

# Board of Selectmen

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April 21, 2020

Remote meeting via telephone conference call

Present:

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

## **Call to order: 7pm**

Ms. Johnson called the meeting to order and read the following statement:

“This meeting is being held remotely by telephone as an alternate means of access pursuant to the 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 telephone communications during this meeting may be recorded by the Town of Hingham and is being recorded by the Town of Hingham in accordance with the Open Meeting Law.”

Ms. Johnson reviewed for the public the format of the meeting. She noted that the Board of Selectmen will discuss each item on the agenda and after each will ask for comments or questions from the public. She advised that, at the end of the meeting, the public would have an opportunity to comment on items not on the agenda.

## **COVID-19 Update**

Mr. Mayo gave the following update on COVID-19:

“Governor Baker announced today that all public and private schools in the Commonwealth will remain closed for the remainder of the school year to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. We are anticipating further guidance from the Governor with respect to essential services in the State and will reevaluate Town operations at that time.

As of today, the Department of Public Health (DPH) is reporting 3,043 COVID-19 cases in Plymouth County. DPH is now releasing COVID-19 case data by city/town once a week on Wednesdays, which is a new development from last week. As of last Wednesday, DPH was reporting 49 confirmed cases in Hingham. Please keep in mind that the numbers reported by the state are lower than the actual number of cases, as they do not include clinical diagnoses of COVID-19 by medical professionals or people who self-diagnose and stay at home.

The state has launched a Community Tracing Collaborative with Partners in Health. This program focuses on using volunteers to reach out via phone and text to confirmed positive COVID-19 patients and anyone they have been in contact with to trace and contain the onward spread of the virus by arranging testing, as well as medical and quarantine support. This program has been welcomed by our local Health Department.

The Hingham Health Department issued an order over the weekend that went into effect on Sunday morning requiring all essential workers to wear protective face coverings while interacting with the public or when within six feet of a coworker. This order applies to employees in all grocery stores, restaurants, pharmacies, and all essential businesses included in Governor Baker's COVID-19 Essential Services Order. The order also requires businesses to enforce social distancing of 6 feet between members of the public in their establishments and to post signage on the door advising on social distancing.

If residents see that a food establishment, grocery store, or other essential business is not complying with this order, please report it directly to the Hingham Health Department by emailing [HealthDirector@hingham-ma.gov](mailto:HealthDirector@hingham-ma.gov). Residents serve as our eyes and ears of the Town. Reporting incidents directly to the Health Department rather than through social media, is much more effective and will allow staff to address the situation more efficiently.

In line with CDC's recommendation, we continue to encourage all residents to wear cloth face coverings in situations where social distancing is difficult to maintain."

### **Update on Town Services**

Ms. Monsegur gave the following update on Town Services:

#### Hingham Public Schools Update

Hingham Public Schools will remain closed for the remainder of this academic year per the Governor's order earlier today. In a letter sent out to the community today, the School Department stated it would begin planning for revisions to its Remote Learning Plan. It expects to receive new, revised guidance for the extension to the Remote Learning Plan from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education later this week. The current plan will remain in effect through Friday, May 1, 2020. The School is also planning to conduct a districtwide survey of students, faculty, and families to solicit feedback about the Remote Learning Plan. The School has been sending out great community letters conveying this information. Those communications can be found on the School's COVID-19 Resource and Communication page at <https://hinghamschools.com/>.

#### Public Works Updates

Recycling operations at the Transfer Station remain open. Residents may continue to drop off recyclable materials while maintaining a safe social distance (at least six feet) from others. Residents should continue to move through the Transfer Station efficiently, and should not congregate in groups or linger for conversations. We thank everyone for following these guidelines thus far. The Superintendent of the Department of Public Works reports that street sweeping and tree cleanup operations resulting from last week's storm are ongoing. DPW is also expecting there to be debris from the 30-50 MPH wind gusts tonight, so staff will be on call to address any issues. DPW is currently working on the 2020 street reconstruction/paving schedule with the Town Engineer. The National Grid gas main replacement project on Route 228 is ongoing. The gas company is moving fairly quickly and is past Collins Road (heading in the direction of 3A) as of today.

