

# Board of Selectmen

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January 19, 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

## **6:30 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.

## **Review of FY22 Department Budgets**

### **Bare Cove Park**

Rik Johnson, 6 Simmons Road, presented. Bare Cove Park is a former U.S. Navy ammunition depot, now 484-acre wildlife sanctuary and public recreation area along the banks of the Weymouth Back River. He recommended a FY22 level budget of \$28,424, which includes 1 part-time ranger. He reported that more people than usual have been using the park during the pandemic. Ms. Power asked how the dog-leashing program has been going. He said that the committee has generally been pleased with the program. Mr. Fisher asked for clarification on what falls under the category of Grounds R & M. Mr. Johnson said that park maintenance, grounds keeping, fencing, etc. fall under that category. Mr. Ramsey commended the work of Park Ranger Scott McMillian. Ms. Power thanked the Bare Cove Park Committee for being great custodians of the park.

### **Elder Services**

Ms. Jennifer Young, Director of Elder Services and the Senior Center, presented. She reported that the mission of Elder Services is to support the independence and ongoing personal development of Hingham’s population 60 and older, advocate for their needs, and work to enhance the quality of their lives. She recommended a FY22 level budget of \$293,095, which included \$268,206 in salaries and \$293,095 in expenses. There was some discussion regarding the effects of COVID-19 on the Senior Center programs and services. She noted that two of their transportation positions are fully grant-funded. Mr. Fisher clarified that the Senior Center is not currently open to the public and asked Ms. Young to elaborate on outreach calls made to seniors during the pandemic. Ms. Young said that, at the beginning of the pandemic, volunteers reached out to the Town’s oldest residents in order to get information to them. Volunteers made 913 individual calls, and a total of 2,700 personal and pre-recorded calls to elders. Mr. Fisher also asked if there were any planned building improvements that would be made while they wait for a more comprehensive renovation. She said that they have some

minor renovations planned, including automated curtains and paint to make doorway thresholds more visible. Ms. Power pointed out that Ms. Young's presentation quantified what it would cost if they were to pay their many volunteers at the Senior Center, which she estimated to be \$280,734. There was some additional discussion about how and why seniors engage with the Senior Center.

### **Bathing Beach Trustees**

Mr. Ed Johnson, 108 Ward Street, member of the Bathing Beach Trustees, presented. He explained that the Bathing Beach is operated by a Board of Trustees who manage the property "as a park, bathing beach or playground for the benefit of the people of Hingham." He recommended a FY22 budget of \$38,282, which included the following:

- Salaries for life guards
- The repair and maintenance of the grounds
- Increased water for the outdoor shower at the new beach house

Ms. Power asked about the operations of the Beach House snack shop since it opened in September. Mr. Johnson said that the opening of the snack shop was very successful and anticipated a much busier summer in 2022. Mr. Chris Daly said that their plan is to open in April of 2021. Mr. Ramsey complimented the Trustees on the new brick walkway and signage. Mr. Fisher asked if the additional expenses for water and electricity would be recoverable through the snack shop tenant. Mr. Daly explained that the tenant pays a separate bill for his portion of the electric in the snack shop, but does not pay for electricity for outdoor lighting or for lighting in the community room. Mr. Fisher asked if there were any plans for the Farmer's Market coming back to the beach parking lot. Mr. Daly reported that the Trustees had not yet heard from the Farmer's Market. There was some additional discussion regarding potential revenue from the community room and the snack shop. Mr. Daly said that their ultimate goal is to have the bathhouse operation fund the beach operation. Ms. Power complimented the positive changes that have been made to the beach area over the last few years. She also suggested that the Trustees give the Board an update on operations prior to the next budget season.

### **Public Works, Landfill/Recycling, Sewer**

DPW Superintendent Randy Sylvester presented. He recommended the following FY21 budget:

- DPW: \$4,191,414
  - \$563,365 for snow removal
  - \$385,500 for road maintenance
  - \$284,000 for paving supplies
- Transfer Station: \$1,655,017
- Sewer: \$3,492,259

