

## **Advisory Committee**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**May 23, 2023**

### **Hingham Town Hall, Third Floor, South Hearing Room/Hybrid Meeting**

**In Attendance:** Chairperson; George Danis, Nancy MacDonald, Tina Sherwood, Kathy Curley, Davalene Cooper, Caitlyn Kirk, Brenda Black, Brian Stack, Andy McElaney, Sarah Melia, Joe Griffin

**Participating via Zoom:** Carol Tully

**Absent:** Jason Price, Alan Macdonald, Lyndsey Kruzer

**Call Meeting to Order:** Chairperson Danis called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. 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.”*

### **Comments from the public on items not on the agenda**

None

### **Recap of AdCom 2023: Budget, Warrant, TM process**

It was an atypical meeting year for the Advisory Committee. We met 39 times, which is 30% more than in other years. We had six new members on the Committee. It was a hectic season and our new members did not have the opportunity to ease into the Committee. Also, we returned to in-person meetings, after two and a half years of being remote. We had two Town Meetings this year. Also, we are the Advisory Committee who advocated for the largest amount of money in Town history. We were able to pass both the new Foster School and the Public Safety Facility building, as well as passing the largest override in the Town’s history, which the Town approved overwhelmingly.

We put into place the new MOU which will allow for predictability and stability for our budgets. This was done in full collaboration with the Select Board and the School Committee. And, the override was the first one the Town has passed in 14 years. Whether we agreed or disagreed with one another, we engaged in civil and respectful discourse.

One of the hallmarks of this year was our strong relationships with the Select Board and the School Committee. One of the reasons for our success as a Town was likely due to this respect and the open lines of communication.

One takeaway from Town Meeting could be that we should consider including the Town Moderator earlier in discussions and conversations regarding the process of Town Meeting, especially if there are complicated Articles.

## **Liaison reports:**

### **Financial policy working group: Hear, discuss and possible vote on proposed changes**

This group was established by Chair Danis following 2023 Town Meeting in response to the passage of Articles 12 (creation of a tax mitigation stabilization fund) and 13 (creation of a capital stabilization fund). The commission was tasked to look at the Town's financial policy to determine if and what changes should be made to the financial policy as a result of these articles. The team agreed that the Town should continue to be constrained by the current financial policy, including maintaining a fund balance of 16 to 20% of TAE and the importance of maintaining the Town's AAA rating. It was agreed that only funds in excess of 20% of TAE should be considered eligible for addition to the new stabilization funds. The team reviewed the original AdCom hearings for the stabilization funds and data provided by Sue Nickerson. Members also sought advice from previous AdCom chairs. The group met five times over 2 months for over twelve hours as a group, as well as individual analysis by members on specific topics. The group recommends minimal changes to the financial policy and that additions to either fund should be left to the purview of future AdCom's based on then current balances, economic situation, and Town needs.

Recommended changes to the policy are:

- Paragraph 7 to read - amend first sentence to read:
  7. When Unassigned Fund Balance exceeds 20%, the Advisory Committee should consider recommending that Town Meeting apply such amounts in excess of 20% to items such as unfunded long-term liabilities, long-term and non-recurring capital expenditures, retirement of debt, or targeted tax relief, including but not limited to a transfer of some portion of such excess to a tax and/or capital stabilization fund or funds.
- Amend second sentence to read:

Excess Unassigned Fund Balance should not be used to fund recurring operating budget items, except as otherwise provided herein.

### **Additional liaison updates**

There were no additional liaison updates.

### **Election of FY 24 Advisory Committee Officers**

The three positions that the committee was accepting nomination and votes for were, chair, vice chair, and secretary. Nancy MacDonald was nominated and voted by roll call vote (11-0) for the chair position. Tina Sherwood was nominated and voted by roll call vote (11-0) for the vice chair position. Caitlyn Kirk was nominated and voted by roll call vote (11-0) for the secretary position.

### **Discussion of Advisory Committee housekeeping items:**

**Approval of minutes: April 20, 2023**

The April 20, 2023 meeting minutes were approved with minor grammatic edits by roll call vote (11-0).

**Next meeting: Tuesday June 27, 2023**

**Comments from the Public on Items Not on the Agenda**

There were no comments from the public.

**The meeting was adjourned at 8:27 p.m. by roll call vote (11-0).**

**Documents Distributed for This Meeting:**

AdCom May 23, 2023 Meeting Agenda

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Alicia Anthony**

**Recording Clerk**