#### Recreation Department Updates

Our Recreation Department is working hard to operate as many live remote classes as possible. They are running twelve dance classes and about five fitness classes all via Zoom at this time. Residents interested in participating in the fitness classes can find information on the Recreation Department's website. Recreation staff continue to work with the Town's consultant on the athletic field and outdoor court study and expect to have a draft report completed soon. Staff are also scheduling and planning for fall and winter Recreation programs.

Mr. Fisher thanked Mr. Mayo and Ms. Monsegur, as well as all the Town departments, for functioning well during this difficult time. He also clarified that the schools are "open" for remote learning but that the physical structures are closed.

He also asked if there is a sample notice available that businesses could use as a model to post as required by the Health Department regarding with compliance with COVID-19 standards and Mr. Mayo said that he would have it posted to the Town's website.

Ms. Power added that the news about the closure of the schools for the remainder of the school year is not unexpected but bittersweet, especially for the High School Seniors and the students that have been preparing for spring sports. She read the following Tweet from the HHS Girls Lacrosse team that she felt captured the essence of the HHS Class of 2020 and all of the athletic teams:

"To the Seniors: While most have four years to leave their mark, you only needed three to leave your legacy. Your grit, tenacity, enthusiasm, humor, kindness and competitive fire will live on in our program."

She commented that Principal Rick Swanson is very aware of the desire of the seniors to in some way to celebrate at some point when it is appropriate. She acknowledged that this is very hard time for our seniors. Ms. Johnson concurred with Ms. Power's comments on the heartbreak involved with missed milestones and cancelled celebrations while also appreciating the sacrifices being made by the community in an effort to keep everyone safe. She asked if there were any questions from the public and there were none.

### **Appointments**

#### Special Police Officers

Chief Olsson explained that Special Police Officers are appointed on a yearly basis and are required to complete specialized training as well as a yearly recertification program consisting of 40 hours of in-class service. He added that all Court Prosecutors from the eight communities served by the Hingham District Courthouse will be appointed as Special Police Officers, giving them the authority to make arrests in the Courthouse in the absence of a Hingham Police Officer. He explained that law enforcement agencies think of this as a form of mutual aid.

Mr. Fisher clarified for the public that the function of the Special Police Officers is primarily additional support for special events and during busy times such as elections, parades, fireworks, concerts and traffic duties. Chief Olsson said that they would not be able to hold some of these larger events or road safety without the Special Police Officers. Chief Olsson added that the Special Police Officers pay for

their own training and equipment. Mr. Fisher thanked the Chief for organizing this program again this year.

**Vote:** Ms. Power made a motion to appoint the following personnel as Special Police Officers for the Town of Hingham for a term ending April 30, 2021:

Raymond Abreau  
Leslie Badger  
Kenneth Corcoran  
Kenneth Corson  
Joseph Driscoll  
Daniel Goldstein  
David Horte  
Robert Mansfield  
Michael McCue  
Michael Murray  
Kevin Nguyen

John Norkaitis  
John Norris  
Michael Parker  
Mitchell Powers  
Michael Riley  
James Taylor  
Russell Way, Jr.  
James Wells  
Brian Willard

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes  
Ms. Power: yes  
Ms. Johnson: yes

**Vote:** Mr. Fisher made a motion to appoint Charles Souther as a Special Police Officer for the Town of Hingham for a term ending December 31, 2020. Ms. Power seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes  
Ms. Power: yes  
Ms. Johnson: yes

**Vote:** Mr. Fisher made a motion to appoint the following Officers as Court Prosecutors and back-ups for Hingham District Court for a term ending April 30, 2021:

- Hull PD
  - Officer Michael Flaherty
  - Detective Daniel Dunn
- Hanover PD
  - Sergeant Daniel Salvucci
  - Sergeant Timothy Kane
- Rockland PD
  - Officer Sean Brundige
  - Officer Jeffrey Direnzo
  - Officer Joseph Zielinski
- Scituate PD

