

Board of Selectmen

August 4, 2020

Remote meeting via telephone conference call

Present:

- Board of Selectmen: Ms. Mary Power (Chair), Mr. Joseph Fisher, and Mr. Bill Ramsey
- Mr. Tom Mayo, Town Administrator
- Ms. Michelle Monsegur, Assistant Town Administrator

Call to order: 7:00 pm

Ms. Power called the meeting to order 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 chair 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.”

Ms. Power asked if anyone was recording the meeting. David Cedrone of WATD News indicated that he was recording the meeting for news purposes.

Town Administrator Report

Mr. Tom Mayo read the following notice:

“Last night, the chair of the Board of Selectmen, Mary Power, received an email demanding that she promptly resign from the Board or else the sender of the email would go to “every media outlet” with evidence of her alleged bias and conflict of interest with respect to the Hingham Police Department.

The Town has forwarded this email to the office of the Massachusetts Attorney General for its review and possible action.

Our Town Government in general and the Board of Selectmen in particular always act with the highest degree of integrity. Although correspondence from residents is always welcome, we will not allow this type of communication to disrupt the proper operation of town government.

Since we have asked for the Attorney General’s review, we will have no further comment on the email at this time.”

Mr. Mayo then read the following statement regarding the retirement of Police Chief Glenn Olsson:

“August 3, 2020

Today (yesterday) Glenn Olsson notified me of his retirement from his position as Chief of Police, effective August 3, 2020. While Chief Olsson’s retirement is a tremendous loss for the Town, his

decision was not unexpected. Several months ago, Chief Olsson informed me that he was preparing to retire. While we were still discussing the particulars of the timing of his retirement, the United States and the Town of Hingham were confronted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Chief Olsson, as he has for nearly 40 years of service, placed the needs of the Town first and postponed his retirement planning. However, I always knew that the day of his retirement would arrive after he and his department had dealt with the initial response to this unprecedented health emergency. It has been an honor to work with Glenn Olsson over the years. I have admired the way he handles all of his duties with compassion and dignity. In a world full of important and difficult issues, Chief Olsson's consistency and humanity have helped guide the Town and the department. Chief Olsson's retirement is a true loss for the Town but he has certainly earned it and it is comforting to know that he will continue to be a phone call away whenever his town needs him."

Mr. Ramsey made some comments on the Chief's retirement including, "I truly believe that he changed the paradigm on community policing. He made himself accessible to Boy Scout and Girl Scout Troops, to Town Boards, to residents with concerns. He reached out to community organizations. He was a Chief who was truly integrated into our community and, maybe most importantly of his tenure as Chief and of his service to our Town, was if you came to him with an issue or a concern, he didn't care who you were or what your issue was, he treated everyone with dignity and respect." Mr. Ramsey wished Chief Olsson best of luck in his retirement, thanked him for his service and said that he was honored to call him a friend.

Mr. Fisher thanked Chief Olsson for attending countless meetings of the Zoning Board of Appeals and for making sure that public safety issues were raised, considered, and properly addressed. Mr. Fisher added, "he was not just concerned about safety issues in general. He was specific. He was concerned about handicapped access, ease of transportation, possible traffic congestion, maintaining proper sight lines and visibility when people would exit a proposed development. He got into the details so that Hingham residents could enjoy living in their homes and commuting around our streets. When I started on the Board of Selectmen last year, Glenn told me that he was thinking about retiring. Fortunately, he continued to serve the Town for at least my first year on the Board. While I will miss him, I respect his decision to retire. Thank you, Glenn, for your years of service."

Ms. Power commented on her time working with Chief Olsson over the past 20 years, and especially on the Fourth of July Parade Committee. She commented that Chief Olsson demonstrated "empathy, understanding, and respect-and a sense of humor." In her role as the Advisory Committee liaison to Public Safety, she observed his well-executed administrative skills. As a member of the Board of Selectmen, Ms. Power had the opportunity to observe a variety of his roles including, being a "Town leader and a respected member of the community." She felt it had been an honor and a privilege to work with Chief Olsson. She thanked him for his service and wished him well in his retirement.

Appointment of Interim Police Chief

Mr. Mayo suggested that Deputy Chief David Jones was capable and ready for the position. He recommended that the Board consider Deputy Jones as Interim Police Chief. Mr. Fisher commented that he felt Deputy Jones was an able leader and up to the task of Chief. He supported his appointment as Interim Police Chief. Mr. Ramsey said that he has known Deputy Jones for many years, both personally and professionally. He said that he has worked with him when Mr. Ramsey worked in the

District Attorney's Office. He was confident that Deputy Jones was up to the task. Ms. Power echoed the Board's remarks and endorsed Deputy Jones as Interim Police Chief. She credited Chief Olsson with a solid succession plan.

