

Board of Selectmen

March 9, 2020

Regular Session

Present

Selectmen: Ms. Karen Johnson, Chairman, Mr. Joseph Fisher and Ms. Mary Power
Mr. Tom Mayo, Town Administrator, and Ms. Michelle Monsegur, Assistant Town Administrator.

Call to Order: 7:00pm

Ms. Johnson

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment

Tom Patch, Ship Street, urged the Board to move as quickly as possible with the acquisition of the water company due to the current low interest rates. He stated that, on Bloomberg, today's interest rate on Municipal bonds was 1.5%. He also suggested that the Town pursue a 30-year mortgage rather than a one-year and a 29-year mortgage, stating that these low rates may not be available a year from now.

Ms. Johnson said that this is something that the Board has been monitoring very closely and she asked Ms. Power to briefly comment. Ms. Power said that, over the past few weeks, the Town has been in discussion with Bond Counsel and the Town's financial advisors about this very question.

National Grid Update

Dennis McCaffery, Customer and Community Manager with National Grid, gave an overview of their pending project on Route 228 in Hingham. He explained that this project is the second phase of a large gas main replacement. He said that the first phase happened about two years ago, adding that in this phase they will replace approximately 8,000 feet of main. He said that they have already met twice with the DPW twice regarding the project. He added that they hope to start the project within a few days and said that there are signboards on the street and they are posting some FAQ's on the Town's website.

Ms. Johnson asked him to speak about individual neighborhood notification as the project moves down Rt. 228. Mr. Nelson Pio, Project Manager, answered, saying that they have notified residents within the limits of the work approximately three weeks ago. He said that the project would start at Short Street and would work its way North. He said that the project would be broken up into three phases. The first part would be to locate the main by making some test holes, then installing the main, and finally to begin service. He added that the foreman would contact the residents within the impacted areas to start the service transfers.

Mr. Fisher asked what sort of noise the residents in the affected area should expect. Mr. Pio said that they expect the project to take approximately five months. He said that one of the biggest factors in the project will be if they encounter ledge but they won't know that until they start digging some test holes. He added that they will be working between the hours of 7pm-5am Sunday through Friday. He said that if they do encounter ledge they will plan on adding another crew to speed up the process. He also said they do encounter ledge they will limit the working hours to 12am to allow the residents to get a decent night's sleep. Mr. McCaffery said that they did encounter ledge during their last project and it did create some hardships for residents, but he added that there are fewer residences the closer they work their way towards Rt. 3A.

Mr. Fisher asked if there would be blasting if they encounter ledge. Mr. Pio said that there would be no blasting but they would be using jackhammers and hydraulic hammers. He added that blasting would damage their infrastructure.

Ms. Power said that when they were deciding when to embark on this phase of the project, it was determined that night work would be least disruptive. She said that National Grid had been a really responsive partner in the first two phases of the project. She said that she hopes they would continue to give residents about a week notice regarding when work would be right in front of their home. She said that residents had previously felt that notification was helpful. She also hoped that materials would be delivered during the day to avoid excess noise at night. Mr. McCaffrey agreed and added that they will be giving the Town periodic progress updates.

Ms. Johnson echoed Ms. Power's comments and said that National Grid has been a great partner in coordinating its work with the Town's road-building project. She also asked how long they anticipated working in front of each residence. Mr. Pio said that, without the presence of ledge, they anticipate completing a couple hundred feet of roadway per day.

Mr. Fisher asked how residents should communicate any concerns to National Grid. Mr. McCaffrey said that they could contact him directly and added that his phone number had been on the email notification that was sent to residents.

Hingham TRIAD Initiative

Jennifer Young, Director of Elder Services, explained that TRIAD is a national initiative that brings together public safety, seniors, and the community to offer educational services that are relevant to seniors. She said that she has been working with the Police Chiefs, the D.A.'s Office as well as the Sheriff's Office since last November and the program is finally coming to fruition with a kick-off event scheduled for Monday, April 6 at 11:00am at the Senior Center. At that time, they will sign an agreement that they recognize the value of this program and that they are committed to the delivery of the service. She explained several of the programs that they have run in the past, such as "In Plain Sight," a program that teaches older generation what to look for in a younger person's bedroom that might indicate drug abuse issues. She added that they have also had programs on Lyme Disease, Fire Safety and Fall Prevention. It was determined that Ms. Johnson, as Chairman of the Board, would be designated as the signatory on the TRIAD agreement.

Mr. Fisher asked if this program would address issues of both physical crime as well as cyber-crime. Ms. Young said yes, stating that they plan on offering programs aimed at online safety. She added that they plan on putting together a SALT Council (Seniors and Law Enforcement Together) that would select the TRIAD programs. She will be looking for Hingham seniors to volunteer to be a part of this Council.