- Sergeant Kenneth Bates
- Sergeant James Bulman
- Sergeant James Gilmartin
- Detective Owen Kirkbride
- Norwell PD
  - Sergeant William Pasteris

Ms. Power seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Ms. Johnson: yes

**Vote:** Mr. Fisher made a motion to appoint the following detectives as agents of the Board of Selectmen to enforce the laws of the Liquor Control Act and the Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission (ABCC) regulations for all licensed liquor establishments in the Town of Hingham for a term ending April 30, 2021:

Detective Sergeant Phil Emmott

Detective Phil Tracey

Detective Dan Leary

Detective Heather Hermida

Detective Michael Gervasi

Ms. Power seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Ms. Johnson: yes

### **Earth Day Proclamation**

**Vote:** Ms. Johnson moved to proclaim Wednesday, April 22, 2020 Earth Day in the Town of Hingham.

Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Ms. Johnson: yes

She read the following Earth Day Proclamation:

### **EARTH DAY PROCLAMATION**

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Hingham as part of the global community is participating in Earth Day 2020 and recognizes the environmental challenges faced by all peoples; and

**WHEREAS**, it is understood that as citizens of the global community the Town of Hingham must step forward and take action to create positive environmental changes that will support the management and care of our environment; and

**WHEREAS**, environmental education along with awareness helps the citizens of Hingham develop the concern and skills to address the environmental challenges we face; and

**WHEREAS**, in recognition of today's environmental challenges trees will be planted as a symbol to our commitment to the good stewardship of all that is entrusted to our care.

**WHEREAS**, The Town of Hingham pledges to support environmental and educational initiatives in our community that encourage others to undertake similar actions.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, we, Karen A. Johnson, Mary M. Power, and Joseph M. Fisher, Selectmen of the Town of Hingham, do hereby proclaim Wednesday, April 22, 2020 as **Earth Day**.

Dated this Twenty-first day of April, Two Thousand and Twenty

Ms. Johnson said that usually there are ceremonies that accompany these proclamations that the Board of Selectmen will attend which we will have to forego this year due to the COVID-19 crisis. Mr. Fisher added that the first Earth Day was in 1970 and is a movement that is ongoing and should be observed every day.

### **Arbor Day Proclamation**

Mr. Fisher read the following Arbor Day proclamation:

#### **ARBOR DAY PROCLAMATION**

**WHEREAS**, In 1872 J. Sterling Morton proposed to the Nebraska Board of Agriculture that a special day be set aside for the planting of trees, and

**WHEREAS**, this holiday, called Arbor Day, was first observed with the planting of more than a million trees in Nebraska, and Arbor Day is now observed throughout the nation and the world, and

**WHEREAS**, trees can reduce the erosion of our precious topsoil by wind and water, cut heating and cooling costs, moderate the temperature, clean the air, produce oxygen and provide habitat for wildlife, and

**WHEREAS**, trees are a renewable resource giving us paper, wood for our homes, fuel for our fires and countless other wood products, and trees in Hingham increase property values, enhance the economic vitality of business areas, and beautify our community, and

**WHEREAS**, trees, wherever they are planted, are a source of joy and spiritual renewal, and

**WHEREAS**, Hingham, Massachusetts has been recognized as a Tree City USA by The National Arbor Day Foundation and desires to continue its tree-planting ways,

**NOW, THEREFORE**, we, Karen A. Johnson, Mary M. Power, and Joseph M. Fisher, Selectmen of the Town of Hingham, do hereby proclaim Friday, April 24, 2020 as **Arbor Day** in the Town of Hingham, and urge all citizens to support efforts to protect our trees and woodlands, support our Town's forestry program, and to plant trees to gladden the hearts and promote the well-being of present and future generations.

Dated this Twenty-first day of April, Two Thousand and Twenty

**Vote:** Mr. Fisher made a motion to proclaim Friday, April 24, 2020 Arbor Day in the Town of Hingham. Ms. Power seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Ms. Johnson: yes

**Public Comment for items not on the agenda:** none

#### **Selectmen/Town Administrator Reports**

Ms. Monsegur: nothing to report

Mr. Mayo read the following credit overview that the Town of Hingham has received from Moody's:

"Hingham's credit position is superior and its AAA rating far exceeds the median rating of AA3 for cities nationwide. Key credit factors include a very healthy financial position, very strong wealth and income profile and a considerable tax base. It also reflects an affordable debt burden and a moderate pension liability."

