

## Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

**Date: September 15, 2020**

**Place: Remote Meeting via Zoom**

***In attendance:*** Committee Members Bob Curley, Julie Strehle, Victor Baltera, Eryn Kelley, Evan Sheehan, Kathleen Almand, Libby Claypoole, Andy McElaney, Nancy MacDonald, Davalene Cooper, Dave Anderson, Alan Macdonald, Tina Sherwood, Kristen Dziergowski, George Danis and Town Accountant Sue Nickerson.

***Absent:*** No one.

***Call meeting to order:*** Chair Curley called the meeting to order at 7:05 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.”

***Comments from the public regarding items not on the Agenda:*** None

***Welcome new AdCom members:*** Chair Curley led all current and new members in introductions designed to familiarize members with each other's background.

***Approval of minutes:*** Minutes of the June 30, with revisions, were approved by roll call vote of 11-0-3 (new members Alan Macdonald, Tina Sherwood and Kristen Dziergowski abstained). Minutes from the July 14 meeting were approved by roll call vote of 10-0-4 (new members Alan Macdonald, Tina Sherwood and Kristen Dziergowski joined Dave Anderson in abstaining).

***Review of current forecast document:*** Ms. Nickerson led a review of the July 31 FY-21 Monthly Analysis Spreadsheet. This spreadsheet is part of the Town's FY-21 Financial Management Plan and will be updated and reviewed monthly.

On the revenue side, Ms. Nickerson stated that timing issues affected state aid, charges for services and excise taxes while investment income is down due to low interest rates this year and cash balances. Ms. Claypoole questioned a \$500,000 revenue difference in the FY-21 forecast on the spreadsheet and the FY-21 forecast in the ATM 20 Warrant. Ms. Nickerson described this as unused levy capacity which had been designated to fund property tax relief for low income seniors.

Mr. Anderson questioned Ms. Nickerson about critical areas of concern to which she replied that state aid (due to the unknown impact COVID-19 will have on the state budget) and meals tax receipts (lower due to COVID-19) were revenue concerns.

On the expense side, Ms. Nickerson stated that expenses were well controlled due in part to the deferral of capital expenditures till the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter. She also noted that employee pension benefits are due in July which distorts the monthly total compared to the annual expenditure. Mr. Curley added that controls on hiring and spending meant that all non-essential spending is deferred until we have a better understanding of probable revenue and expenses. Ms. Nickerson added that we have received \$60,000 from Plymouth County as reimbursement for FY-20 COVID-19 related expenses and that this sum has been deposited into fund balance. The Town has submitted additional expenses totaling \$700,000 to the County for FY-21 expenses. These funds will be returned to the budgets of the appropriate departments.

Ms. Nickerson stated that \$2.6 million in turn backs were realized in FY-20, primarily from the snow and ice account and the engineering department reorganization.

***Discussion of Public Safety Facility and Potential Special Town Meeting:*** Ms. MacDonald gave an update on the recently formed building committee, RFP process and a timeline on the purchase date and due diligence process for the property. The committee has done a walk-through of the existing Police Department and the North Street Fire Station and toured the recently completed Scituate public safety facility. Ms. MacDonald noted several areas the committee is looking into:

1. The proposed facility is 56,000 square feet versus 28,000 in Scituate;
2. Access onto Essington Drive from the proposed location is controlled by the MBTA and the Town will need to negotiate access prioritization for emergency vehicles;
3. The RT 3A traffic light is controlled by the State and the Town will need to negotiate priority access for emergency vehicles;
4. Test borings on the property may uncover hazardous materials given the industrial use of the property for ship building. Ms. Claypoole inquired about the seller's responsibility for any contamination clean-up expenses and Mr. Baltera stated that typically sellers do not assume this liability with the remedy being that the buyer has the option to cancel the transaction.

Mr. Curley stated that AdCom and the BOS would have a joint meeting with the Architects on October 15 and that the Warrant Article is due to the printer on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. AdCom members should be prepared for one to two meetings during this time.

The proposed Special Town Meeting date is November 14 and it will be conducted outdoors.

Ms. Kelly inquired about a walk-through for committee members and Ms. MacDonald and Mr. Curley indicated that Harbor Media may be preparing a public interest video presentation.

**ATFC Seminar registration:** Mr. Curley mentioned the annual seminar presented by the Association of Town Finance Committees will be via Zoom this year. The program is scheduled over three nights (10/22; 10/29 and 11/12). Registration is open to all AdCom members and registration costs are paid by the town.

**Liaison reports – Education:** Mr. Anderson gave an update report on the schools. Under the current plan schools will open remotely on September 16 with a hybrid solution beginning September 28. Some key issues identified by Mr. Anderson include:

1. Bus transportation is limited to 25 pupils per bus versus 77 normally;
2. COVID-19 expenditures for technology related items total \$1.2 million;
3. COVID-19 related PPE expenditures total \$350,000;
4. Revenue for full day Kindergarten will be short \$1.0 million versus budget
5. Revenue for Kids in Action will be short \$200,000 versus budget;
6. State aid is level funded for Q-1 but has not been determined for the rest of the year.

**Housekeeping items:**

1. The committee agreed to retain the 7:00 pm start time for meetings;
2. The committee agreed to record future meetings to support transparency but IT constraints/options need to be explored if the meetings are to be publicly available via Harbor Media. Mr. Curley and Ms. Strehle will investigate;
3. Next meeting scheduled for September 29 with HMLP presenting an overview and update on their operations;
4. Mr. Danis thanked those members who had completed their Conflict of Interest training and reminded those who have not done so to complete their training and to forward a copy of their certificate as soon as possible.

**Matters not anticipated within 48 hours of meeting:** None

**Adjourn:** Roll call vote to adjourn at 8:55 pm (14-0)

Respectfully Submitted,  
George Danis, Secretary

List of Documents Distributed for this Meeting:

Agenda

Monthly financial analysis spreadsheet: July  
ATFC annual seminar notification

Approved on 09/29/2020