

Board of Selectmen

January 12, 2021

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

7:00 PM: Call to order

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. There were no responses.

Approval of Minutes

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to approve the minutes dated December 8, 2020. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to approve the minutes dated December 15, 2020. Mr. Ramsey seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Agreement with Rotti McGroddy Design Collaborative, LLC for architect/designer services for the South Shore Country Club maintenance facility project and outdoor pool complex project

Ms. Power thanked Kevin Whalen, Director of the South Shore Country Club and Christine Smith, Chair of the South Shore Country Club Committee for joining the Board. Mr. Whalen reported that they had nine bidders for the project. The committee interviewed the top five bidders and ultimately chose RMD Design. He said that they had provided a very detailed scope of services and fees. He said that the fees would be as follows:

- Maintenance facility: \$264,590

- Master Plan: \$22,000
- Outdoor Pool Complex: \$296,715

He said that the 2-year contract would expire in 2023. The evaluating committee included J.R. Frey, Town Engineer, Bill Friend from the Country Club Management Committee, along with other South Shore Country Club Staff. When asked by Ms. Power, Mr. Whalen said that there are four main parts to the maintenance facility including:

- Maintenance shop
- Staff area
- Cold storage
- Environmental Center (fuel and chemical storage)

Mr. Whalen reminded everyone that the SSCC is an enterprise fund, which means that any money spent would be paid back by the SSCC, based on the revenues that the club generates. He also said that the maintenance portion of the project is important to the safety of the employees. Ms. Smith added that the Country Club Management Committee unanimously recommended Rotti McGrotty Design and authorized Mr. Whalen to sign the contract on their behalf. She thanked Mr. Whalen and his staff and Bill Friend for the large amount of work they completed in a short amount of time. She noted that golf, which is 85% of the club's revenue, has done very well during the pandemic. She felt that the SSCC has been a nice place for people to go and enjoy the outside in a safe manner.

Mr. Fisher commented that the Country Club is a valued asset for the Town and it is important that the Town "preserve and enhance it." He noted that an existing condition site survey, a geotech sub-surface investigation, and a hazardous material inspection were not included in the scope of work. He asked if any of that work has been done. Mr. Whalen said that some of that work has been done, including elevations, environmental flagging, identification of wetlands, and setbacks. He noted that no borings have been done to determine whether ledge or hazardous materials are present. He added that the SSCC would do everything necessary to be compliant with all regulations. He anticipated an extra cost for boring near the present tennis courts to determine the presence of ledge. He said that the Community Preservation Committee has allotted \$500,000 for the design of the pool, but their estimate has come in much lower. Mr. Fisher also noted some differences in the process of this project compared to the Joint Public Safety Project, which completed a site assessment before a design had been agreed upon. Mr. Mayo said that an extensive site assessment was done at 335 Lincoln Street because its former use was as a military installation. Ms. Smith also said that the new building would be better able to protect the environment from chemicals and fertilizer than what has been existing at the SSCC. Mr. Mayo suggested that the Board move forward with the contract as procured and they can talk to a number of professionals including Town Engineer J.R. Frey and Real Estate Counsel Susan Murphy to get a sense of what geo technical work or additional site assessments could be beneficial, and in what order. Mr. Fisher also asked for information on timing and target dates for the project. Mr. Whalen said that RM Design provided a preliminary schedule in their response to the RFP and noted that the contract concludes on January 4, 2023. Mr. Fisher encouraged the use of a timeline to meet scheduling goals throughout the project.

Mr. Ramsey clarified that tonight the Board is voting to take action on the Warrant Article from last spring. Mr. Mayo said that last Spring Town Meeting allocated funds to do this work.

Ms. Power noted that she reviewed this contract, as did Town Counsel John Coughlin, who reviews all agreements of this nature.

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the agreement with Rotti McGroddy Design Collaborative, LLC for architect/designer services for the South Shore Country Club maintenance facility project and outdoor pool complex project in an amount not to exceed \$583,405. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Ms. Power noted that RM Design has already signed this agreement, which is standard practice of this Board. The Board of Selectmen typically do not sign an agreement until the other party has done so.

Agreement with SAFE Boats International, LLC to purchase a new law enforcement vessel for the Harbormaster

Mr. Ken Corson, Harbormaster, outlined the agreement for the public. He said that, last spring, Hingham had been awarded a grant from the Federal Government Port Security for the purchase of a new patrol boat. He noted that this purchase was part of their 5-year capital plan. Their current boat is over 20 years old and had been slated to be replaced in 2017. He said that they tried to get several more years of use out of it in anticipation of receiving this grant. They have selected a contractor to construct the boat, which is a contractor they have used before. He said that the new boat will be a 24' center console and will be a great platform to be out with the community on the water. Mr. Corson explained that the grant would fund $\frac{3}{4}$ of the vessel would be funded through FY21 Capital Outlay appropriation, as well as some other funds. He noted that there would be some ability to change some of the electronics, etc. during the construction process. He also said that the boat would be functional within a year from the signing of the contract.

