

Board of Selectmen

January 21, 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

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 18, 2020. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Vote: Ms. Power made a motion to approve the minutes dated December 22, 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 January 14, 2021. Mr. Ramsey seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to approve the minutes dated January 20, 2021. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Review of FY22 Department Budgets

Building

Mr. Mike Clancy, Building Commissioner, presented. He recommended a FY22 budget of \$254,710, which included \$238,750 for salaries and \$15,960 for expenses. He noted that the Building Department Revolving Fund offsets Building Department salaries. Major expenses he expected in FY22 included the following:

- \$5,000 for in-state travel
- \$2,678 for vehicle fuel
- \$2,500 for code books

Mr. Clancy added that the Building Revolving Fund is typically credited with all plumbing, gas, and electrical permit fees and is used to pay related staff/inspector salaries and expenses. There was additional discussion regarding how salaries are split between the department and the revolving fund. Ms. Power advised that there is an annual Warrant Article that addresses the Revolving Fund. Ms. Power also added that revenue generated by the Building Department is 4 times greater than the cost of operating the department. There was additional conversation regarding the impacts of COVID-19.

Conservation

Loni Fournier, Conservation Agent, presented. She recommended a FY22 budget of \$214,133, which included \$200,877 for salaries and \$13,256 in expenses. She reported that the Commission employs two full-time personnel (1 Senior Planner and 1 Assistant Conservation Officer). Major expenses for her department include \$5,000 for property maintenance and \$5,000 for feasibility and design of the Lehner Conservation Area parking area. Ms. Fournier reported that the department's revenue is not directly proportional to the number of permit applications. This is due to a number of different types and sizes of permits. She also reported on the impacts of COVID-19 on departmental procedures. Mr. Ramsey thanked Ms. Fournier for helping the Boy Scouts with Eagle Scout projects. Ms. Power reported that there is currently one vacancy on the Conservation Commission and encouraged interested citizens to complete and submit a Talent Bank application

Historical

Ms. Andrea Young, Historic Administrator, presented. Ms. Young reported that she supports both the Historical Commission and the Historic Districts Commission. Ms. Young recommended a FY22 budget of \$83,042. Which included \$75,679 for salaries and \$7,363 for expenses. Major expenses include \$2,728 for Memorial Bell Tower repair and maintenance and \$2,000 for an annual assessment of monuments. She regretfully reported the cancellation of annual events such as the Battle of Grape Island and the Preservation Awards due to COVID-19. She added that the tax work off program was not

possible this year, also a result of COVID-19. Mr. Ramsey thanked Ms. Young for all her efforts in supporting the history of Hingham. Mr. Fisher asked how people could give a gift to help support Hingham's historic preservation. Ms. Young advised that any interested parties could write a check to the Preservation Projects Fund. Ms. Young would then send them information for their tax deduction.

Land Use & Development

Senior Planner Emily Wentworth presented a FY22 budget recommendation of \$155,265, which included salaries for two full-time personnel (1 Senior Planner and 1 Land Use and Development Coordinator) and expenses of \$7,375. She reported major expenses (as required under MGL c. 40A, s. 11) of \$2,000 for postage for Abutters Notices and \$2,000 for Legal Ads for scheduled hearings. Ms. Wentworth reported a continued decline in the number of variance applications. She attributed this to the fact that the ZBA has granted fewer exceptions from the Town's otherwise effective dimensional regulations, and no exceptions to the Town's use regulations in recent years. She also reported that Hingham's subsidized housing percentage is at 11.37%, which is above the State's safe-harbor minimum. Mr. Fisher added that 40B applications are down because Hingham has exceeded the State's minimum. Ms. Power suggested that the Town engage the services of accounting firm to determine and establish financial reporting for the Affordable Housing Trust, work previously undertaken by members of the HAHT. Mr. Fisher thanked Ms. Wentworth for her work on the COVID-19 Restaurant Reopening Group.

South Shore Country Club

Mr. Kevin Whelan, Director of the SSCC, presented. Also present were members of the Country Club Management Committee, including Christine Smith, Bill Friend and Steve White. Mr. Whelan presented projected revenues of \$1,986,000 and expenditures of \$1,889,280. Mr. Whelan reported 10 full-time personnel and 20 part-time and seasonal personnel. Major expenses include:

- \$229,000 for R&M buildings and equipment
- \$157,000 for golf course treatments
- \$78,000 for utilities
- \$70,000 for Pro Shop merchandise
- \$45,000 for R&M irrigation

Mr. Whelan also noted some impacts of COVID-19 including increased golf revenue and a decrease to bowling, camp and restaurant revenue. However, he added that overall revenue is at 100% FY21 vs. FY20. There was some additional discussion regarding the ongoing Turf Care Maintenance Facility project, the one-time \$45,000 expense to upgrade the irrigation system and proposed equipment purchases. Mr. Whelan said that all purchases would be contingent upon actual revenues. Ms. Power also mentioned that the Greenside Grill has been great partners with the Town and reminded the public that they are open Wednesday-Sunday.

