

Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: May 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, Alan Macdonald, Brenda Black, Libby Claypoole, Tina Sherwood, 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. ***Further discussion and Vote on Advisory Committee Policies and Procedures:***

Davalene Cooper presented the latest draft of this document. A brief discussion ensued and a minor edit was made to the draft document.

The AdCom approved the document by a roll call vote of 13-0-0 (Eryn Kelley was absent for the vote).

4. ***Preparation for Town Meeting- Speaker assignments, Moderator's meeting update:***

Chair Curley reviewed the speaker assignments for the May 8, 2021 Town Meeting and reminded the AdCom that members would be asked to speak by the Moderator only where discussion of an Article was initiated by citizens at the Meeting.

Chair Curley further advised the AdCom that he would post a meeting for the morning of May 8, 2021 in the event the AdCom had items to discuss. He added that he fully expected to cancel this meeting.

5. ***Further discussion and Vote on Article U- PRS windows:***

Dave Anderson stated that the Town has received an estimate of just under \$4.0 million dollars to replace the PRS windows. He reminded the AdCom that this project has been approved by the Massachusetts School Building Authority's (MSBA) Accelerated Repair Program and that the Town expects to receive reimbursement for eligible expenses at the rate of 33.95 percent. Mr. Anderson further reminded the AdCom that Broadstone Bare Cove Alliance (developers of the Cove apartments) has already contributed \$1.0 million for this project.

A brief discussion followed over whether this project would trigger additional work as mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Ray Estes, a member of the School Building committee, stated that this was still to be determined. Mr. Estes further stated that there is a threshold (30% of the value of the property) needed to trigger ADA compliance. ADA compliance expenses would not be considered reimbursable by the MSBA.

Libby Claypoole noted that the project estimate includes \$90 thousand for vestibule work. Ms. Claypoole noted that the Capital Outlay Committee had previously allocated funds for this project in two successive years (and is listed again as a FY23 project) but that the School Administration had used those funds for other purposes as is their prerogative under State law. Mr. Estes stated that he could not speak to prior vestibule appropriations but that this number was an order of magnitude estimate from the Architect.

Ms. Claypoole also inquired about the amount of the appropriation and whether it should be reduced by the funds already provided by Broadstone Bare Cove Alliance. Mr. Estes noted that the MSBA requires the full amount of the project to be listed irrespective of the source of funds since the reimbursement will be based on the total project cost.

The AdCom approved this Article by a roll call vote of 14-0-0.

6. Review and approval of Minutes from April 27, 2021: The Minutes were approved, with edits, by a roll call vote of 12-0-2 (Tina Sherwood and Libby Claypoole had been absent from the April 27 meeting).

7. Discussion and Vote on Article 11- Reserve Fund Transfer:

Chair Curley introduced this agenda item by noting that details of the transfer amount had been distributed to the AdCom earlier and asked for comments/questions. Chair Curley noted that the requested amount to be transferred is \$588,884. Town accountant Sue Nickerson provided the following details in response to questions from the AdCom:

Legal Total: \$717,937 (Approximate)

- General legal: \$120,000 (Approximate);
- Litigation: \$275,000 (Approximate);
- Personnel: \$75,000 (Approximate);

- Real Estate: \$275,000 (Approximate) (Ms. Nickerson noted that counsel was assisting the Planning Department due to staff openings).

Property and Liability: \$353,047;

- Fire Total: \$50,000 (Approximate)
 - Mold removal costs for North Fire Station: \$43,000 (Approximate);
 - Air duct cleaning for three stations: \$13,000 (Approximate).

Workers Compensation:

- Settlement of an existing disability claim: \$47,000;

Town Meeting:

- Additional costs for having two Town Meetings in FY 21: \$50,00

Ms. Nickerson noted that several of the numbers listed above are approximate as final numbers will not be known until year end.

