of 12/31/2019, excluding this grant, is \$145,306. Davalene Cooper noted that historically the Town has provided more CPA funds for historic preservation and open space than for community housing, and urged that this be changed in the future. There was discussion about whether these funds are coming out of the CPC General Fund or the CPC Housing Reserve. Further research with Sue Nickerson is recommended. Ms. Strehle provided a Comment and a favorable recommendation of \$272,300.
2. Recreation Commission PRS tennis courts repair - Tom Belyea introduced this portion of the Article, which will provide \$75,000 toward the repair of the six tennis courts located at the Plymouth River School. The repair involves application of an overlay membrane over the existing courts in order to avoid having to completely replace the courts. While there is a Town study underway to determine needs for fields and courts, these tennis courts are considered in imminent need of repair, which precludes waiting for study results. Mr. Belyea provided a Comment and a favorable recommendation of \$75,000.

3. Lehner Land Improvements - Ms. Strehle introduced this portion of the Article, which will provide \$8,000 for the Conservation Commission to re-survey a portion of the property boundary and install permanent boundary markers and kiosks at the Lehner Conservation Area, in order to guide maintenance activities, improve public access, and enhance the visitor experience. Senior Planner/Conservation Officer Loni Fournier was present to answer any questions. Ms. Strehle provided a Comment and a favorable recommendation of \$8,000.
4. Restore Canterbury Street Cemetery - Mr. Belyea introduced this portion of the Article, which will provide \$40,000 for the Historic Commission to restore the Canterbury Street Cemetery. Restoration includes cleanup of the landscape, gravestone assessment, and conservation. After this project is completed, ongoing annual maintenance at the Cemetery will cost \$1,200, which is included in the FY21 Historical Commission budget. Since this funding may not be enough to fix every gravestone, there may be a future request for funding from CPC or another source. Mr. Belyea provided a Comment and a favorable recommendation of \$40,000.
5. SSCC Pool Design & Construction Documents - Dave Anderson introduced this portion of the Article, which will provide \$500,000 to the Country Club Management Committee ("CCMC") to prepare design and construction plans to replace the now-defunct outdoor pool located at the South Shore Country Club. Kevin Whalen, South Shore Country Club Director of Operations, and Christine Smith, Chair of the CCMC, were present to answer any questions. A conservative cost estimate of the total pool construction is \$7 million. AdCom members discussed potential funding sources for construction of a pool, and whether the Town is in favor of taking on this kind of capital project. Mr. Anderson provided a Comment and a favorable recommendation of \$500,000.
6. Second Parish Clock Tower Face Restoration - Mr. Anderson introduced this portion of the Article, which will provide the Congregation of Second Parish \$32,030 to restore the faces of the four tower clocks at the historic church building. Weather exposure has led to deterioration in the structural components of the clock faces, necessitating the proposed repairs. The deterioration threatens the internal mechanisms of the clocks, which were repaired by the Town in 2017. AdCom members discussed the Supreme Judicial Court *Caplan v. Town of Acton* decision in 2018, which raised questions about the constitutionality of funding restoration projects in churches. At the same time, there is the 1889 Town Meeting Article that authorized the Selectmen to "take charge of all the public clocks in the Town, and to charge the expense of keeping them in order and running..." While the BOS has discussed this issue with Town Counsel, who is comfortable that the funding is appropriate, the BOS has requested that this opinion be put into writing. Mr. Anderson provided a Comment and a favorable recommendation of \$32,030.

Benjamin Lincoln House - Nancy MacDonald introduced this Article, which is expected to be a separate Article at Town Meeting from Article M (Community Preservation), because it includes borrowing. Mr. Anderson recused himself from the discussion. The Article will provide for the Town to grant the Hingham Historical Society \$772,000 towards the purchase of the Benjamin Lincoln House. This grant amount includes \$42,000 from the Community Preservation Historic Preservation Reserve, and \$234,356 from the Community Preservation General Fund, and also authorizes the Town to issue bonds to fund \$495,331 for the acquisition. This Article will require a two-thirds majority to pass.

