

# Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

**Date: March 4, 2021**

**Place: Remote Meeting via Zoom**

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

***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.

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

3. ***Warrant Article hearings and potential votes:***

a. Article N- Design and Construction bids for Public Safety Facility:

Nancy MacDonald, Public Safety Facility Building Committee Chair Bob Garrity and Committee member and Town Engineer J.R. Frey presented this Article which seeks funding to prepare schematic and design documents for the proposed Public Safety Facility and to hire an Owner's Project Manager to protect the Town's interest throughout the project. Funding for the Article will be from the proceeds of the 2011 sale of Hersey House which amounts to \$1,250,000. These funds have been placed in the Town's General Fund Balance and designated as Restricted. At a prior Town Meeting these funds were voted to be used for renovations at the Town Hall including the space occupied by the Police and the Senior Center. Town Counsel has opined that these funds which have remained unused for over a decade may permissibly be used for the Public Safety Facility.

Ms. MacDonald first presented a brief history of the North Fire Station. She addressed the findings of the 2015 Town Meeting created Fire Station Building Committee that determined that the existing North Station could not be renovated and needed to be replaced. Ms. MacDonald also identified the space needs of both the Police Department and Senior Center for additional space. The Public Safety Facility, if built, will house both the Fire Station (North Station will be closed) and the Police Station. The new Facility will thereby address the North Station situation, the Police Department needs, and allow for the renovation of, and provide additional space for, the Senior Center.

Mr. Garrity and Mr. Frey both spoke about the process followed to date and the next steps. First, a feasibility study was undertaken to determine the adequacy of the property for its intended use including a conceptual design. Second, if funding is approved, a schematic design will now be completed followed by the development of design documents. The third step will be to hire an Owner's Project Manager (OPM) whose job is to protect the Town's interest and oversee the completion of the design, construction, and bid documents, assist with the RFP and contractor selection process, and oversee the actual construction of the facility (if approved by Town Meeting). Mr. Garrity presented certain cost items for next steps, which total \$1,826,000. These costs will need to be refined if possible, to bring the expected cost of this next phase to \$1,250,000 or less.

The Board of Selectmen (BOS) have not yet voted this Article. The AdCom deferred voting on this Article until after the BOS votes and until refined cost estimates are available.

b. Article R- Amend General Bylaw HAHT Reporting Requirements:

Davalene Cooper and HAHT Chair Tim White presented this Article which seeks to amend the Town's general bylaw regarding the HAHT. The bylaw, which was last amended by 2012 Town Meeting requires HAHT to present a financial report at Town Meeting. This Article would require the HAHT instead to present an annual financial report to the Board of Selectmen.

The Advisory Committee voted 14-0-0 in favor of the Article.

c. Article AA- Rockwood Road Transfer: The planned hearing on this Article will be deferred to a later date until an issue raised concerning an easement claimed by an abutter can be resolved.

d. Article BB- Citizens Petition Amend General Bylaws Articles 2 and 3: The planned hearing on this Article will be deferred to a later date.

e. Article W- Waterways Fund Transfer:

Libby Claypoole presented an updated comment and recommendation on this Article. The update is based on comments from the AdCom during the initial hearing on this Article on February 25, 2021. The update detailed the source of funds to be transferred to the Municipal Waterways Improvement and Maintenance Fund as parking fees for the purpose of accessing slips or moorings, permit late fees and boat fines, and 50% of boat excise taxes. Town Accountant Sue Nickerson noted that these fees are placed in the “local Receipts” account and that, by transferring them to the Waterways Fund, the Town would see a decrease in local receipts as a source of revenue. Following some discussion it was determined to defer voting on this Article until clarification could be obtained from Town Administrator Tom Mayo on the intent of the Article and also if it should be considered a perennial article in the future.

**5. Discussion of Forecast, Financial Policy, Fund Balance and Override, Finance and Tax planning tools:**

The AdCom discussed the process for moving forward on the budget given the projected shortfall, ongoing discussions about an override, and the prospect of additional federal funds for State and Local community expenses related to COVID-19. Chair Curley felt that a likely scenario is that the BOS would present a balanced budget given the current revenue projection and a second option detailing an override and how the new receipts would be allocated. Members queried the mechanics and process of an override, including how an override would be socialized to residents. Comparisons were drawn to the May, 2009 override process and the July, 2020 purchase of the water company. Discussion also centered on the forecast for the future and the use of the Financial Sensitivity modeling tool to project the revenue needs to balance the budget under various spending rate scenarios. A question was raised as to whether Town Meeting could vote to use Fund Balance to close the anticipated deficit and the effect of such action on any proposed override.

**6. Town Administrator Budget Recommendations:** This item was deferred as the Town Administrator was still attending the Board of Selectmen meeting.

**7. Review and Approval of Minutes from February 25, 2021 meeting:** Approved, with revisions, by roll call vote of 14-0-0.

**8. Warrant Article update:** Chair Curley stated that there has been no update since the March 2, 2021 meeting. He further stated that the Report of the Personnel Board is expected to be available within the next two weeks.

**9. Liaison Reports:**

- a. Eryn Kelley noted that Article Y, HMLP Transmission and Substation Distribution Facilities is still under discussion by the BOS over abutter concerns and a possible change in the scope of the project;
- b. Brenda Black stated that the proponents of Article O, the Climate Action Planning Study, and Article P, the Climate Action Planning Committee, were looking for a date for their presentation to the AdCom. Chair Curley stated that he would schedule them on March 11, 2021;
- c. Julie Strehle noted that the Bare Cove Park Committee was planning to meet on March 10, 2021 to consider pulling their grant request.

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

- a. Meeting times: Chair Curley noted that the AdCom would next meet on March 9 and March 11, 2021;
- b. Policies and Procedures Review: Davalene Cooper noted that the group conducting the review would present its findings at the March 9, 2021 meeting;
- c. Town Meeting and related deadlines: Chair Curley stated that there have been no changes to the proposed dates since our March 2, 2021 meeting.

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

12. ***Adjourn:*** Motion to adjourn at 9:09 pm by roll call vote of 14-0-0

Respectfully submitted,

George Danis, Secretary

List of Documents Distributed for this Meeting:

- Agenda
- Warrant Articles
- FY 22 Town Administrator budget recommendations
- Citizen comments regarding Article Y, HMLP Transmission and Substation Distribution Facilities
- Citizen comment regarding Aaa rated communities free cash balance

Approved with revisions on 03/11/2021 by roll call vote 14-0-0