Ms. Power asked what would happen to the boat it would be replacing. Mr. Corson said that he would decide the exact plan later once the new boat was complete.

Mr. Fisher asked why the Town needs a customized vessel. Mr. Corson said that the Town needs a commercial-type vessel because recreational vessels do not last as long. Mr. Corson also noted that the boat would meet all environmental standards as required for four-stroke outboard engines. Mr. Corson anticipated the life span of the new boat could possibly be 30 years. Ms. Power noted that, in the past 15 months, Mr. Corson has secured grants for the Town of approximately \$2.3 million, including a \$2 million grant for dredging. Ms. Power commended his efforts in bringing State tax dollars to Hingham. She thanked Mr. Corson for his efforts in securing these grants, noting that his legal background as well as his background in law enforcement makes him uniquely positioned to write

compelling grants. She recognized the tremendous financial contributions that he has made to the Town of Hingham. Mr. Corson thanked his team, including Assistant Harbormaster Joe Driscoll who took the lead on this project.

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the agreement with SAFE Boats International, LLC to purchase a new law enforcement vessel for the Harbormaster in an amount not to exceed \$268,519.96, contingent on receipt of a signed agreement as presented from SAFE Boats International, LLC. Mr. Ramsey seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Review of FY22 Department Budgets

Ms. Power said that the board would be hearing from several department heads during the evening to review their annual budget requests. She noted that the board would not vote on any budgets or make any budgets recommendations at this meeting. They plan to wait until they hear budget requests from all Town departments, noting that FY22 revenue is very uncertain this year due to COVID-19. Ms. Power invited the public to visit the Town of Hingham website where they could access many of these budget documents. She felt that this could be an opportunity to learn about what each municipal department does. She also said that the Advisory Committee would be holding their own public hearings regarding these budgets, beginning next week. Ms. Power also extended the Boards appreciation and gratitude to every department head for the professionalism and dedication that they have shown to the Town over the last 10 months during the pandemic, adding that they not only had to figure out how to stay open for business, but many also took on more responsibilities, due to COVID-19.

Town Accountant, Reserve Fund, Debt Service, Employee Benefits, Unclassified

Ms. Sue Nickerson, Town Accountant, presented.

Town Accountant:

Ms. Nickerson stated that the Town Accountant:

- Manages weekly Payroll and Accounts Payable Warrants for Town, School, and SSREC
- Coordinate yearly Audit for the Town (Liaison to Audit Committee)
- Prepare and submit yearly Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR)
- Assist in the preparation of the Town's annual budget; staff and work closely with Advisory Committee
- Manage workers' compensation and unemployment
- Retirement Office
- Dispatch

Ms. Nickerson cited FY22 salary requests of \$292,016 and expenses of \$11,355. Significant COVID-19 impacts were to:

- Coordinate multiple municipal and school CARES Act reimbursements totaling \$3M

- Monthly FY21 revenue and expenditure analysis with Forecast Group
- Investigate endless fraudulent unemployment claims
- Suspended in-person consultations for retirees and new/existing employees
- Manage remote meetings via Zoom for Advisory Committee, Audit Committee, and Retirement Board

There was some discussion regarding the change in salary requests over the past several years. Ms. Nickerson explained that some employees had retired and new ones started at a lower step. Ms. Power noted that the budget has been increasing by approximately 2% per year. She also mentioned that a detailed breakdown of expenses is also available to the public on the Town's website.

Reserve Fund:

Ms. Nickerson explained that the Reserve Fund is .75% of the operating budget and is the budget for unforeseen expenses that arise during the fiscal year. She recommended a budget of \$664,578 for FY22. She said that when an unforeseen expense comes up, a department head could fill out a Reserve Fund request, to be approved by the Board of Selectmen and the Advisory Committee.

Debt Service:

Ms. Nickerson stated that the debt service is the principal and interest payments on the Town's debt obligations. She noted that a schedule was available on the website. FY22 principal is \$4,122,877 and interest is \$1,584,499, with an additional unused non-excluded debt capacity of \$196,262.

Ms. Nickerson stated that the Town's debt service included the following:

- Hingham Middle School
- East School
- Central Fire Station
- DPW Facility
- The turf field
- Road improvements

There was some additional discussion of interest rates, which are on average 2% average for a typical term of 20 years.

Group Insurance:

Ms. Nickerson stated that the Town's Group Insurance is health and basic life insurance for employees and retirees. The Town increased the life insurance benefit in FY21. Ms. Nickerson stated that the Town will not know their FY22 rates until the first week in March, so she typically forecasts the budget to be a 10% increase over the previous year. The request for FY22 was \$7,347,181 for both municipal and school employees, and retirees. Ms. Nickerson said that Hingham's retirement is approximately 70%. Ms. Power noted that this is in line with Hingham's peer communities.

Workers' Compensation:

Ms. Nickerson said that the category is payment for job-related injuries. She plans to level fund this with a FY22 request of \$330,000. She said that this has been sufficient over the past few years.

