

**Advisory Committee
Meeting Notes
January 10, 2023
Hingham Town Hall/Hybrid Meeting**

In Attendance: Chair George Danis, Tina Sherwood, Davalene Cooper, Andrew McElaney, Caitlyn Kirk, Lyndsey Kruzer, Brenda Black, Joe Griffin, Alan Macdonald, Carol Tully, Jason Price

Absent: Nancy MacDonald, Sarah Melia

Participating Remotely: Brian Stack, Kathy Curley

Call Meeting to Order: Chair Danis called the meeting to order at 7:00 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

There were no comments from the public.

FY 24 Budget Hearings:

Building Department (D. Cooper) Dept Head Mike Clancy, Hingham Building Inspector

In addition to funds appropriated in Article 6, the Building Department receives money from the Building Department Revolving Fund. The Revolving Fund receives revenue from gas, electric, and plumbing inspection fees. The Fund has a positive cash position and during FY24, the Revolving Fund anticipates revenue of \$192,000. In FY24, expenses to be paid by the Fund are anticipated to be \$300,000. The budget for salaries for the department is \$271,342, which is \$737 less than FY 23. FY 24 expenses are budgeted at \$14,910, which is a decrease of \$1,050, primarily because state travel is reduced by \$2,000. Printing services are increased by \$350, while repair and maintenance on vehicles is increased by \$600. It is expected that there will be a Warrant Article to raise fees for gas, plumbing, and electric inspections at this year's Annual Town Meeting.

A total budget of \$286,252 was recommended for the Building Department.

Weir River Water System (B. Black / T. Sherwood) Dept Head Russ Tierney, Water Superintendent

The Weir River Water System is an enterprise fund, therefore all of the expenses are paid for out of the revenues of selling water to Hingham, Hull, and Cohasset rate payers. The department consists of one full-time employee, with an additional request for an Assistant Superintendent. There are two other positions within the department that are partially paid for in the amount of \$10,000 for administration help and \$28,000 for 25% of the Town's GIS position. The remainder of the employees are contracted through Veolia Services. The budget for FY24 has increases which include wage adjustments and a 19%

increase in the operator contract services line – part of which comes from a 7.5% increase in contract services – including billing - provided by Veolia (who will hire 2 new positions) and reflects challenges with higher pricing in things like chemicals and equipment. There is also an increase in property taxes and an increase in property and liability insurance costs. The water company has implemented a reserve fund of \$100,000 for unexpected repairs.

A total budget of \$14,059,255 was recommended for the Weir River Water System.

Historic Preservation (C. Tully) Dept Head Andrea Young

The budget for the Historic Preservation is up by \$2,172 from last year, which is mostly due to the Memorial Bell Tower’s repair to sustain its restored condition. Total salaries will be \$85,796 and expenses will be \$9,713.

A total budget of \$95,509 was recommended for the Historic Preservation.

Library (A. McElaney) Dept Head Linda Harper, Director of the Library as well as David Mehegan, Chair of the Library Board of Trustees

The total budget for salaries for FY24 is \$1,806,243 an increase of \$26,808 or 1.5%. Overtime pay to employees is required to keep the library open on Sundays. The budget for expenses for FY24 is \$418,147, an increase of \$7,013 or 1.75%. Most of the increase is for books and periodicals. In FY24, a Commonwealth Grant of \$46,000 is to be expected.

A total budget of \$2,224,390 was recommended for the Library.

Recreation Commission (C. Tully) Dept Head – Mark Thorell

The Recreation budget is supported by a revolving fund. The total budget shows an increase of \$11,000 from last year. There are four full-time personnel, six full-time seasonal employees, and 125 part-time seasonal. There is a revolving fund of \$1,767,000 in revenue that comes from the camps and programs. Field Maintenance is up \$11,000. Salaries are budgeted at \$195,160 and expenses at \$192,445.

A total budget of \$387,561 was recommended for the Recreation Commission.

Warrant Articles: Hearing and Possible Vote on the Following Articles:

Article B: Assume Liability for DCR on Rivers, Harbors, etc.

Chapter 91, Section 11 authorizes appropriations for construction, maintenance, and improvements on the waterways. Towns are allowed to appropriate funds which are then transferred to the Commonwealth so DCR may manage the projects. Municipalities are also required to assume liability for the projects completed by DCR.

A motion was made, seconded and AdCom approved Article B by unanimous vote of those present 12-0.

Article L: Acceptance of Easements

The Article provides that the Town authorize, but not require, the Select Board to accept grants of easements for streets, water, drainage, sewer, and utility purposes or any public purpose on terms and conditions the Board deems in the best interest of the Town.

A motion was made, seconded and AdCom approved Article L by the unanimous vote of those present 12-0.

Article M: Extension of Hingham Senior Means-Tested Property Tax Exemption

In 2019, the town voted to adopt a Senior Means Tax Exemption for older Hingham residents. The purpose is to assist seniors who face lower income and higher real estate taxes. This authorization is due to expire in January 2024. Article M would remove the expiration date and permit the tax exemption to continue beyond January 2024.

A motion was made, seconded, and AdCom approved Article M by unanimous vote of those present 12-0.

Liaison Reports:

SSCC Pool (A. Macdonald)

Last week the budget for the Country Club was discussed. AI reported that the litigation brought in the Land Court by certain abutters is scheduled for trial in March 2023. The scheduled court date is in March, with possible decision by summer. If the project is able to move forward, the construction costs must be re-bid.

HMLP (B. Black)

The HMLP has submitted a Warrant Article asking for the Town's permission to put solar arrays on to Town buildings. There are several policy directions that the Light Board is considering and they have decided to put together a survey for residents regarding these subjects.

ACES- School Budget Session 1 (G. Danis)

Chair Danis reported that the School Committee and ACES held their first meeting to discuss the first draft of the FY24 school budget.

Discussion of Advisory Committee Housekeeping Items:

Approval of Minutes from the December 20, 2022 and January 3, 2023 AdCom Meetings

A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes from December 20, 2022 with minor edits, which was voted unanimously in favor (12-0).

A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes from January 3, 2023 with minor edits, which was voted unanimously in favor (12-0).

Next meeting: January 17, 2023

Chair Danis stated that the next AdCom Meeting will be held next Tuesday, January 17, 2023, where the initial reviews of the municipal budget hearings will be finished, and additional warrant articles will be reviewed.

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 p.m. was made, and voted unanimously in favor (12-0).

Documents Distributed for this Meeting:

AdCom January 10, 2023 Meeting Agenda
AdCom December 20, 2022 Meeting Minutes
AdCom January 3, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Article L Acceptance of Easements

Article M Extension of Hingham Senior Means-Tested Property Tax Exemption

Article B Assume Liability for DCR

Respectfully Submitted,

Alicia Anthony/Recording Clerk