Water

Mr. Russell Tierney, Superintendent of the Weir River Water Company, presented the following FY22 budget recommendation:

- Salaries = \$252,676
- Contract Services = \$4,835,887
- Property Taxes / Insurance = \$920,600
- Other Expenses = \$613,303

- Debt Services = \$5,788,969

Mr. Tierney said that personnel includes 1 full-time Water Superintendent, 1 part-time Administrative Assistant, 1 season inspector, and 13 employees employed through contract operations with SUEZ. Mr. Tierney also commented on the impact of COVID-19 on their operations. Mr. Tierney also noted that the water system is an enterprise fund, similar to the South Shore Country Club. Ms. Power added that a more detailed version of the Weir River Water System budget is available at www.hingham-ma.gov. She also commented that Mr. Tierney's budget is very consistent with the 10-year projections that were the basis for the financing of the water system. There was some additional conversation regarding billing and collections, communications for emergency main breaks, and customer satisfaction. Ms. Power commended Mr. Tierney for his dedication and the strong impact he has made since joining the Weir River Water System.

Public Safety Utilities

Ms. Michelle Monsegur, Assistant own Administrator, presented. She reported that the recommended FY22 budget is \$519,060 and listed the 3 components of this budget as follows:

- The FY22 Emergency Water Service budget is a flat fee charged by Weir River Water System to maintain water in the 900+ fire hydrants in town. A flat fee is used because fire hydrants do not have a water meter to measure the amount of water used and is based on the number of fire hydrants in the system.
- \$10,000 for emergency repair of fire hydrants
- This budget funds 2,300+ streetlights in town through the Hingham Municipal Light Plant.

Community Planning

Mr. Tom Mayo, Town Administrator, presented. He announced that the Town's long-time Community Planning Director, Mary Savage-Dunham, recently resigned in the beginning of January. He recommended a FY22 budget of \$191,066, which included \$166,861 for salaries (1 Director of Community Planning and 1 Administrative Assistant) and expenses of \$24,205, including consulting services, printing, advertising and office supplies. He discussed some impacts of COVID-19 on daily operations of the department. He recommended an additional expense of \$65,921 for an Assistant Town Planner to help manage the increasing number and complexity of development initiatives, including:

- Comprehensive Master Plan update
- South Hingham development
- Downtown/Harbor visioning effort
- Climate action planning and resiliency efforts
- Tree preservation study
- Major developments and projects that come before the Planning Board

Mr. Mayo noted that this budget is still a work-in-progress and noted that he looks forward to working closely with the Advisory Committee on additional planning. There was some additional discussion regarding increases in office supplies and advertising services. Mr. Fisher highlighted the importance of revenue opportunities in South Hingham.

Selectmen

Mr. Mayo, Town Administrator, presented. He recommended at FY22 budget of \$577,342. The Selectmen's budget included salaries of \$493,752 for 5 full-time personnel and expenses of \$83,590. Major expenses included \$27,500 for misc. property and consulting needs. Mr. Mayo recommended an additional expense of \$35,000 for a Communications Consultant. This consultant would help centralize and professionalize Town communication functions including:

- Enhance strategic communications – get info out about major initiatives and core services, promote positive engagement with local government
- Crisis management
- Social media engagement
- Press liaison
- Emergency response

Mr. Mayo felt that hiring such a consultant would be a Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) best practice. Mr. Fisher thanked Mr. Mayo for recognizing the need and advantage of getting information to residents so that they can take advantage of what the Town has to offer. Ms. Power felt fortunate to have such a capable and dedicated team in the Selectmen's Office.

-Legal: Ms. Monsegur explained that the Town has 4 main Town counsel, including General Counsel, Labor Counsel, Real Estate Counsel and Litigation Counsel. Major expenses this past year included COVID-19, the water acquisition, the purchase of 335 Lincoln Street, and litigation. He recommended a FY22 budget of \$257,000. She also recommended an additional request of \$25,000 to cover a structural deficit in the budget. Mr. Ramsey encouraged everyone to work hard to reduce this budget.

-Town Hall: Ms. Monsegur recommended a FY22 budget of \$257,966 for salaries and \$446,802 for expenses. She explained that Town Hall has 2 full-time and 2 part-time maintenance staff who clean, maintain, and oversee Town Hall systems and repairs. This team also supports the needs at 308 Cushing Street, GAR Hall, 8 Short Street, public meetings/special events, and other public facilities as needed.

-Town Meeting: Ms. Monsegur recommended a FY22 budget: \$43,442. This budget would cover the following:

- Custodial support for Town Meeting
- Printing of 10,000+ warrants; postage for 9,600 households
- Equipment rental and setup (chairs, audio system)
- Stenographer

Ms. Monsegur said that Town Meeting budget reflects their anticipation that one Town Meeting would take place in FY22. If that changes, they will modify the budget as needed. Ms. Power noted that the FY23 budget would begin in July of 2023, so, if a Special Town Meeting were needed in the fall (for Foster School and the Public Safety Facility) any related costs would be reflected in the FY23 budget.

-Health Imperatives and the SS Women's Center: Ms. Monsegur explained that both of these agencies provide services to survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence in Hingham and the South Shore in general. Hingham's an annual donation allows them to provide a service to Hingham residents that the Town would otherwise not be able to provide. The Town's annual contribution to Health Imperatives is \$2,700 and to the South Shore Women's Resource Center is \$3,700.

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: Nothing to report

Mr. Ramsey: Nothing to report

Mrs. Power reported that the next meeting of the Board of Selectmen is scheduled for Tuesday, February 2, 2020.

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 10:03 PM.

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