Joint Public Safety Facility and Senior Center Renovation Discussion

Mr. Mayo explained that the Public Safety Complex is anticipated to go to Annual Town Meeting in April 2020 for feasibility and conceptual design funds and to a Special Town Meeting in fall 2020 for full design and construction funds. He added that the Senior Center build-out is anticipated to go to Annual Town Meeting in April 2020 for full design funds and to a Special Town Meeting in fall 2020 for construction funds. He said that the Design costs for the Public Safety Complex are anticipated at \$250,000 and the construction costs are anticipated to be approximately \$28,000,000. He also said that the design plans for the expanded Senior Center are anticipated to be \$525,000 and associated construction costs are estimated to be \$8,000,000.

He added that the design for the Public Safety Complex includes a feasibility study and development of conceptual design options for use during the building committee's public process. Funds for full design and bid plans will be incorporated into the construction estimate and requested at a fall Special Town Meeting along with property acquisition funds. If funded, final design and bid documents would be created immediately following the Special Town Meeting authorization and construction would commence as soon as the procurement process was complete. He also explained that the full design plans for the Senior Center buildout would be developed with an April 2020 Town Meeting authorization and will be available to the building committee during the public process leading up to the fall Special Town Meeting. Construction of the Senior Center build-out will commence after the Police Department moves into the new Public Safety Complex.

Mr. Mayo added that a real estate appraisal was obtained from Tyburski Appraisal Corporation dated February 3, 2020. The "as if vacant" property value has been appraised at \$4,000,000 (less \$300,000 to bring to an "as is" property value of \$3,700,000). He also said that the Purchase price has been established at \$5,475,000 in a Letter of Intent dated 3/5/2020 before the Hingham Board of Selectmen for potential ratification at their scheduled meeting on 3/9/2020.

He then gave a history of the current Police, Fire and Senior Center facilities. He noted that the project would Modernize Police and Fire services into one complex, realizing operational efficiencies and cost savings and would offer additional benefits including the following:

- Operationally optimal location for North Fire Station: call volume, 3A corridor, traffic light control, by-right zoning
- Provides much-needed modern and expanded space to accommodate North Fire Station services, equipment, and staff – including separate facilities for male and female firefighters

- Provides much-needed modern and expanded space to accommodate Police services, equipment, and staff
- Senior Center would expand into Police Department space at Town Hall, at least tripling the total space for the Senior Center from approximately 5,000 sf to over 15,000 sf
- Maintains Senior Center central location on Town Hall campus while avoiding the additional costs of building a new, standalone facility
- Provides long-term ability for Town to serve growing senior population

Ms. Johnson then began a discussion among members of the Board followed by questions from the public. Mr. Fisher clarified that while this concept has been analyzed and reviewed for a number of years, finding the right property is something that Mr. Mayo has just recently been able to do. He thanked the seniors for their patience in dealing with recent parking and space concerns at the Senior Center while the Board and the Town Administrator's office conceptualized an appropriate solution to a broad number of related issues. He asked if the move of the Police Department would have any effect on the operations of SSREC. Mr. Mayo explained that SSRECC (South Shore Regional Emergency Communications Center) is the 911 call center that serves the towns of Hingham, Norwell, Hull and Cohasset. He said that it would have no effect on the SSRECC operations.

Mr. Fisher added that there weren't really any options for modifying the North Fire Station, adding that today's fire equipment is physically larger and it is hard to get it through the bay doors. Mr. Mayo added that the North Fire Station, being built in 1941, does not have accommodations for female fire fighters, though the Fire Department is currently addressing the issue as best it can with ad-hoc adjustments. Mr. Fisher added that he has toured the Police Station and noted that its facilities also need to be enhanced. Mr. Mayo said that the seniors could expect to move into the redesigned space by the Fall of 2023. Mr. Fisher said that in the interim the Board would continue to look into short-term solutions to the current parking issue at Town Hall.

Ms. Power thanks Mr. Mayo and Ms. Monsegur for their hard work on the public safety project. She asked whether cost estimates for the Senior Center project received this fall factored in price escalation during the two years prior to construction. She also said that freeing up the North Fire Station property could help solve some of the Town's other space concerns or potentially help defray the cost should it be sold or leased. She also commented that, in general, she has heard from the seniors that they would like the Senior Center to stay at the Town Hall rather than in a stand-alone facility. She also emphasized that the current interest rates, the price and the location of the property all make this a very compelling opportunity.

Ms. Johnson said that current best practice and municipal service delivery, particularly for public safety, all points in the direction of a joint Public Safety facility, adding that the parcel at 335 Lincoln Street allows the Town to keep up with the pace and evolution of services. There were some additional comments from the Police and Fire Chiefs regarding their current space constraints and the need for more modern facilities and equipment as well as the need for a training facility. Ms. Young echoed many of the Chief's comments regarding space issues in the current Senior Center. There was some additional discussion of a plan for the fire trucks to enter and leave the proposed new station.