Unemployment:

Ms. Nickerson said that the Town of Hingham is a reimbursable employer, meaning that the Town of Hingham pays for every dollar that an employee receives in unemployment. She suggested level funding this budget in FY22 with a request of \$30,000. She noted that unemployment claims, real and fraudulent, have been extremely difficult during FY21, due to COVID-19. COVID-19 related claims would be eligible for CARES Act reimbursement.

Contributory Retirement:

Ms. Nickerson explained that this budget for pension liability

Medicare:

Ms. Nickerson explained that this budget is the Town's share of mandated Medicare employment tax. Her FY22 budget request is \$1,177,935, which is a 10% increase over the prior year. This budget includes all municipal and school employees, additional Police details and Recreation Department employees. Ms. Power suggested that this budget request may be low due to the large number of new employees requested by the School Department. Ms. Nickerson said that Group insurance may also be affected.

Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB):

Ms. Nickerson stated that this budget covers health insurance for future retirees. Hingham is one of only a handful of municipalities that fund this. She noted that OPEB would be fully funded in 2035. Her FY22 budget request is \$1,267,567. Ms. Nickerson stated that funding OPEB is very important to the Town's credit rating. There was some additional discussion of how these funds were being invested. Town Treasurer, Jean Montgomery, stated that the funds are invested in the Pension Reserve Investment Trust Fund, which is the Massachusetts State retirement fund, managed by the State's Retirement Board. She noted that they have been very happy with its performance.

Insurance:

Ms. Nickerson's FY22 budget request for property, building, and liability insurance was \$1,028,87. This would cover all insurance for the Town and schools. She noted that the increase is due to several large claims over the past several years, including the Middle School roof, the High School fire, and the East School flood. Ms. Power added that the Weir River Water System, as an enterprise fund, would be paying a portion of the insurance bill in FY22. Mr. Fisher asked if the Town ever bids out on insurance. Mr. Mayo answered that the Town plans to do so next year.

Ms. Power shared her appreciation for Ms. Nickerson and her team in their efforts this year.

Dispatch

Mr. Mayo explained that this budget supports the South Shore Regional Emergency Communications Center (SSRECC), located in Town Hall. SSCREE serves the towns of Hingham, Hull, Norwell and Cohasset. His FY22 budget request was \$941,182. He noted that the budget request per Town was based on population. There was a short discussion regarding the 5% increase in their budget. There

was some additional discussion regarding inviting more towns into the group in a fiscally sound way, as well as associated space constraints.

Treasurer/Collector

Ms. Jean Montgomery, Treasurer/Collector, presented. She explained that her department is responsible for the following:

- Managing the Town's cash
- The investment of Town funds
- The Investment of Temporarily Available Cash/public funds
- Debt issuance
- Tax lien deeds
- The auctioning of land of low value
- The issuance and collecting of tax bills
- Enforcement measurers
- Municipal lien certificates

Ms. Montgomery said that her department has continued to perform at 100% while adhering to COVID-19 staffing and workplace safety restrictions. She requested a FY22 budget of \$417,147, which included salaries of \$357,327 and expenses of \$59,820. There was a short discussion about tax liens and the impact of COVID-19.

Assessors

Ms. Erin Walsh presented. She cited the department's key initiatives as follows:

- Provide the highest quality of services including efficient and courteous service to the public
- Provide financial stability by fairly and equitably determining and assessing all real and personal property at its full and fair market value as of January 1 of each year for the purpose of taxation in compliance with State law
- Maintain and administer all property tax data and mapping records
- Administration of motor vehicle and boat excise taxes
- Administration of personal and motor vehicle tax abatements, betterments, and statutory tax exemptions
- Implement policy decisions and directions of the Board of Assessors

Ms. Walsh requested a FY22 budget of \$313,838, which included \$262,635 in salaries and \$52,203 in expenses. She noted that interior inspections were temporarily stopped due to COVID-19, while exterior operations continued as usual. Ms. Walsh also reported that house sales in 2021 were down by 11%. Mr. Fisher asked if the Assessor's Office uses the GIS technology. She explained they had used a GID service in the past. Mr. Mayo reported that the Town is in the process of hiring a GIS coordinator thus eliminating the need for an outside contractor.

Human Resources

Ms. Lisa Campbell, Director of Human Resources, presented. She stated the key initiative of the Human Resource Department are as follows:

- To implement updated wage and classification plan
- coordinate quarterly training program with EAP
- Ethics training for all employees, including special municipal employees
- Manage yearly open enrollment for benefits
- Maintain I9 record keeping retention and destruction system

Important COVID-19 impacts were:

- Increase in health and dental insurance enrollments due to qualifying events
- Increase in life insurance inquiries
- Conducted electronic open enrollment for health and dental
- Increase in leaves of absences by 12.5%
- Assist in development and implementation of COVID-19 return to work and sick leave policies
- Creation and maintenance of Families First Coronavirus Relief Act (FFCRA) policies and processes

Her FY22 budget request of \$151,274 included salaries of \$147,624 and expenses of \$3,650. She noted that the 9% increase in her budget was due to an increase in hours for her benefits coordinator, due to the increased workload created by the pandemic. Ms. Power commended Ms. Campbell for her work on the wage and classification survey she implemented this past year. She stated that it is very crucial to the retention of very skilled employees.