The offer to purchase this historic home is time sensitive, in that the owners' deadline to close is June 2020. The Historical Society is working with the Town's permitting boards to determine necessary repairs

and renovations to make the house safe for the public, but permitting has to be done in conjunction with Historic New England, which has a historic easement on the property. The Town's real estate counsel is working on language for the Article which would provide mitigation for any potential risks to the Town. Ms. MacDonald will provide a Comment and Recommendation at a future AdCom hearing.

### ***Warrant Article Hearings and Votes***

S – Additional Funds for Foster School Feasibility Study - George Danis provided an overview of this Article, Comment, and a favorable recommendation. School Department Director of Business and Support Services John Ferris was present to answer any questions. This Article asks whether the Town will appropriate, borrow or transfer from available funds, a supplemental amount of money equal to \$350,000 for a feasibility study for Foster School reconstruction (in addition to funds appropriated from 2017 Annual Town Meeting). School construction costs have risen in recent years, and school building projects with comparable scope to the Foster School project, have required a larger amount of feasibility funds than the \$750,000 appropriated for Foster at the 2017 Annual Town Meeting.

If the Article is for borrowing, then the recommendation will have to include borrowing language. Mr. Danis will consult Sue Nickerson about the borrowing, and necessary language for the recommendation.

The vote to approve the recommendation was 12-0.

CC – South Shore Country Club Maintenance Facility – Mr. Danis provided an overview of this Article, Comment, and a favorable recommendation. Kevin Whalen, South Shore Country Club Director of Operations, and Christine Smith, Chair of the CCMC, were present to answer any questions. This Article provides for borrowing (not to exceed) \$2,200,000 to build a new maintenance facility at the SSCC. The current maintenance facility is located underneath the now-closed pool, and leaking from the pool over the years has damaged the maintenance area, causing portions to be closed, and other areas needing to be shored up. The new building will include a maintenance facility, storage for chemicals and equipment, office space, bathrooms and an environmental management center. The CCMC has discussed the planned facility with Town boards. Approval requires a two-thirds vote by Town Meeting. The recommendation will need to include borrowing language.

The vote to approve the recommendation was 12-0.

N - Amendment to Council on Aging By-laws - Ms. Strehle provided an overview of this Article, Comment, and a favorable recommendation. The purpose of this Article is to update the language of the Town's Council on Aging (COA) By-law. Upon recent review of the Council on Aging By-law, Section 16 of the Town of Hingham General By-laws, the COA found that the current leadership titles and the date of its annual meeting in Section 4 were out of date. In Section 5, the name of the Commonwealth's department on elder affairs was also out of date.

The vote to approve the recommendation was 12-0.

### ***Liaison Reports***

Water Company - Dave Anderson

The water management company SUEZ was selected as the vendor to operate the Weir River Water System.

Hingham Municipal Power & Light - Regarding Article H, Disbursement of Electric Light Department Receipts, Andy McElaney contacted HMLP to determine the history of unexpended balance, including the amount (if any) left over each year, and what is done with it. Mr. McElaney will ask to include this item on a future AdCom meeting Agenda.

### ***Budget Status***

Handouts for tonight's meeting include Hingham Operating Budget Trends (part of budget presentation on 2/11/2020), and Debt Service Expenses for Various Amounts of Debt. This information can help AdCom members start thinking about upcoming budget decisions.

### ***Warrant Process Update***

Committee members should send draft comments which have had a hearing and a vote to Bob Curley, who will log the Article into the WASS, and then pass along the Article to the editors. Please send Articles out as soon as possible because there are many articles ahead of us.

### ***Discussion of Advisory Committee Housekeeping Items***

Next meetings will be held on Tuesday, 2/25/2020, and Thursday, 2/27/2020.

### ***Matters Not Anticipated within 48 Hours of the Meeting*** - None

**Adjourn** - 10:48 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Julie Strehle, Secretary

### List of Documents Distributed at this Meeting:

Agenda

Articles M, S, CC, N

Hingham Operating Budget Trends, Actuals Through 2018

Town of Hingham Debt Service for Various Amounts of Debt

Email correspondence from proponents of increasing the School Department budget

CPC Debt Scenarios

South Shore Country Club Map of Proposed Facility

AdCom approved 02/25/2020