Mr. Fisher asked if they anticipated any issues with the MBTA due to the proximity of the commuter boat and its parking lot to the proposed Public Safety Complex. Mr. Mayo and Ms. Johnson both said that they have had conversations with the MBTA with regard to prior proposals and found them to be very supportive of a Shipyard location.

There was some additional discussion about the location's proximity to the water and it was determined that while it was not in a flood zone, there would be a feasibility study that would identify any roadblocks from an engineering perspective.

There were some questions from the public regarding clarification of the location of the proposed building site, parking issues, and the possibility of taking the property by eminent domain.

Vote: Ms. Power made a motion to approve the Letter of Intent between 291 Mystic LLC and the Town of Hingham, dated March 5, 2020, for the purchase of the property located at 335 Lincoln Street in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Letter of Intent. Mr. Fisher seconded. All were in favor, 3-0.

Warrant Articles

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to open the warrant and remove Article W and insert Articles NN, OO, PP and QQ and close the warrant. Ms. Power seconded. All were in favor, 3-0.

Article NN: Public Safety Facility Feasibility & Design Funds

Will the Town vote to raise and appropriate, borrow or transfer from available funds a sum of money for the purpose of determining the feasibility of locating a new Public Safety Facility, and for the conceptual design thereof, to be located on the property known as 335 Lincoln Street, Hingham, MA, or elsewhere, or act on anything relating thereto?

Vote: Ms. Power made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article NN. Ms. Fisher seconded. All were in favor, 3-0.

Article OO: Public Safety Facility Building Committee

Will the Town vote to establish a Public Safety Facility Building Committee for the purpose of overseeing the determination regarding the feasibility of locating a new Public Safety Facility, and for the conceptual design, final design, engineering and construction thereof, to be located on the property known as 335 Lincoln Street, Hingham, MA, or elsewhere, or act on anything relating thereto?

Vote: Ms. Power made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article OO. Mr. Fisher seconded. All were in favor, 3-0.

Article W: Design Funds for Moderate Senior Center Renovations

Will the Town raise and appropriate, borrow or transfer from available funds, a sum of money to be expended by the Board of Selectmen to be used for any expenses related to design and engineering services for renovations to the Senior Center in Town Hall and the space currently occupied by the Police Department or act on anything relating thereto?

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article W. Ms. Power seconded. All were in favor, 3-0.

Article QQ: Design Funds for Senior Center Renovations

Will the Town raise and appropriate, borrow or transfer from available funds, a sum of money to be expended by the Board of Selectmen to be used for any expenses related to design and engineering services for renovations to the Senior Center and the space currently occupied by the Police Department in Town Hall or act on anything relating thereto?

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article QQ. Ms. Power seconded. All were in favor, 3-0.

Article PP: Senior Center Building Committee

Will the Town vote to establish a Senior Center Building Committee for the purpose of overseeing the design, engineering and renovation of the Senior Center and the space currently occupied by the Police Department located at 224 Central Street, Hingham, MA, or act on anything relating thereto?

Mr. Fisher made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article PP. Ms. Power seconded. All were in favor, 3-0.

Article D: Report of the Personnel Board

Will the Town accept the report of the Personnel Board appointed under the Classification and Salary Plan, or act on anything related thereto?

Ms. Johnson explained that the Personnel Board is established pursuant to the Town of Hingham Personnel By-Law and is comprised of five members appointed by the Moderator. She added that this Article provides funds to pay for financial obligations of the Town relating to salary increases, fringe benefit changes, and job reclassifications for non-School Department employees and makes certain amendments to the Personnel By-Law, including the Classification and Salary Plan.

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article D. Ms. Power seconded. All were in favor, 3-0.

Article O: Repair/Reconstruction of Town Pier: Withdrawn

Bill Reardon, Chair of the Harbor Development Committee, spoke about recent developments (cost increases and engineering recommendations) that have led to the withdrawal of the previously recommended Article O, "The Repair and Reconstruction of Town Pier."

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to open the Warrant and remove Article O and to close the Warrant. Ms. Power seconded. All were in favor, 3-0.

Selectmen/Town Administrator Reports

Ms. Monsegur: Nothing to report

Mr. Mayo: Nothing to report

Mr. Fisher: Nothing to report

Ms. Power said that on March 10 she was going to the Town of Cohasset's Board of Selectmen's meeting to update them on the status of the Water Company transition. She also said that she plans on attending the Plymouth County Advisory Committee meeting on Thursday, provided that the Hingham Board of Selectmen do not have another meeting.

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Power seconded. All were in favor, 3-0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:06pm

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