Information Technology

Mr. Steve Becker, Director of Information Technology presented. He explained that his department is responsible for the following:

- Provide Technology Services to all 26 Town Departments as well as Boards and Committees (except for HMLP) across 16 municipal locations and manages delivery of these services across the fiber network.
- Implement and monitors cybersecurity defenses. (Web/Spam filters, Endpoint Antivirus, firewalls, assessments and mitigation)
- Responsible for over 300 user accounts, 36 Servers, 2 EMC SANs, 280 End User Devices (Desktops, Laptops, Tablets), 100 printers, 97 IP Security Cameras, 4 Firewalls, 27 Wireless Access Points, Backup appliance, Web and Email Security Gateways, Email Message Archiver, 24 Cisco Switches, and 18 UPSs.
- 1 voice server, 30 voice switches and 750 telephones.
- Providing procurement, configuration, deployment, maintenance, removal/disposal of all technology hardware and software/databases.
- Administration of 3 websites and 11 social media accounts.

He cited a key initiative of FY22 as the implementation of a Redundant Fiber Loop to replace existing Comcast I-NET fiber connecting municipal buildings. Other initiatives include:

- Investigating upgrade of IT/Data Center area

- COVID-19 – Enabling remote workforce through VPN access
- COVID-19 – Purchase and deployment of 57 new laptops for remote users
- COVID-19 – Initial setup of Zoom for staff and public meetings along with ongoing meeting scheduling and video archival maintenance
- File server migration to new server
- MS Exchange migration to new server
- Cisco Switch upgrades
- Town Hall Security Cameras Phase II

Mr. Becker explained the challenging impacts of COVID-19 for their department. Main impacts included:

- Ramp up of additional remote users via the Virtual Private Network (VPN) – increased the number of VPN users from approximately 52 to 117
- Distribution of staff desktops to remote personnel with at home assistance when needed
- Purchase and deployment of 57 laptops to key personnel – much setup was completed offsite
- Implementation and ongoing administration of Zoom meetings as well as video management and archival
- Supported COVID-19 Incident Management Team
- Alternating schedules made collaboration between IT personnel difficult - discussion of issue resolutions, deployment plans, etc.

Mr. Becker said his FY21 request of \$572,153 includes salaries of \$295,439 and expenses of \$276,714. He further explained that their total for salaries includes a reimbursement of \$54,991 from the schools and a reimbursement of \$25,158 from the Weir River Water System for a GIS Coordinator.

Ms. Power commended Mr. Becker's initiatives as COVID-19 hit and employees started to work from home. She thanked the whole IT Department for their essential help during the pandemic.

Veterans' Services, GAR Hall, Celebrations

Mr. Keith Jermyn, Director of Veterans Services, presented.

Veterans Services

He stated the mission and services of the Veterans Services as follows:

- Administer benefits to qualifying veterans and/or their dependents under MGL Chapter 115
- Provide assistance to and advocate for all of the Town's veterans and their dependents
- Direct emergency financial assistance for veterans in need
- Coordinate military ceremonies and events to recognize and honor Hingham veterans
- Manage a Town-wide Flag Notification ALERT System for the Town's 37-municipal flag poles
- Liaise with regional, state, and federal officials and programs to advocate for veteran resources, services, and benefits

Mr. Jermyn explained several impacts of COVID-19 that his department experienced this past year including:

- Veterans & surviving spouses unable to access the office; most need in-person assistance with receipts and monthly benefit checks due to inability to navigate online functions, and geriatric state – increased man hours and increases phone and mailings expenses.
- Suspended in-person intake interviews for ALL Federal & State Claims in March thru present – increased Department Head hours, as well as increased phone and postage expenses.
- Implemented virtual Veterans Council and GAR Trustees via Zoom
- Mandated bi-weekly Working Groups (A & B); Implemented for Contact Tracing

Mr. Jermyn recommended a FY22 budget request of \$289,928, which included salaries of \$109,522 and expenses of \$180,406. There was additional discussion of the impact of COVID-19 on those Veterans who utilize the Town's tax work-off program.

GAR Hall

Mr. Jermyn explained that GAR Memorial Hall is managed by a Board of Selectmen-appointed, 3-member Board of Trustees who manage the 132-year-old historical museum memorializing military service of Town's veterans dating back to Civil War. GAR Hall serves several other Town functions/groups, including BSA, HPD, 50-Flag's Program, Militia, DAV, Legion, & VFW and hosts HHS Sophomore Class Annual History Day event, now in its 11th year. Mr. Jermyn recommended a FY22 budget of \$19,692, which included \$9,839 for repairs & maintenance of building and grounds and \$9,048 for utilities.