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to appoint David Jones as Interim Police Chief effective immediately. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Transfer of the Restaurant Common Victualler Wine and Malt Beverages License

Ryan Knowles, Senior Director of Internal Operations at Muse Paintbar, explained that Muse Paintbar has chosen to have a third party manage their finances. He said that Muse Paintbar would be acquired by EAD Entertainment, LLC, a private equity firm. He noted that nothing is changing except for the ownership entity at the corporate level.

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to approve the transfer of the Common Victualler Wine and Malt Beverages License from Muse Paintbar, LLC d/b/a Muse Paintbar to EAD Entertainment, LLC d/b/a Muse Paintbar, 15 Shipyard Drive, Nancy Potts, Manager, with the following operating hours: Weekdays: 5:00 PM-11:00 PM, Saturday and Sunday: Noon to 11:00 PM; subject to the approval of the Massachusetts Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission. Mr. Ramsey seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Statement from Interim Chief David Jones

Chief Jones thanked the Board of Selectmen and the Town Administrator for the opportunity to serve as Interim Police Chief and made the following statement, "I sincerely appreciate your confidence and support of me in appointing me to this position. I look forward to continuing the transparency, community partnership and outstanding service that the residents have come to expect from our department. To Chief Olsson, thank you for your dedication and many years of guidance. You're over 40 years of experience helped to develop and mentor several generations of officers, myself included. I wish you the very best in your well-deserved retirement. To the men and women of the Hingham Police Department, thank you for your continued and unwavering dedication and professionalism. It is truly a privilege to be a part of such a talented team. I will work with you and for you as we continue to make positive changes within our department and the community. Thank you very much."

Memorandum of Agreements

The Selectmen were joined by David Pace, Chairman of the Personnel Board, and Russell Conn, Personnel Board member. Mr. Conn presented the Police agreements and Mr. Pace presented the Library agreement. Mr. Conn recommended that the Board sign the Memorandum of Agreements with

the Police Superiors and with the Police Patrolmen, which included a 2% wage increase for one year. He said that they normally have three-year contracts, but because of COVID-19, have decided to recommend a one-year contract and hope to present a three-year agreement next year. He said that the Personnel Board recommends these contracts as the best interest of the Town. Mr. Conn thanked Police Chief Olsson, Deputy Chief Jones, Tom Mayo, Michelle Monsegur, Lisa Campbell and Joe Fisher. He also acknowledged the cooperative attitude between the Unions, Legal Counsel, and the Town.

Mr. Pace said that the Library employees also usually have a three-year agreement, but have agreed to a one-year agreement due to the COVID-19 environment. He noted that the agreement contains a 2% salary increase for Library employees. He thanked all those involved, including Chief Olsson.

Mr. Fisher confirmed that the 2% salary increase was retroactive to July 1, 2020. He also asked if these budgets were consistent with those budgets presented at Town Meeting. Mr. Mayo confirmed that they were. He stated that he had reviewed the documents and was comfortable with them.

Mr. Ramsey thanked the Union leadership and asked under which contract Detectives would fall. Chief Jones clarified that they would be part of the Patrolmen's contract.

Ms. Power noted that many of Hingham's peer communities have asked Public Safety employees to take furloughs. She said that the 2% pay increase during this time of financial uncertainty represents the Town's commitment to the men and women who work in the Police Department, the Fire Department and the Library.

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to authorize the execution of the Memorandum of Agreement with the Police Superior Officers Union, MCOP, Local 405 effective July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. Mr. Ramsey seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to authorize the execution of the Memorandum of Agreement with the Police Patrolmen's Association, effective July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. Ms. Power seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: abstain

Ms. Power: yes

Mr. Ramsey abstained because his brother is a member of the Police Patrolmen's Union.

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to authorize the execution of the Memorandum of Agreement with the Library Staff Association-SEIU Local 888, effective July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Police Patrolman Interviews: Griffin P. Moriarty, Kevin P. Nguyen, and Daniel E. Goldstein

Chief David Jones explained the recruitment process for the new officers. He said that the first step is to take the Civil Service exam. Once the Town has a vacancy in the Police Department, Civil Service then provides the Town with some names from their list. Once those candidates indicate that they are willing to accept employment, they are assigned a background investigator. When the background investigations are complete, the candidates are subject to a Police panel interview, which is designed to be a stressful situation. In this case, there were three Police Officers from Hingham, one from Scituate, and one from Cohasset. The candidates are rated on the selection criteria. Next, they are subject to psychological exam, a medical exam, a drug test, and a physical abilities test. He said that the candidates are then brought before the Board of Selectmen, as the appointing authority, for additional interviews.

