

Select Board

January 24, 2022

Present:

- Select Board: Mr. Bill Ramsey, Chair, Ms. Liz Klein and Mr. Joe Fisher
- Mr. Tom Mayo, Town Administrator
- Ms. Michelle Monsegur, Assistant Town Administrator for Finance
- Mr. Art Robert, Assistant Town Administrator for Operations

6:00 PM: Call to order

Mr. Ramsey 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. “

He announced that Select Board members participating in the meeting were himself, Bill Ramsey, Ms. Liz Klein, and Mr. Joe Fisher. The meeting was conducted both in person and remotely via Zoom.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Ramsey read the following statement on behalf of the Select Board:

“Sunday marked the Lunar New Year- a time that should be a joyous celebration in our community. This is a time when all members of our community should feel safe, secure and welcome. Yet our nation has just experienced 39 mass shootings so far in 2023, including the ones Saturday in Monterey Park and Monday in Half Moon Bay, California.

The events in Monterey Park, home to one of the largest AAPI communities in the US, can cause fear, anxiety, and a range of other emotions. We stand with our AAPI community in condemning the violence and rejecting any identity-based animosity or harassment toward individuals in and around our community.

In Half Moon Bay, where children were present at the scene of the mass shooting, we are reminded of our communal responsibility to safeguard our Town against violence and intolerance.

We have said it before, and we will continue to say that hate has no home in Hingham. Hate will not divide us, and it will not conquer us. Violence will not be tolerated.”

Approval of Minutes

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to approve the minutes dated January 18, 2022. Ms. Klein seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Two Special (One Day) Wine & Malt Beverages licenses to Friends of Hingham Cemetery, Inc.

Mr. John Davenport, 63 Burditt Avenue, President of Hingham Cemetery, explained that he is requesting two special one-day liquor licenses for two upcoming events at the Hingham Cemetery's Ames Chapel. This is part of their annual "dead of winter" events series, which have included author readings and music. These events have been very successful in the past. He expects between 50-90 people and reported that there is ample parking on site. He said that the Hingham Police Department has reviewed the parking arrangements for past events, with no concerns.

Vote: Ms. Klein made a motion to approve the issuance of two Special (One-Day) Wine and Malt Beverages licenses to Friends of Hingham Cemetery, Inc. for the 2023 Dead of Winter Art Series to be held at Ames Chapel on February 2, 2023 and March 4, 2023 from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Firefighters Association IAFF Local 2398

Fire Chief Murphy presented. The Hingham Fire Department signed an MOA with the Firefighters' Union in November of 2021. The Union signed the contract in July of 2022, and it has subsequently been reviewed by Human Resources and Town Council Kevin Feeley. Chief Murphy reported that the firefighters are happy with the contract. Mr. Ramsey expressed his gratitude for the work of the Hingham Firefighters.

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to sign the Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Hingham Permanent Firefighters Association IAFF Local 2398 effective July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2024. Ms. Klein seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

2023 Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article Discussion

Article I: Building Department Revolving Fund

Building Commissioner Mike Clancy presented. Article I asks the Town to limit the total amount that may be spent from the Building Department Revolving Fund, established under Article 18 of the General By-laws, to \$350,000 during FY24. Mr. Clancy explained that code books, office supplies, vehicle fuel and maintenance, uniforms, as well as 50% of department and inspectors' salaries and other items are

paid from the Building Department Revolving Fund. He also presented some information on how the Building Department's proposed fee adjustments compare with surrounding towns, which will be part of a separate Town Meeting article.

Vote: Ms. Klein made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article I. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Article J: Elder Services Revolving Fund

Ms. Jennifer Young presented. She explained that the fund in question is where they place revenue from all Senior Center recreational activities. Article J asks to limit the total amount that may be spent from the Elder Services Revolving Fund, established under Article 16 of the General By-laws, to \$80,000 during FY24.

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article J. Ms. Klein seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Article O: Acceptance of M.G.L. c. 59, § 5N

Mr. Keith Jermyn, Veterans Services Director, explained that this article is a local representation of legislation that was passed several years ago by the State called the "Valor Act." It would allow ten veterans to take advantage of this property tax reduction by working in the Veterans Services Department for a property tax reduction for a maximum of \$1,500. The participants would earn a property tax reduction in lieu of pay and, this year, the number of hours they can participate would double. Article O asks the Town to authorize the Select Board to establish a program to allow veterans to volunteer to provide services to the Town of Hingham in return for a reduction in the real property tax obligation of that veteran. In the event that a veteran is not able to perform the services themselves, they may have a representative provide services on their behalf. The maximum reduction for said real estate taxes would be based upon 125 volunteer hours in any given tax year.