Celebrations

Mr. Jermyn recommended a FY22 budget of \$17,107, which included:

- Funds for annual mulching, floral plantings, and wreath placing (Decorating) of the Town's 21 military/veteran memorials
- Funds procurement (and replacement) of metal grave markers for the deceased veterans iaw MGL
- Funds coordination of annual ceremonies including:
 - National Peace Officers' Memorial Day
 - Memorial Day and Veterans' Day Observances
 - Battle of Grape Island Commemoration
 - Fourth of July Parade
 - POW/MIA National Recognition Day
 - Seaman H. L. Foss Recognition Day

Mr. Mayo thanked Mr. Jermyn for all he does for the Town's veterans. Ms. Power echoed his comments and highlighted the trust Hingham's veterans have in Mr. Jermyn and Ms. Potts. She appreciated all he did during the pandemic to continue making connections with Hingham's veterans.

Possible Warrant Articles for 2021 Annual Town Meeting

Climate Action Plan study funds

Ms. Power took a break from the departmental budget discussion to address the proposed Warrant Articles from Hingham's Climate Action Task Force. She introduced Brad Moyer, Chair of the Energy Action Committee and member of the Climate Action Task Force. Mr. Moyer, 23 Colonial Road, introduced members of the Climate Action Task Force including Kathy Reardon and Maria Zaid. He explained that the Energy Action Committee had previously put forth a Warrant Article for the FY21 Annual Town Meeting regarding an energy action goal. This Article was subsequently retracted after consultation of the Board of Selectmen and the Advisory Committee, in an attempt to obtain funds and additional planning, as well as the creation of an Energy Action Task Force, formed under the leadership of Tom Mayo. He also noted that Town Planner, Mary Savage-Dunham and Brooks Winter of the MAPC were also instrumental in helping the Task Force. Through a public workshop, input from community members, and weekly meeting, the Task Force created two Warrant Articles. One Article asked for requisition of funds to undertake a climate action planning effort. The other addressed a goal of achieving net neutrality by 2014, or another feasible target. Mr. Moyer shared with the public the following proposed Warrant Articles.

ARTICLE A: Will the Town vote to raise and appropriate, borrow or transfer from available funds, a sum of money to be spent by the Town for the purposes of creating a climate action plan, which will evaluate a wide range of carbon emission reduction strategies and propose measures to achieve a zero sum of carbon emissions produced and taken out of the atmosphere ("net zero") by the year 2040 or another target deemed feasible, or act on anything related thereto?

Mr. Moyer pointed out that the amount of funding in Article A was not yet specified. He noted that MAPC had put together a plan using the \$50,000 as a preliminary guide. He said that they are still learning from what some other Towns have done. Also, HMLP has said they would be willing to put some funds towards this Article. Ms. Power added that it is typical Town practice to save the final amount for the recommended motion, in case the number changes during the process. Mr. Moyer also pointed out that Article A would cover all carbon emissions in Hingham, not only in the municipal sector, but also in the residential, business, and transportation sectors throughout town. He added that the goal of Article A is to inform the Town that their goal is net neutrality by 2040, but that the planning effort could yield another target, based on the results of the study.

ARTICLE B: Will the Town vote to establish a Climate Action Planning Committee charged with establishing a Climate Action Plan, or act on anything related thereto, with such committee consisting of 12 members determined as follows: one member of the Energy Action Committee, who shall serve as Chair of the Climate Action Planning Committee; one member of Cleaner Greener Hingham, one member of the School Committee or its designee; one member of the Hingham Municipal Light Plant; one member of the Planning Board or its designee; one member of the Conservation Commission; one member of the Weir River Estuary Committee; one member of the Development &

Industrial Commission, and four residents, two selected by the Board of Selectmen and two selected by the Moderator?

Mr. Moyer explained that the body proposed in Article B would be town-wide, with a purposed of overseeing the work of the consulting firm/expert brought in with the funds obtained by Article A. Mr. Moyer noted that this plan was modeled after the efforts of Hingham's Master Plan, coupled with research into efforts of other peer communities. Mr. Fisher commented on the environmental impact of the MBTA's proposed service cuts to the ferry and the Greenbush train service. He also asked why the Energy Action Task Force had a plan of net neutrality of 2040 when the State has recommended a goal of 2050. Mr. Moyer said that they went with the goal of 2040 in an effort to make Hingham a leader in this area. There was some additional discussion on this goal. Mr. Fisher thanked Mr. Moyer for his efforts. Mr. Ramsey felt that this was a wonderful first step and he was looking forward to supporting these Articles. He was happy that HMLP was planning to support this effort. He also suggested that a smaller committee could enhance efficiencies. Mr. Moyer thanked the community for all their support. Ms. Power said that she supported inserting the proposed Warrant Articles, but supported Mr. Ramsey's concerns regarding the size of the proposed committee.

Laura Burns, 479 Main Street, felt that it was meaningful that the Board of Selectmen showed support for the proposed articles.

