

Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: March 16, 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, 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.

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

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

- a. ***Article O- Climate Action Planning Study:*** Brenda Black presented an update on this Article which had been heard by the AdCom at its March 11, 2021 meeting. The Article seeks funding for a Climate Action Plan and the Hingham Municipal Lighting Plant has committed to provide this funding. Town Counsel recommends a no action vote on this Article since no appropriation is required. The AdCom voted no action on this Article 13-0-0 (Eryn Kelley was absent during the vote);
- b. ***Article P- Climate Action Planning Committee:*** Alan Macdonald presented an update on this Article which had been heard by the AdCom at its March 11, 2021 meeting. Mr. Macdonald noted that the Comment and the Recommended Motion had been revised to identify the Hingham Municipal Lighting Plant Board as the appointing authority for the representative to the committee from the Hingham Municipal Lighting Plant. The AdCom voted 13-0-0 in favor of the Article (Eryn Kelley was absent during the vote);

- c. Article BB- Citizens petition to amend General By-Laws Articles 2 and 3: Chair Curley noted that Town Counsel stated that the AdCom could recommend that a study committee be formed to further review this Article. Chair Curley stated that he did not support this action. The AdCom voted no action on this Article 13-0-0 (Eryn Kelley was absent during the vote).

4. Review, Discussion and potential vote on Advisory Committee Policies and Procedures:

The AdCom initially discussed the Policies and Procedures at its March 9, 2021 meeting. Davalene Cooper provided an update to the Committee based on questions raised during that discussion:

- a. Ms. Cooper spoke with previous AdCom Chairs about the requirement that minority opinion voters need to be recorded in order to speak at Town Meeting. Ms. Cooper stated that none of the previous Chairs she spoke with could identify a specific date or reason for this requirement but all of the Chairs felt that the policy served as an alert to the majority to enable the them to prepare to respond to the minority view, if presented, at Town Meeting;
- b. Ms. Cooper provided updated language regarding liaison subcommittees, teams and the Open Meeting Law requirements. Further discussion ensued and Ms. Cooper will review suggested changes at a future meeting;
- c. Ms. Cooper also provided an update on political advocacy by the AdCom. Further discussion ensued and Ms. Cooper will review suggested changes at a future meeting.

5. Further discussion of forecast, Financial Policy, Fund Balance, Overrides and Debt Exclusions:

Chair Curley reviewed a Forecast Sensitivity Table Spreadsheet prepared by Board of Selectmen (BOS) Chair Mary Power. The spreadsheet outlines various spending scenarios for the FY 22 through FY 26 budget years with the corresponding revenue needed to balance each year's budget. Revenue options include the use of one-time money provided by either Fund Balance, Federal stimulus funds or a combination of the two. In addition to the one-time money, funds provided by an override are listed as an option, especially as the available one-time money is depleted or restricted by policy.

Chair Curley further noted that he was expecting an updated forecast by March 18th and that the numbers presented in the spreadsheet would likely change based on the new forecast.

Chair Curley stated that the BOS would be reviewing the Forecast Sensitivity Table Spreadsheet at its March 18, 2021 meeting and that Chair Power had stated that it would be helpful to the BOS if the AdCom could provide some feedback to the BOS prior to their meeting based on its initial review of the spreadsheet. Chair Curley

solicited input from the AdCom and members were supportive of an option to fund the FY 22 budget with one-time funds with the possibility of an override in order to balance the FY 23 budget. While recognizing the possibility of an override, the AdCom was concerned with the municipal and school annual expense growth rates as compared to the growth rate in revenues. Members stressed the need to balance the growth rate in expenses with the growth rate in revenues.

6. Review and approval of Minutes from Meeting of March 9, 2021: This agenda item was deferred until the March 16, 2021 meeting.

7. Warrant Articles update:

- a. Eryn Kelley noted that the BOS had voted no action on the Hingham Municipal Lighting Plant's Article requesting a land transfer from the Town and funding to add a third transmission line and a new substation;
- b. Alan Macdonald noted that the BOS had deferred a vote scheduled for March 18th on the Salaries of Town Officers;
- c. Davalene Cooper stated that she would be sending out a draft comment and recommendation on Article Q, the Citizens Petition in support of gender neutral language, in advance of the March 18, 2021 AdCom hearing on it;
- d. Andy McElaney noted that the Planning Board did not support Article DDD, which seeks a change in Town Zoning By-Laws to allow detached accessory dwellings. The Planning Board supports the creation of a study committee to further evaluate this proposal.

8. Liaison reports: Dave Anderson noted that the ACES subcommittee is meeting on March 17, 2021 for a hearing and possible vote on the School Budget. If no vote is taken the ACES group will reconvene on March 22, 2021 and will make its recommendation to the AdCom at the March 23, 2021 AdCom meeting. Mr. Anderson also questioned the status of the Plymouth River School windows as the Town is still waiting on a firm estimate of the project cost. The options discussed included an AdCom supplement to the Warrant that would be made available at Town Meeting or including a ceiling amount in the Recommended Motion.

9. Discussion of Advisory Committee housekeeping items:

- a. Meeting times: The AdCom will next meet March 18, 23 and 25;
- b. Town Meeting and related deadlines: No update.

Chair Curley reminded all AdCom members to the Department budgets they were responsible for, including additional funding requests, in preparation for our March 25, 2021 budget meeting.

Julie Strehle reminded members to forward approved Warrant Articles to the editors, with a copy to her, as soon as they are approved.

10. Matters not anticipated within 48 hours: None

11. **Adjourn:** Motion to adjourn at 9:37 pm approved by roll call vote of 14-0-0

Respectfully submitted,

George Danis, Secretary

List of Documents Distributed for this Meeting:

- Agenda
- Warrant Articles
- Forecast Sensitivity Table worksheet
- Citizen emails
- March 9, 2021 AdCom meeting minutes draft

Approved with revisions on 03/25/2021 by roll call vote 13-0-0 (Libby Claypoole was absent).