He thanked the current Board of Selectmen and Boards past for maintaining the Town's fiscal responsibility.

Mr. Fisher commented that upcoming summer camps and other summer programs may end up being closed or postponed. He encouraged the Board of Selectmen and other groups to make plans to direct the energy of the Town's young people in a positive manner.

He also mentioned that there has been some talk about possibly re-opening the Hingham Farmer's Market in a manner that conforms with State and local health standards. He said he was looking forward to making sure that the result of those discussions are consistent with Hingham's health standards.

Mr. Fished said that he has been receiving communications about residents who have been working hard to provide support to our first responders and others who are on the front lines during this COVID-19 pandemic. He thanked those who have been working hard to provide that support.

Mr. Mayo added that he wanted to recognize that hard work and dedication of the staff at SSCREC (South Shore Regional Emergency Communications Center), adding that last week was Dispatcher Appreciation Week. He said that the SSRECC dispatchers receive some of the hardest calls that local residents ever have to make and the SSRECC team is there to talk them through the situation and ensure them that help is on the way. He added that the SSRECC team plays an integral part of the Town's COVID-19 response, serving as part of our Incident Management Team. Last week Chief Olsson organized a drive-by thank you from members of the Hingham, Hull, Norwell and Cohasset Police and Fire Departments. Mr. Mayo thanked the Laurie Croke, Director, and Aaron Smith, Assistant Director, and their entire SSRECC team for their service to the citizens of Hingham, Hull, Norwell and Cohasset.

Ms. Power reported that she has been watching some of the news conferences at a State and Federal level and said that while the number of new cases of COVID-19 may seem to be plateauing, she urged residents to continue following guidance regarding social distancing. She also commented that she continues to be inspired by those people in the Hingham community who are helping others get through this difficult time. She drew attention to a group call FLAG (Font Line Appreciation Group) who have been collecting donations that are then used to support local food establishments by purchasing food that, in turn, is delivered to local first responders, primarily at South Shore Hospital. She also mentioned two local citizens, Katie Daly and Katie Puzo, who work at South Shore Hospital who are playing a key role in connecting the generous donations with the hard-working healthcare people.

Ms. Johnson reported that the Town's financial planning effort is ongoing and the Board of Selectmen, the Finance team and Capital Market Advisors are working on a daily basis to update their projections in terms of the close of the FY2020 and the planning of the FY2021. She added that they are looking forward to updating the Town at Town Meeting with regard to that planning which also includes information from the Massachusetts State Delegation on State and Federal Aid possibilities.

She also reported that Linda Harper and the Library staff have been emailing residents for whom they have email addresses to make them aware of free online services offered by the Library.

Ms. Johnson also mentioned that Mother's Day is approaching and a number of downtown merchants are participating in a window-shopping event. Merchants who are participating have displayed a paper flower in their window and will be offering purchases via phone order, delivery or curbside pick-up.

Ms. Johnson also mentioned resident Peter Rando, long-time owner of Pete's Barber Shop in Hingham Square, who recently celebrated his 102<sup>nd</sup> birthday. She said that the Police and Fire Departments were part of a 50+ car parade that passed his house on Levitt Street. Mr. Rando was able to sit in his driveway and wave to those who participated in this celebration. She read the following excerpt from a story in the Hingham Anchor. In the article former Hingham Selectmen and Planning Board member and now ZBA member Paul Healy said, "There are a lot of happy memories of that time. There is a reason that people said that Hingham Center is the best place on Earth. Pete Rando was a real part of that and it's great to have a portion of that time still remembered. Happy Birthday Pete."

**Vote:** Mr. Fisher made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Power seconded.

Roll call vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Ms. Johnson: yes

**Meeting adjourned at: 7:42pm**

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