Vote: Ms. Power made a motion to insert the attached Warrant Articles, as provided by Town Council, for funding a Climate Action Plan for the Town of Hingham and to establish a Climate Action Planning Committee into the Warrant for the Town of Hingham 2021 Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Public Safety Facility design and bid funds

Mr. Mayo explained that the proposed Warrant Article allows the Town to complete and move past the conceptual design for a joint Public Safety facility into preliminary and ultimately final design and construction. It would allow the Town to get construction bids and project managers etc. in order to get a final design. The final design would provide the Town with information necessary for potentially funding the development and building of a joint Public Safety facility. Mr. Fisher, liaison to the Public Safety Building Committee clarified that this Article does not authorize the construction of the project, but rather will help the Town determine what is appropriate to build. Mr. Bob Garrity, Chair of the Public Safety Building Committee felt that the proposed Article was consistent with what the committee has been and will continue to do. He noted that the Committee would, over the next couple of months, determine the designer as well as costs for the project. Mr. Fisher added that the urgency in moving forwards with the project has not diminished. Ms. Power noted that, if Town Meeting were to authorize design funds in the spring of 2021, a request for construction funds would happen in the fall of 2022, at the earliest. There was some additional discussion as this project relates to the Foster School project.

Ms. Power commented that the Town could take up both projects at the same time. Mr. Fisher concurred and noted that the Board's vote on this should not be viewed as a prioritization of this project above any others. Ms. Power also inquired whether the additional work would include finalizing the size of the proposed facility, which Mr. Mayo confirmed. Ms. Power stated her opinion that, while the feasibility study determined the site was capable of supporting a 50,000 square foot facility, she was not sure whether a facility of that size was warranted.-

Vote: Ms. Power made a motion to insert the attached Warrant Article for funding for the design and construction bid documents for the new public safety facility to be located at 33 Lincoln Street, Hingham, Massachusetts into the Warrant for the Town of Hingham Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Warrant Article for Public Safety Facility design and bid funds:

Will the Town vote to raise and appropriate, borrow or transfer from available funds, a sum of money to be expended by the Board of Selectmen to be used to pay the expenses for design, architectural, engineering, owner's project manager and other professional services to complete the design and to issue construction bid documents and to obtain construction bids for a new Public Safety Facility to be located at 335 Lincoln Street, Hingham, Massachusetts, or act on anything relating thereto.

Fire

Deputy Louis LaChance and Fire Chief Steve Murphy presented. Deputy LaChance explained that their mission and services continue to include the following:

- To save lives, protect property, and support our community
- Provide the best possible customer service through professionalism and pride
- Promote fire prevention, public education, and risk reduction
- To provide pre-hospital care/transportation and fire control
- To show fiscal responsibility and strategic planning for Hingham's future needs
- We are the one stop agency for any emergency, non-emergency, or just when someone doesn't know who to call.

Chief Murphy explained some major impacts of COVID-19 on the Fire Department, including the following:

- Daily exposure to suspected and confirmed patients with no transmission to FD personnel
- Transported 235 patients presumed positive. (801 unknown)
- Instituted Town Incident Management Team (IMT) that held over 350 command group meetings
- Created Fire Department IMT, and participated in restaurant re-opening, Town Meeting prep, and other working groups.
- Purchased \$51,900 worth of PPE and Decontamination Equipment.

- Submitted FEMA reimbursement request for \$867,233.84

There was some additional discussion regarding FEMA and CARES Acts reimbursements. Chief Murphy said that approximately 95% of Police and Fire overtime would be eligible for 75% reimbursement through FEMA.

During FY21 the Fire Department's key initiatives included the following:

- Hired eight new firefighters, leaving the department with just one vacancy
- Transitioned to online EMS training
- Created Town IMT to help manage COVID including tracking expenses and proper PPE for all Town departments
- Extensive use of Emergency Management capabilities
- Continue assisting Town in COVID response, recovery, and return to pre-COVID while applying lessons learned
- Expanding home safety inspection program and community paramedics

Chief Murphy reported that the department is looking to help the community through serving as vaccinators. He said that they currently have 8 employees who are able to serve in this capacity and hope to add 3 more. He also said that their budget is still using the numbers from their FY20 collective bargaining agreement. His FY22 budget request of \$6,202,739 includes \$5,618,989 for salaries, \$509,259 for expenses and an additional request of \$74,491 for an additional firefighter. There was some additional discussion regarding the hiring process for firefighters, which can take from 12-14 months. Chief Murphy also provided the Board with some additional information regarding the use of overtime within the department. He stated that the majority of overtime hours are a direct result of call-backs and training for firefighters. He explained that COVID-19 was responsible for increased overtime hours. FEMA reimbursements should cover much of the additional overtime due to COVID-19. Chief Murphy expressed his thanks to the Board for their efforts to move forward the joint Public Safety facility, but noted that there were a number of repairs and maintenance for all three stations that would need to be addressed before the completion of that facility. He cited mold issues at North Station and the replacement of fire detectors, halogen lights and other items at the Central Station.