Vote: Ms. Klein made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article O. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Article W: Acceptance of M.G.L. c. 59, § 5C½

Chair Ramsey recused himself from discussion related to Article W and any subsequent vote.

Town Assessor Erin Walsh explained that Article W would allow all existing exemptions to be doubled for all eligible residents. She felt that this would be a great help, particularly to seniors and veterans in a year that the residents would be asked to consider a tax override. In FY22 the total amount of exemptions totaled approximately \$75,000. Article W proposes to increase that by double to \$150,000. Mr. Jermyn added that the Town may be eligible for some reimbursement from the State.

Vote: Ms. Klein made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article W. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Ramsey: abstain

Mr. Jermyn also announced that tomorrow night is Veterans Appreciation Night with the Hingham High School Wrestling Team. The event will begin at 6:45 and will include recognition of Hingham members of the military reserves, retirees, Gold and Blue Star families. All donations will be put towards the issue of Veterans suicide. A Gold Star father and Hingham resident has been a long standing scorekeeper for the HHS Wrestling Team. His son, Matthew Partyka, was an alumni of HHS and the Wrestling Team.

Article C: Reports of Various Town Committees

Town Administrator Mayo explained that this article would allow the acceptance of reports of various committees that were formed by Town Meeting.

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article C. Ms. Klein seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Article G: Transfer from the Stabilization Fund

Ms. Monsegur explained that this is a perennial article. Any funds left over from bond premiums are transferred to the Stabilization Fund to be used to pay interest on projects in the future. The typical transfer is about \$170,000. The amount of this year's transfer is not included in the Warrant Article, but it would be included in the Advisory Committee's recommendation that will be given at a later date. Article G asks the Town to transfer a sum of money from the Stabilization Fund and/or from available reserves for the purpose of paying debt service for excluded debt in order to raise funds through the FY24 tax rate.

Vote: Ms. Klein made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article G. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:**Mr. Fisher: yes****Ms. Klein: yes****Mr. Ramsey: yes****Article Q: Establishment of a Capital Stabilization Fund**

Ms. Monsegur presented. Article Q asks the Town to create a “Capital Stabilization Fund” for the purpose of setting aside funds for future appropriation by Town Meeting in order to pay for capital equipment and/or capital projects and to transfer an amount of money from available reserves into said “Capital Stabilization Fund.” Article Q would also ask Town Meeting approval to dedicate all general fund receipts from the sale of tangible supplies (motor vehicles, machinery, computer equipment, furniture and other items of personal property but excluding real property) into this “Capitalization Fund,” effective July 1, 2023. She noted that use of these funds would require Town Meeting approval by a 2/3 vote, but this Article would set aside money specifically for this purpose. At the moment, there is approximately \$50,000 in the fund. She felt that the establishment of this fund would help to prioritize future capital projects. Proceeds from a newly formed auction program would be put into this new account.

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article Q. Ms. Klein seconded.**Roll Call Vote:****Mr. Fisher: yes****Ms. Klein: yes****Mr. Ramsey: yes****Article S: Sale of 32 Rockwood Road**

Community Planning Director, Ms. Emily Wentworth, presented. Article S asks that Town to allow, but not require, the Select Board to sell, lease, or otherwise transfer the parcel of land located at 32 Rockwood Road and shown as Lot 56 on Assessors’ Map 62 for residential use. This article will also require that the proceeds from any such sale, lease or other transfer shall be deposited into the “Capital Stabilization Fund” if such a fund has been established by the Town. Ms. Wentworth said that the property was acquired by the Town in a tax taking in 1990. Town Counsel, Mr. John Coughlin, explained that there are two ways to go about the sale of the property. Because the property was taken in a tax title taking, the Select Board could either sell it through a custodian, similar to a foreclosure auction, or the Town could sell it through a request for proposals. Ms. Klein clarified that the property could be purchased for an “accessory residential use,” which is different than an “accessory dwelling unit.”