These budget requests include salaries for 51 full-time staff, 2 part-time Transfer Station staff, and expenses. He said that a Transfer Station fee analysis is almost complete. He suggested that the Town is underfunding itself on fees. He also spoke about impacts of COVID-19 on DPW operations. Most notably, there was an increase of 2,000+ additional visits to the Transfer Station per week. Mr. Sylvester said that the Sewer budget would be offset by the same amount of revenue, much like an enterprise fund. Ms. Power added that taxpayers who do not use the sewer do not pay for the service. Mr. Sylvester also proposed an additional request of \$103,960 for 2 Heavy Equipment Operators due to increased workload at the Transfer Station. He suggested that this additional request would be more cost-effective than paying employee overtime. Mr. Fisher asked if Mr. Sylvester expected the amount of

trash would go back to regular levels after the pandemic. Mr. Sylvester hoped that it would, but also stressed the importance of recycling. Mr. Fisher also asked if he was satisfied with the way residents and staff are adhering to COVID-19 regulations. Mr. Sylvester reported that he has generally been happy with compliance with COVID-19 protocols. There was some additional discussion regarding the budget for snow removal and the lack of opportunities for composting at the Transfer Station. He reported that he is looking into buying, through grants, personal compost bins that could be sold to residents for a minimal fee. Mr. Ramsey recognized the efforts of Steve Messinger at the Transfer Station. There was some additional discussion regarding budgeting for snow removal. Mr. Sylvester announced that Matt Cahill has joined the DPW as Assistant Superintendent.

### **Health**

Executive Health Director, Susan Sarni presented. Her budget recommendation for FY22 was \$363,404, which included \$343,542 for salaries and \$19,862 for expenses. She reported that the Health Department has 3 full-time employees and 3 part-time employees. She noted that major expenses included:

- \$3,000 for meetings and seminars
- \$3,000 for in-state travel
- \$2,500 for water testing

Mr. Ramsey thanked Ms. Sarni for all she has been doing to keep the public safe during the pandemic.

Mr. Fisher asked if Ms. Sarni's department has been able to keep up with septic inspections during the pandemic. Ms. Sarni reported that Betty Nee is a State Soil Evaluator, has continued to perform perk tests, soil tests and septic inspections (with the Town Engineer) during the COVID-19 crisis.

There was some additional discussion regarding COVID-19 vaccine clinics and costs in Hingham. Mr. Fisher reported that he has gotten calls from residents who are anxious to receive the vaccine. Mr. Fisher and Ms. Power also thanked Ms. Sarni for her dedication to the Town and its residents during the COVID-19 crisis.

### **Library**

Ms. Linda Harper, Director of the Hingham Public Library, presented. Also in attendance was Lucy Hancock, Chair of the Library Trustees, and Jeremy Parker, Treasurer for the Hingham Library Corporation. Ms. Harper presented a recommended budget for FY22 of \$1,929,066. This budget included salaries for 12 full-time and 23 part-time personnel of \$1,559,866 and \$369,200 for expenses. Ms. Harper updated the Board on some impacts of COVID-19 on the Library's offerings. She also updated the Board on the Library's Long Range Strategic Plan. She noted that the Library is still closed to the public, but that people can still put items on hold and check out items safely without contact. Ms. Power noted that the budget for books, magazines and periodicals has increased by approximately 66%. Ms. Harper gave the Board some information regarding State aid for libraries, as well as the Library Trustees' budget. There was some additional discussion regarding the cost of books versus e-books and costs for utilities, specifically electrical costs.

Ms. Lucy Hancock, 15 Amber Road and Mr. Jeremy Parker, 186 Hull Street, stated that the Trustees budget is usually put together in May of each year. Mr. Parker said that they would provide copies of past budgets to the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Parker added that books, materials and programs are the

largest items in the Library Corporation's budget. There was some additional discussion regarding the Library budgets.

### **Town Clerk, Elections**

Ms. Eileen McCracken, Town Clerk, presented. She recommended a FY22 budget of \$200,981. This budget includes salaries of \$195,365 for 3 full-time employees and expenses of \$5,616. Ms. McCracken noted that major expenses include \$2,849 for printing services (street list), \$1,754 for postage (census), and \$2,250 for a Town Meeting stenographer.

Ms. McCracken also recommended a FY22 Elections budget of \$23,320. This budget includes \$6,950 for salaries and \$16,370 for expenses. Notable expenses for elections include \$6,500 for computer service agreements and \$5,520 for printing services.

Ms. McCracken reported some of the impacts of COVID-19 on her department's operations and explained some personnel changes for FY22. She also explained that there was an increase in expenses this year due to the purchase of election poll machines. There was some additional discussion regarding the future of mail-in voting. The Board thanked Ms. McCracken for her many years of service to the Town. Ms. Power also thanked Ms. Liz MacVarish for her 22 years of service in the Town Clerk's Office and wished her well in her upcoming retirement.

### **Board of Selectmen-sponsored Warrant Articles for 2021 Annual Town Meeting**

Ms. Power explained that the following motion is a procedural vote to submit Board of Selectmen sponsored Warrant Articles for the 2021 Annual Town Meeting. After the Board of Selectmen's vote, each of these Warrant Articles will then be subject to a public hearing by the Board of Selectmen and the Advisory Committee.

**Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to include the following Board of Selectmen-sponsored Warrant Articles in the 2021 Annual Town Meeting Warrant:**

- **Hannah Lincoln Whiting Fund**
- **Assume Liability for DCR on Rivers, Harbors, Etc.**
- **Reports of Various Town Committees**
- **Report of the Personnel Board**
- **Salaries of Town Officers**
- **Budgets**
- **Transfer from the Stabilization Fund**
- **Disbursement of Electric Light Department Receipts**
- **Building Department Revolving Fund**
- **Transfer Funds to the Reserve Fund**
- **Acceptance of Easements**
- **Proposed Changes to Article 14 of the General By-Laws (Advisory Committee By-law)**
- **Municipal Waterways Improvement and Maintenance Fund**

Mr. Fisher seconded.

**Roll Call Vote:**

**Mr. Fisher: yes**

**Mr. Ramsey: yes**

**Ms. Power: yes**

### **Inside Town Finances: Volume 2, Local Receipts**

Ms. Power introduced Volume 2 in a series of topics related to municipal finances. She explained that the purpose of this series is to inform and educate the community about various municipal finance issues. Each weekly edition in this series can be found on the Town of Hingham's website at [www.hingham-ma.gov](http://www.hingham-ma.gov).

### **COVID-19 Update**

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

#### COVID-19 Data

"The Hingham Health Department is urging residents to remain vigilant against the spread of COVID-19 as the community remains at a high risk for the disease. According to [public health data](#) from the MA Department of Public Health (DPH) released last week, the Town's designation remains at "red," indicating a "high risk" of spread in the community. The average daily incidence rate for the Town of Hingham is 70.8 per 100,000 residents, up from 58.6 the prior week. According to DPH, there have been 238 new cases of COVID-19 in the community over the past 14 days. There have been a total of 1,133 cases in Hingham since the start of the pandemic. As of yesterday, confirmed COVID-19 cases in Massachusetts had climbed to 451,535. Residents are strongly encouraged to avoid high risk activities, especially indoor social gatherings, and all Massachusetts residents are under orders from the Governor to wear masks at all times while in public. Residents are reminded to always take the following precautions to prevent further spread of COVID-19 in the community:

- Remember that an infected individual can spread COVID-19 before they have symptoms, which is why social distancing -- maintaining a minimum of 6 feet from others -- is critical.
- Those who must go out are urged to:
  - Avoid gathering in groups
  - Maintain 6 feet from people outside your household
  - Do not shake hands or hug
  - Wash your hands often
- Those who are at a high risk for COVID-19, including those over the age of 65 and with underlying health conditions, are advised to stay home and avoid non-essential tasks and errands.
- Wear a mask in indoor and outdoor spaces at all times.
- Face coverings should:
  - Cover the nose and mouth
  - Fit snugly and comfortably against the side of the face
  - Be secured with either ties or ear loops
  - Permit breathing without difficulty
  - Be able to be washed and machine dried without damage. Face masks should be washed regularly depending on the amount of use.

#### Vaccine Rollout

Vaccine distribution continues across Massachusetts as the state works through its [three-phase vaccine rollout plan](#). We were pleased to announce last week that first responders in the Town of Hingham received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccination. On Tuesday and Thursday, Jan. 12 and 14, Hingham paramedics administered the Moderna vaccine to members of the Hingham Police Department, Hingham Fire Department, and regional 911 dispatchers during clinics held at the Hingham Senior Center. The Hingham Health Department is one of approximately 115 organizations statewide approved to distribute vaccinations to public safety personnel as part of Phase 1 of the state's COVID-19 vaccination distribution plan. The COVID-19 vaccination is not available to the general public at this time. However, our Vaccine Planning Group is applying for state authorization to allow the Town to operate a clinical site for additional groups in Phase 1 of the state's rollout plan, such as health care workers providing non-COVID-facing care. We are also following the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency's Incident Management framework to expand our Vaccine Planning Group and bring in additional trained staff to plan and coordinate larger-scale vaccine clinics, should we be authorized by the state to move forward. As more information becomes available, we will continue to share it with the community. Please refer to the state's [When can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?](#) website for the most up-to-date vaccine information. This page can be found by visiting [mass.gov](#), clicking on the COVID-19 link, and then clicking "When can I get the vaccine?".