Ms. Power said that the Board would be conducting interviews of each candidate individually. Each Board member would ask the candidates several questions and would allow each candidate to make some closing remarks. Chief Jones brought each candidate before the Board for questioning. After the interviews, Ms. Power noted that the Board of Selectmen would plan to make appointments at their next meeting. Mr. Fisher asked Chief Jones if he fully endorsed each of the candidates. Chief Jones said that he fully endorsed each one. All Board members agreed that all of the candidates were very impressive.

Request for Installation of New Gas Service at 5 Merrill Street (if needed)

Ms. Power noted that this agenda item had been discussed at a previous meeting and noted that Town Engineer J.R. Frey was in attendance. Mr. Radar said that he had brought his own Engineer, Bracken Engineering, to the site to look at the cracked and settled pavement. Mr. Radar's position was that it was advantageous for the Town to agree to waive the moratorium so that he could access gas service and repair the cracked pavement at his own expense. Mr. Radar thanked Mr. Frey for meeting him onsite but noted that Mr. Frey would not entertain a lifting of the moratorium for any reason other than an emergency.

Mr. Fisher asked Mr. Frey for his assessment of the cracks in the pavement. Mr. Frey explained that they were reflective cracks. He said that was a patch of the area underneath the current paving job. This patch would expand and contract differentially from the surrounding areas and did not feel the cracking was significant.

Mr. Ramsey asked for some examples of emergencies in the past that have resulted in a waiver of the street opening moratorium. Mr. Frey explained that an emergency situation would be a situation that

could cause a threat to public safety, health or the environment. He said that the most common emergencies are water main breaks. Mr. Ramsey also asked if there were any past situations where the Board had waived the moratorium. Mr. Frey said that he was not aware of any and added that Board has consistently denied applications until the moratorium has ended.

Ms. Power commented that the Board also looks at extenuating circumstances while reviewing waiver requests. She noted that he had visited the site and did not see an extenuating circumstance that would require a waiver of the moratorium. The Board noted that it was not easy to say no, but felt it was important to be consistent in their decision.

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to deny the request to waive the moratorium and allow for the proposed gas service at 5 Merrill Street. Mr. Ramsey seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Discussion of Process for Development of Flag Policy

Ms. Power said that their discussion was not intended to decide what a policy should or should not include, but rather to be a discussion of how to go about developing a policy. She noted that the Board began by reviewing the minutes of the June 4, 2020 Board of Selectmen meeting when there was a discussion of flying the Pride flag. She said that, at that time, there was agreement that the Board should develop a policy. Ms. Power suggested the following four steps as a way to develop a policy:

1. Document the existing practice
2. Obtain input from: Town employees (Police, Fire, and others), Interested civic groups(Pride Committee, Unity Council, American Legion, Veterans Council, and others), and residents who don't fall into one of the above groups
3. Obtain comparative data from benchmark communities, including answers to the following questions:
 - Do you have a formal Flag Policy? If so, could we get a copy of it.
 - Do policies or practices apply to Town-owned assets only or do they include school buildings?
 - Do you have a process for considering requests to fly flags?
 - Do you have any policies or practices with respect to displaying signs, banners, stickers, or other displays on Town-owned assets?
4. Ask Town Counsel to conduct a legal analysis of our findings and review the input.

Ms. Power also suggested that the Board should consider whether they should codify the Town's existing practice as it is written or if they want to alter it in some way. She also suggested that the Board consider whether they felt it necessary to designate a group of people to help with the decisions.

Mr. Ramsey noted that the Town of Hingham, pursuant to Federal Law, flies the flag of the United States and the POW MIA flag. He stated that these two flags are required to be flown at municipal buildings.

He said that the Town also flies the flag of the Town of Hingham, pursuant to the Board of Selectmen. He added that, from May 7-15 every year for the past five years, the Town flies the Peace Officers Memorial flag. He also said that, at the Harbor, the Town flies the United States flag, the POW MIA flag, two related military flags, one of which displays every branch of the armed forces, and the Gold Star Family flag. He also noted that at several locations, the Town also flies the flag of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, pursuant to an Executive Order from the Governor. He acknowledged that flags could conjure many emotions in people. As an example, he said that, while it is very emotional for him to see flying the flag of the unit he served with in combat, to others it means nothing. He said that it is very difficult for a Board to be the arbiter of what flags mean to different people. He acknowledged that the flying of flags is a very emotional issue for many people and felt it was imperative that policies of Boards be consistent, with respect to flags on municipal buildings and flags on Town assets. He noted that a lack of consistency could lead to litigation. He liked the idea of reaching out to residents and local groups and encouraged to include Veterans Officer Keith Jermyn in the discussion.

