

**Advisory Committee
Meeting Notes
January 24, 2023
Hingham Town Hall, South Hearing Room**

In Attendance: Chair George Danis, Nancy MacDonald, Davalene Cooper, Andrew McElaney, Caitlyn Kirk, Brenda Black, Joe Griffin, Alan Macdonald, Brian Stack, Jason Price

Absent: Tina Sherwood

Participating Remotely: Carol Tully, Sarah Melia, Lyndsey Kruzer, 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.

Recess to join the Select Board for a joint meeting to hear the proposed CPC budget. At the conclusion of the presentation AdCom will recess and then reconvene to continue its meeting.

Notes from Select Board Meeting:

Ms. Julie Strehle, 231 Leavitt Street, Chair of the Community Preservation Committee, presented. She reported that the CPC’s nine members have been meeting since September to review the preliminary and final applications. The Community Preservation Act was enacted by the MA Legislature in 2000 and adopted by Hingham in 2001. Hingham’s Community Preservation Committee derives revenue from a 1.5% surcharge on the real estate tax levy, plus a distribution from the Commonwealth’s Community Preservation Trust Fund. Projects that the CPC fund must fall within four categories: open space, affordable housing, historic preservation, and recreation. The total funds the CPC had this year was \$1,624,958 and the total request for the final 11 applications totaled \$1,274,263. The minimum debt service payments they are required to set aside is \$220,226, but the committee voted to set aside \$270,379 (Lehner Land \$195,279 and payoff Lincoln house \$70,000 + fee \$5,000).

Ms. Strehle explained each of the final recommended CPC projects.

CPC Administrative Fund: Requested \$50,000 Recommended \$50,000

The COC Administrative Fund would pay for Community Preservation Coalition dues, a recording clerk, legal fees, and other administrative assistance. Any unspent funds would be put in reserve for future use.

HAHT Opportunity Fund: Requested \$700,000 Recommended: \$735,000 These funds would help to preserve and develop affordable housing in Hingham. The HAHT hopes to contribute 5 affordable units per year over the next decade.

HHA 132 Scotland Street – 3 Projects

- • House Envelope Repairs: Requested \$15,592 Recommended \$15,592
- • Garage Envelope Repairs: Requested \$12,964 Recommended \$12,964
- • Boiler Replacement: Requested \$7,727 Recommended \$7,727

Because the property at 132 Scotland Street was acquired using CPC funds at the 2006 Annual Town Meeting, it is eligible, under CPA regulations, to use CPC funds for “preservation” projects as well as “rehabilitation and/or restoration efforts.” The CPA defines “preservation” as protection of personal or real property from injury, harm or destruction. Examples: building envelope and site work to preserve the structural integrity of the housing; roof, siding and window replacements to assure the water tightness of the housing; upgrading dangerous electrical or plumbing services; replacement of dangerous building systems which threaten the housing units; installation of hard-wired smoke alarms, sprinklers and other building fire suppression systems.

Thaxter Street Fire Door Hold-open System: Requested \$40,535 Recommended \$40,535

This project is planned for the Elderly Housing at 30 Thaxter Street. These units were not created by CPA. Therefore only “preservation” projects are allowed to receive funds from the CPC. The fire doors at their building are heavy and often propped open because it is very difficult for the elderly or handicapped residents to open the doors themselves. Propping the doors open is a fire hazard because they cannot close quickly in the event of a fire and would not stop a fire from moving throughout the building. The proposed new doors are held open by magnets. If a fire alarm is triggered, they would close automatically and would be a safer option for the residents.

Cronin Basketball Court: Requested \$178,945 Recommended \$178,945

The request is to replace the Cronin field basketball court with post tension concrete, which is a material that is reinforced with high strength steel bands and is expected to last for 30 years. Ms. Strehle reported that there are cracks everywhere on the current court is currently in a state that is beyond repair.

Pickleball Court Study & Design Requested \$55,500 Recommended \$55,500

Ms. Strehle said that this project would aim to identify the most optimal location in town for some pickleball courts as well as the number of courts that would be appropriate. Creation of pickleball courts was a recommendation of the 2020 Athletic Fields & Outdoor Courts Study. While there are some pickle ball court lines taped onto current tennis courts, it is not ideal because the courts are much smaller than tennis courts and the net should be a different height. There is also competition for court time with tennis players. Ms. Strehle reported that a number of South Shore towns have recently built pickleball courts because there is so much interest in the sport. The applicants hope to build six courts.