#### **Review of Open meeting law complaint filed by Patrick Higgins and Associates on January 4, 2021**

Mr. John Coughlin, Town Counsel, reported that the Town received an Open Meeting complaint for its December 22 meeting. He advised that, under Massachusetts law, the Town has 14 days to review the complaint and file its response. He added that the Town was within that timeframe tonight. He recommended that the Board take a vote to authorize the Town Administrator to file a response.

**Voted: Mr. Fisher made a motion to direct the Town Administrator to prepare a response to the Open Meeting Law complaint filed by Patrick Higgins and Associates on January 4, 2021. Mr. Ramsey seconded.**

#### **Roll Call Vote:**

**Mr. Fisher: yes**

**Mr. Ramsey: yes**

**Ms. Power: yes**

#### **Appointments**

**Vote: Ms. Power made a motion to reappoint Charles Souther as a Special Police Officer for a term ending June 30, 2021. Mr. Fisher seconded.**

#### **Roll Call Vote:**

**Mr. Fisher: yes**

**Mr. Ramsey: yes**

**Ms. Power: yes**

**Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to appoint Daniel McGonagle to the Development and Industrial Commission to fill an unexpired term ending June 30, 2025. Mr. Ramsey seconded.**

#### **Roll Call Vote:**

**Mr. Fisher: yes**  
**Mr. Ramsey: yes**  
**Ms. Power: yes**

**Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to appoint Mark LaBelle to the Energy Action Committee to fill an unexpired term ending June 30, 2022. Mr. Fisher seconded.**

**Roll Call Vote:**  
**Mr. Fisher: yes**  
**Mr. Ramsey: yes**  
**Ms. Power: yes**

**Vote: Ms. Power made a motion to approve the Annual Common Victualler Licenses as presented.**

- Atlantic Bagel & Coffee, 282 Main Street
- b.good LLC, 94 Derby Street, Suite 237
- Barnes & Noble, 96 Derby Street, Suite 300
- Bloomy Rind, 21 Main Street
- Brewed Awakenings, Inc. 19 Main Street
- Broad Cove Auctions, 20 Broad Cove Road
- Bruegger's Bagel Bakery, 211 Lincoln Street
- Capital One Café, 92 Derby Street
- CAVA Mezze Grill, LLC, 94 Derby Street, Suite 239
- Chill Gelato, LLC/ dba Gelato & Chill , 92 Derby Street
- Dunkin Donuts, 179 Lincoln Street
- Elite Vending/Avanti Market, 1 Talbots Drive
- Flik at Blue Cross Blue Shield, 25 Technology Place
- Hingham House of Pizza, 74 North Street
- Nona's Homemade, Inc., 19 Main Street
- Panera Bread, 92 Derby Street
- Pilgrim Skating Arena, 75 Recreation Park Drive
- Redeye Roasters Coffee Lounge, 3 Otis Street
- Smile Zone, LLC/ dba Menchies Hingham Shipyard, 15 Shipyard Drive
- Starbucks Coffee Company, 1 Derby Street
- Starbucks Coffee Company, 184 Lincoln Street
- White's Pastry Shop, 98 Derby Street
- Whiting Street Donuts, 187 Whiting Street
- Whole Foods Market, 94 Derby Street

**Mr. Fisher seconded**

**Roll Call Vote:**  
**Mr. Fisher: yes**  
**Mr. Ramsey: yes**  
**Ms. Power: yes**

**Public Comment**

There were no comments from the public.

**Selectmen/Town Administrator Reports**

Ms. Monsecur reported that Governor Baker signed Hingham's Means Tested Property Tax exemption legislation into law last Friday, January 15, 2020. The 2019 Annual Town Meeting authorized the Board of Selectmen to file special legislation to establish new property tax relief for seniors who meet certain criteria, in an attempt to alleviate some of the tax burden for seniors on a fixed income. Ms. Power thanked former Selectman, Karen Johnson, for spearheading this initiative.

Mr. Mayo thanked the Town's Department Heads for their dedication and commitment to the Town during the pandemic. Ms. Power also thanked Mr. Mayo, Ms. Monsecur and the Board of Selectmen office staff for their help as well.

Mr. Fisher reported that the MBTA's dock improvement project at the Hingham Shipyard is anticipated to begin in December 2021 through 2023.

Ms. Power reported her plans to attend the upcoming meeting of the Library Board of Trustees. As Chair of the Board of Selectmen, Ms. Power is a member of the Library Board of Trustees.

Ms. Power also announced that the next meeting of the Board of Selectmen would take place on Thursday, January 21, 2021 at 7 pm.

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

**Roll Call Vote:**

**Mr. Fisher: yes**

**Mr. Ramsey: yes**

**Ms. Power: yes**

**The meeting adjourned at 9:22 PM.**

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