There was some additional discussion regarding items not covered under their collective bargaining agreement, additional expenses for ambulance supplies, and expenses associated with recruits attending the Fire Academy.

Ms. Power thanks the Chief and Deputy Chief for the continuing dedication and professionalism shown by the Fire Department during the pandemic this past year.

Police, Animal Control, Harbormaster

Harbormaster

Harbormaster Ken Corson explained that the mission and services of the Harbormaster are as follows:

- Public Safety
 - Protection of harbor

- Protection of life and property
- Educate and enforce laws, and regulations governing navigable waters, islands, and shorefronts
- Harbor Management
 - Mooring management
 - Harbor dredging
 - Boat ramp replacement
 - Five islands
 - Boat ramp
 - Beach
 - Red carpet event
- Implement Shellfish Plan

Mr. Corson reported that his FY22 budget request of \$283,289 includes \$208,151 in salaries and \$75,138 in expenses. He noted that FY20 saw the department's largest revenue to date, due to a large number of late fees for mooring permits. He attributed this to be a result of the pandemic. He noted that the department focused on educating the public on COVID-related regulations. Ms. Power thanked Mr. Corson for his work on reorganizing the mooring field.

Animal Control

Chief David Jones presented on behalf of Ms. Leslie Badger, Animal Control Officer. He explained the mission and services of the department as follows:

- Finding loose/missing pets in and around Hingham and reuniting them with their owners.
- Capturing/handling livestock, wildlife, marine mammals and getting them the proper medical care or humanly putting them down.
- Monitoring the Coyote program, conducting neighborhood and town presentations.
- Patrolling Bare Cove Park and monitoring the off-leash program.
- Helped and removed 1000+ swarm of honeybees from Town Hall grounds.
- Working with Veteran's affairs to help resident Veterans with their pets

Chief Jones reported salaries of \$69,099 and expenses of \$6,200, for a total FY22 budget request of \$75,299. Chief Jones and the Board thanked Ms. Badger for her dedication and continued engagement with the community.

Police Department

Chief Jones presented. He stated that the department continues to implement their core values of "integrity, service, excellence and leadership." He also thanked the employees for their service during the uncertainty of the pandemic. Main goals going forward include:

- Community Re-engagement
- Reintroduce our community programs post COVID:
 - Citizen's Police Academies – Linden Ponds / HPD
 - National Night Out / Family Fun Day
 - Community Meetings – Boy/Girl Scouts, K-9 Demos, etc.

- Partner with community groups to offer new programs
- Training
 - Restart training programs that were halted due to COVID-19
 - Offer innovative new training opportunities for employees
 - Focus on regional training opportunities
- Outreach
 - Engage with underserved groups to partner with our Civil Rights Officer
 - Plymouth Country Outreach – Drug Dependency / Overdose
 - Domestic Violence Advocate
 - Mental Health Clinician

Chief Jones reported the many impacts of the pandemic on the department including:

- Suspended all in-person programming in March, including civilian fingerprinting, Citizen's Police Academy Classes at Linden Ponds and HPD, station tours, internships, and community meetings.
- Temporarily moved several administrative and investigative personnel back to patrol; Records division and administrative assistants worked from home with portable equipment.
- All Officer continuing education programs suspended, online training has attempted to fill the void – but many trainings require hands-on experience
- Provided staff for the COVID-19 Command Team, Reopening Groups, and Incident Management Teams.
- Developed policies and procedures to minimize risk to officers and staff.

Chief Jones explained that his FY22 budget request of \$6,333,878 included \$5,864,398 for salaries and \$396,900 for expenses, with additional requests of \$32,580 for a part-time Mental Health Clinician and \$40,000 for overtime. There was some additional discussion regarding the Mental Health Clinician request and the request for overtime. Ms. Power hoped that the Town could increase funding for a Mental Health Clinician over time. Chief Jones explained the benefits of having the Mental Health Clinician dedicated to the Police Department and available to respond to calls with officers.

Mr. Andrew Turner, 179 Wompatuck Road, asked if the budget presentations would be made available to the public. Ms. Power advised that all related budget materials and financial reports would be made available to the public on the Board of Selectmen page at www.hingham-ma.gov. He also asked for additional information relating to officer equipment. Chief Jones said that they have a contractual obligation for the replacement of uniforms and equipment that become damaged. Chief Jones stated that, under the collective bargaining agreement, officers are issued 2 sets of long-sleeved uniforms, 2 sets of short sleeve uniforms, a bullet-resistant vest, body armor, a duty belt with a firearm, radio, taser, handcuffs and also outerwear including a raincoat, hat, and boots. Mr. Turner also expressed interest in obtaining additional information regarding officer training. Ms. Power invited Mr. Turner to email her for more details.