Vote: Ms. Klein made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article S. Mr. Fisher seconded.**Roll Call Vote:****Mr. Fisher: yes****Ms. Klein: yes**

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Discussion of MBTA Community Multi-family Zoning

Ms. Emily Wentworth presented an update on the MBTA Communities Multi-family Zoning requirements. Also present was Real Estate Attorney, Ms. Susan Murphy. Since her last update the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has updated their guidelines and the Town has an upcoming deadline. Massachusetts law has designated 175 communities to be MBTA communities. Hingham had previously been designated by the MBTA as a bus service community, however that designation has been changed to a commuter rail community. This change results in a change in the minimum number of multi-family housing units required within the town. A rail community is required to have a minimum of 15% multi-family housing units. Seventy-five percent of these multi-family housing units are required to be within ½ mile of a transit station. There are no age restrictions on these housing units but they would have to be appropriate for families and there must be a minimum of 50 acres within each district. In order for Hingham to remain in interim compliance, the Town must create and submit to the MBTA an action plan in order to meet the provisions of the Multi-family Zoning requirements. The deadline for submission of the action plan is January 31, 2023 and the deadline for the final implementation of this plan is December of 2024. The Town could choose to amend existing Zoning districts, create new Overlay Districts or create new base Districts. Ms. Wentworth identified potential district locations near transit stations in Town and explained some of the specific requirements for the districts. One of the next steps is to conduct a comprehensive parcel by parcel study. Some communities have decided to bring in extra help to complete this survey for which there may be some State grant money available. Noncompliance with the new requirements could affect the Town's ability to secure grant money from DHCD, such as:

- Housing Choice Capital Grant
- Rapid Recovery Planning Grant
- MassWorks Funding

Mr. Fisher reported that he was in favor of submitting the form and asked if any federal funds could be in jeopardy, in the event that the Town does not stay in compliance. Ms. Wentworth explained that it would mostly be State funding that that would be in jeopardy. Mr. Ramsey clarified that submitting the form would be non-binding and would just allow the Town to stay in interim compliance with the new regulations. Ms. Wentworth agreed and noted that, ultimately, it would be Town Meeting that would need to authorize the changing of any Zoning requirement or districts. Next steps would include identification of new Zoning districts, public hearings held by the Planning Board, and finally submittal of a Warrant Article for a vote by Town Meeting.

Mr. Fisher asked for some clarification on the definition of multi-family housing and asked if accessory dwelling units would be considered multi-family units. Ms. Wentworth explained that "multi-family" could be defined as a building with three or more units or two or more buildings with at least two units each. An accessory dwelling unit would not meet those requirements. There was some additional discussion on permitting and how Zoning would be impacted by newly created Zoning. Because any new Zoning would require a site plan review, it would allow the Planning Board to impose certain conditions on site impacts. Ms. Murphy added that they are leaning towards creating an Overlay

District, which would allow the underlying Zoning to remain in place. Ms. Murphy said that a comprehensive analysis would take place over the next several months.

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to authorize Emily Wentworth to submit the MBTA Action Plan Form to the Department of Housing and Community Development. Ms. Klein seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Appointments (for a list of Talent Bank Applicants, please visit Hingham-ma.gov/SB)

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to appoint Thomas Burbank to the Veterans Council to fill an unexpired term ending June 30, 2025. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Public Comment

“The Hingham Select Board encourages community engagement and welcomes questions and comments as agenda items are discussed at the meeting. In addition, we have set aside up to fifteen minutes for public comment for items that fall under the purview of the Select Board and are not already on tonight’s agenda. If any guests wish to speak, please seek to be recognized. Once recognized, state your name and address and address your comments to the Chair. Comments will be limited to three minutes per speaker and must relate to topics within the scope of the responsibilities of the Select Board. Speakers are encouraged to present their remarks in a respectful manner and not to indulge in personalities. The Public Comment period is not a time for debate by members of the Select Board. The Select Board is not adopting or endorsing any of the comments made during the Public Comment period.”

Ms. Liza O’Riley, 19 Porter’s Cove Road, raised some concerns related to the FY24 budget.

Town Administrator and Select Board Reports

Mr. Art Robert reported that the Town conducted a successful blood drive today in conjunction with the Red Cross. Another blood drive is scheduled for April 10, 2023.

Mr. Mayo reported that the Town has added a page to the website which has information related to the override that will be brought to Town Meeting in April. The webpage can be accessed at <https://www.hingham-ma.gov/1025/Town-of-Hingham-FY24-Override>.

7:00 PM: Joint Session with the Community Preservation Committee and Advisory Committee to discuss Warrant Article N: Community Preservation Committee Recommendations

7:15PM: Mr. George Danis, Chair of the Advisory Committee, reconvened the meeting of the Hingham Advisory Committee that was called to order and in another location.

Mr. 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). See chart below.

Total Sources	1,624,958
Total Request	1,274,263
Debt Payments	270,379
TOTAL	80,316

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.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

8:02 PM: The meeting of the Advisory Committee entered into a recess.

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Klein seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

The meeting adjourned at 8:02 PM.

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