Mr. Fisher fully agreed with Mr. Ramsey's comments. He also stressed the importance of communication. He clarified that the potential policy that the Board is discussing does not apply to School property. He also stressed learning the meaning and symbolism of what flags mean to different groups.

Ms. Power asked if there were any questions or comments from the public and there were none.

COVID-19 Update

Town Administrator, Tom Mayo, gave the following update on the COVID-19 crisis:

“COVID-19 Cases

Massachusetts remains in Phase 3 - Step 1 at this time. As of today, DPH is reporting 119,203 probable and confirmed cases in Massachusetts, of which 9,163 are in Plymouth County. As of last Wednesday, DPH was reporting 288 COVID-19 cases in Hingham.

State Guidance on Gatherings

As we enter the last month of summer, we want to remind people to please be vigilant about taking COVID-19 precautions. The State recently sent a message reiterating guidance for large gatherings, including graduation parties and other summer events. Both DPH and the Hingham Health Department have received troubling reports of large gatherings where people were not wearing face coverings or practicing social distancing. The Commonwealth's current guidance limits indoor gatherings to no more than 25 people and outdoor gatherings to 100 people. Please do your part – practice social distancing, wear a face covering when you can't, wash your hands frequently, and of course stay home if you're feeling sick or have been exposed to COVID-19. Thank you for enjoying summer responsibly and working to prevent a resurgence in our community.”

Town Services Update

Assistant Town Administrator, Michelle Monsegur, gave the following report:

“Elder Services Updates

The Senior Center is currently offering 13 different remote programs, including fitness, discussion, social, and educational opportunities, as well as an “Open Door” meeting hour with the Director of Elder Services. Last week, the Senior Center partnered with the state Office of Consumer Affairs to offer a presentation on identify theft and fraud prevention for local seniors. South Shore Elder Services continues to operate Meals on Wheels out of the Hingham Senior Center. Fuel Assistance Recertification Applications will start to arrive in seniors’ mailboxes this month. Residents can reach out to Senior Center staff for assistance with these forms by calling 781-741-1458.

Hingham Public Library Updates

Right now, the Hingham Public Library is offering everything but in-person browsing and in-person computer use. All other services and resources are currently available, including virtual programs, technology one-on-one appointments, and access to the full Hingham collection digitally and via curbside pickup. Information about current Library events and programs, as well as instructions for curbside pickup, can be found at www.hinghamlibrary.org.”

Mr. Fisher asked for an update on the services at Town Hall. Ms. Monsegur said that Town Hall is currently open to Town employees only and they are adhere to the State’s guidance of staffing offices at 50% of the usual in-person numbers. Those employees not working in-person at Town Hall continue to work remotely from home. She noted that Town Hall continues to offer all its regular services and that staff is available by phone and email. She encouraged resident to reach out to staff as needed.

Appointments

Ms. Power noted that the Board has been hard at work matching the large number of Talent Bank volunteers to available positions. She said that they would soon be making many appointments and thanked the many people who volunteered.

Selectmen/Town Administrator Reports

Ms. Monsegur: Nothing to report

Mr. Mayo: Nothing to report

Mr. Fisher reported that the Town now owns the water company assets and asked Ms. Power to provide the Board with more details. Ms. Power said that Water Superintendent Russell Tierney has communicated to her that all operations have successfully transitioned and that the Weir River Water Company is now operational. Mr. Mayo reported that Suez had held a “Day One” event, attended by Javier Castro, President of Suez. He stressed the importance of the continuity of the same team that had been in place with Aquarion. Mr. Mayo also said that he had the pleasure of touring the water company facility. Suez communicated to him that they place a high importance on customer service, security, the safety of the plant, quality of water, improving service and improving Capital programs. Ms. Power acknowledged the hard work and attentional to detail of Tom Mayo, Michelle Monsegur, Kerry Ryan, John Coughlin and Jean Montgomery for ensuring a smooth transition of ownership of the water company.

Mr. Ramsey congratulated the graduating class of Hingham High School. He applauded the work of the School Committee for making the outdoor graduation ceremony happen.

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Ramsey seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm

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