Police Department request to repurpose a portion of FY21 Capital funds

Ms. Power explained that the Police Department is requesting to repurpose some capital for training equipment and personal protective gear. Chief Jones explained that they are hoping to repurpose some funds that had been allocated to improving their evidence room. He further explained that these funds

would allow them to offer the necessary equipment that would have been provided to officers during trainings that had been cancelled due to COVID-19. He hoped to conduct these mandatory trainings in Hingham with the equipment they hope to purchase with said money. He hope to repurpose \$25,904.90.

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to approve the request of the Police Department to repurpose a portion of FY21 Capital funds for training equipment and personal protective gear. Mr. Ramsey seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Inside Town Finances

Ms. Power announced the implementation of a new resource for residents that aims to educate the public on different topics related to Town finances. She said that each week, the Board of Selectmen would introduce a new topic, related to Town finances. Each volume would be made available at www.hingham-ma.gov. She read the first volume in the series titled “Revenue”.

COVID-19 Update

Mr. Mayo gave the following update on the COVID-19 crisis:

“COVID-19 Data:

As of yesterday, the MA Department of Public Health (DPH) is reporting 417,568 total confirmed COVID-19 cases in Massachusetts, of which 28,588 are in Plymouth County. Hingham cases continue to rise. As of Friday, Hingham remains in the state’s “red” COVID-19 category, with 1,005 total cases (compared to 622 total cases one month ago). Our average daily incidence rate is 58.6 per 100,000 people over the prior 14 days, compared to 31.24 one month ago. These are big increases. The percent of people testing positive for COVID-19 is also rising. The percent positivity for the last 14 days was 5.29% for Hingham, compared to 3.32% one month ago.

Vaccine Rollout:

Vaccine distribution continues across Massachusetts. The state has announced [a three-phase vaccine rollout plan](#) that corresponds with CDC recommendations.

- **Phase 1** will run from about December 2020 – February 2021 and will cover the following people, listed in order of priority:
 - a. Clinical and non-clinical health care workers doing direct and COVID-facing care
 - b. Long term care facilities, rest homes and assisted living facilities
 - c. Police, fire and emergency medical services
 - d. Congregate care settings, including corrections and shelters
 - e. Home-based health care workers
 - f. Health care workers doing non-COVID-facing care

The state continues to update definitions for people covered by those groups on its “[When can I get the COVID-19 website?](#)” The state has been working directly with hospitals and other health care facilities

to vaccinate the people in group 1a – clinical and non-clinical health care workers doing direct and COVID-facing care. Many of those people just received their second vaccine dose.

- People in group 1b – long-term care facilities, rest homes, and assisted living facilities – are being vaccinated as part of the Federal Pharmacy Partnership Program. Staff from the Town’s Vaccine Planning Group are in touch with these facilities in Hingham on a weekly basis. So far:

- Linden Ponds has held two vaccination clinics to cover 530 residents and another clinic is scheduled for this week;
- Queen Anne’s Nursing Home has vaccinated 68 out of 100 residents; and
- Harbor House Nursing Home continues to work through its vaccinations.

The Town partnered with Cohasset, Hull, Norwell, and Scituate to secure vaccines from the state for our police, fire, emergency medical services personnel, which is group 1c. Our Vaccine Planning Group is coordinating clinics to have Hingham paramedics vaccinate our public safety employees. As of today, we have vaccinated 90 public safety employees and have another 60 individuals scheduled to get vaccinated later this week. The state will be publishing more information tomorrow about vaccination of people in group 1d – congregate care settings – and continues to plan for additional groups later in the rollout plan.

The Town’s Vaccine Planning Group is coordinating logistics for the Town so that we are prepared to do our part. We are doing everything we can, given the information and supplies from the state.”

Mr. Fisher reported that he had received as of inquiries from residents regarding vaccinations. Mr. Mayo advised residents to monitor the Department of Public Health’s website for more information.

Public Comment

Ms. Power read the following statement:

“The Board of Selectmen has set aside up to 15 minutes for public comments. Speakers are offered the opportunity to speak for up to 3 minutes. We ask that all comments be directed to the Chair and that they be delivered in a constructive way. This is not a time for the Board of Selectmen to engage in discussion and the Board of Selectmen does not necessarily endorse any of the views expressed during public comment.”

There were no comments from the public.

Selectmen/Town Administrator Reports

Ms. Monsegur: Nothing to report

Mr. Mayo: Nothing to report

Mr. Fisher announced an upcoming meeting on Thursday, January 16 at 6pm of the MBTA, which will focus on their efforts to improve the dock at the Hingham Shipyard. He reported that the MBTA plans to spend approximately \$17 million on the existing floating dock and access gangways in an attempt to improve the rider experience and bring it into compliance with updated accessibility standards. He advised the public to visit www.mbta.com/hinghamferrydock for more information about the meeting.

Mr. Andy McElahney, 26 Meyers Farm Road, member of the Advisory Committee, asked if Hingham would be able to add dentists to the vaccination list. Mr. Mayo said dentists are in group 1E, according to the State, and that the Town would not have access to additional vaccine supplies out of order on the State's list.

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

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

The meeting adjourned at 11:33 PM.

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