Victor Baltera asked about the projected \$1.7 million surplus, plus potential turnbacks from the Municipal and School Departments and the affect this would have on the requested transfer. Ms. Nickerson noted that the surplus was due to full State funding and that it was too early to know about turnbacks. Ms. Nickerson added that the transfer amount would be reduced by the amount of turnbacks and any residual amount would be deposited into Fund Balance. Chair Curley added that the projected surplus is now about \$1.0 million due to lower than expected local receipts.

Mr. Baltera recommended the Article 11 reserve transfer in the amount of \$588,884.

The AdCom approved this Article by a roll call vote of 13-1-0 (Libby Claypoole voted no).

8. Discussion and vote on Reserve Fund Transfer:

Chair Curley introduced this agenda item which seeks a Reserve Fund transfer of \$353,047. The transfer reflects a shortfall in the Property and Liability Insurance account. The transfer can be itemized as follows:

- \$115,000 to address an insurance coverage dispute;
- \$238,047 for increased premiums. Chair Curley added that the Town has had several recent high value insurance claims (High School fire, East School flood) which have resulted in the premium increase. Victor Baltera asked Town Accountant Sue Nickerson about the FY 22 budget for Property and Liability Insurance in light of this premium increase. Ms. Nickerson stated that the FY 22 budget reflects a 10% increase over FY 21. Chair Curley added that the Town is planning an RFP (Request for Proposal) in FY 22 for Property and Liability Insurance.

The AdCom approved this Article by a roll call vote of 11-1-2 (Libby Claypoole voted no; Victor Baltera and Alan Macdonald abstained).

9. *Liaison reports:*

Davalene Cooper provided an update on the Hingham Affordable Housing Trust (HAHT):

- All financial transactions from the inception of the HAHT have been reconciled. Office staff of Senior Planner Emily Wentworth of the Zoning Board of Appeals provided assistance with this reconciliation;
- The Housing Plan is in draft status with plans to present the draft to the Planning Board in mid-June;
- The current affordable housing inventory is as follows: 586 rental units (including 272 at Linden Ponds) and 29 owned residences. Additionally, the 2 units at Rhodes Circle (currently under renovation) will be sold;
- The HAHT will reorganize at their June meeting as Chair Tim White and Treasurer Anita Comerford are stepping down after many years of service.

Kristin Dziergowski provided an update on the Weir River Water Company (WRWC):

- WRWC is currently conducting a cost of service study with the firm of Abraham and Company;
- The WRWC is preparing a Masterplan focusing on storage, infrastructure, and unaccounted water;
- The billing transition to Suez is proceeding without any significant issues.

Libby Claypoole questioned the reimbursement from the WRWC to the Town for advanced costs. Ms. Claypoole stated that the original number of \$1.5 million has increased to \$1.8 million and asked for a reconciliation. Dave Anderson stated that the initial advance was in the \$1.5 million range plus an additional \$250,000 appropriation for transition costs. Mr. Anderson stated that he would refine the numbers and update the AdCom.

10. *Matters not anticipated within 48 hours:*

- Chair Curley noted that a Forecast meeting was held on May 3, 2021 and that a new Forecast had been sent to the AdCom. The new Forecast reduces the expected surplus from \$1.7 to \$1.0 million based on lower than planned local receipts. The updated Forecast did not trigger any change in the Town Financial management Plan;
- Sue Nickerson noted that the Town had just refinanced \$22 million in short term borrowing notes at an interest cost of 0.159%. Ms. Nickerson stated that this extremely low borrowing cost is attributable to the Town's Aaa bond rating.

11. *Adjourn:* Motion to adjourn at 8:29 pm approved by roll call vote of 14-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,
George Danis, Secretary

List of Documents Distributed for this Meeting:

- Agenda;
- April 27, 2021 meeting minutes;
- 3rd quarter Forecast;
- Plymouth River School window replacement quote;
- Reserve Fund Transfer details;
- Warrant Article.

Approved with revisions on 05/25/2021 by roll call vote 14-0-0