Hingham Public Library Digitization from Microfilm: Request \$21,000 Recommended \$21,000 The Hingham Public Library has microfilm reels and newspapers dating back to 1827. This project would digitize all those reels, up to the year 1976, and would add them to an online database so that they could be searchable. Copywrited issues of the Hingham Journal from 1977 to the present would also be made searchable via optical character recognition from computers within the library only. There would be no future costs for this except for an annual maintenance fee of \$175 per year, which would be paid for by

the library. Since microfilm degrades over time, digitization would be a way of protecting the information. Other towns have recently done the same thing.

Former Tree and Park Barn: Requested \$93,000 Recommended \$93,000 Dating to 1857, the building at 8 Short Street is on Hingham's historic inventory list and has formerly been used as a school, a fire station, a WWII rationing board, and a tree and park barn. It is currently leased to a furniture and cabinet maker. The building is in need of repainting and restoration to replace deteriorated architectural features. This application was submitted by the Historical Commission. There were two bids on this project and the requested amount was the average between the two.

Girl Scout House ADA Compliance: Requested \$99,000 Recommended \$109,000

This project would remedy ADA non-compliance within the building, which would include evening out the floor, and reconfiguring and improving access to the restroom and kitchen. The building is historic, dating from 1929 and serves the Girl Scouts and local community groups. Private funding would pay for 30% of the cost and they hope to use CPC funds for the balance. The initial request of \$99,000 was 70% of the total project cost. The Girl Scouts have been fundraising for several years and have raised \$30,000 of the \$40,000 needed to reach the total project cost of \$139,000. The CPC decided to give additional funds so that they could get started on the project sooner.

Following Ms. Strehle's presentation, there was a lively discussion and question and answer period. Mr. Ramsey appreciated the CPC's investment in affordable housing and felt that it is one of the most pressing needs in Town. Ms. Klein was very grateful for Ms. Strehle's leadership in the CPC. Ms. Klein appreciated that the CPC was generous with their extra funds. Ms. Klein noted that affordable housing was outlined in the Master Plan as a goal for the town and she appreciated the committee's interest. Mr. Fisher asked about the increase in the Administrative Fund. Ms. Strehle explained that they have not had a dedicated Administrative person for the past several years and stated that any unused funds would go back into the general fund.

Mr. Fisher also asked if the Building Department has been contacted regarding the fire doors project at the Thaxter Street property. Ms. Vicki Donlan of the CPC said that this project was rejected last year, partially because the Building Department did not receive the proper specifications for the project and therefore could not evaluate the project properly.

Ms. Liza O'Riley, 19 Porter's Cove Road, stated that she is a member of the Master Plan Committee. She encouraged the members of the Advisory Committee to read the Master Plan and take into consideration its recommendations when thinking about the CPC applications.

Vote: Ms. Klein made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article N. Mr. Fisher seconded. With the addition of the affirmative vote of Chair Ramsey, favorable action on Article N was unanimously approved by the Select Board

FY 24 Budget Hearings:

Harbormaster (Ken Corson, Harbormaster and J. Price)

Hingham has 28 miles of coastline. The Harbormaster has 1,500 log entries including 566 calls for service. There are 1,850 vessels on town moorings. The transient moorings and total revenue are down a little bit. Due to police reform – part-time police academy work will not meet accreditation requirements. During the summer it is difficult to 'patrol' the coast as there is such a high day-to-day call volume –

which is one of the reasons that revenue is down. Benchmark data indicates the Harbormaster Dept is understaffed.

Budgets: The salaries are \$249,997 and include 2 full-time personnel and 14 part-time. Expenses are \$85,343 and come predominantly from fuel, vehicles - including boats, and mooring management.

There is an additional request for \$63,100 for another full-time assistant Harbormaster

The Harbormaster budget was recommended for \$335,340.

Warrant Articles: Hearing and possible vote on the following Articles:
Hannah Lincoln Whiting Fund

This Article was deferred to a future Advisory Committee meeting.

Liaison Reports:

ACES (N. MacDonald)

Ms. MacDonald reported that ACES has attended Budget sessions I - IV with the School Committee to hear from the School Administration regarding the level services and balanced budgets being considered for FY24. Their last and 5th session will be on February 1st.

Discussion of Advisory Committee housekeeping items:

Approval of Minutes from the January 17, 2023 AdCom meetings

- The meeting minutes were deferred to a future AdCom meeting.

Next meeting: January 31, 2023

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15p.m. by roll-call vote (13-0).

Documents Distributed for this Meeting:
AdCom January 17, 2023 Meeting Agenda
FY22 Fund Balance Memo Update

Respectfully Submitted,
Tina Sherwood
Secretary, Advisory Committee