

Board of Selectmen

February 2, 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 January 12, 2021. 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 19, 2021. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Carson City Coins, 38 Whiting Street, request for a license as a Dealer in Old and Second-hand Metals and Precious Metals

Lt. O'Shea from the Hingham Police Department explained some additions to the conditions of this license as follows:

- A clear color digital photo of the article being purchased or received along with a clear color digital photo/digital scan of the seller's ID to be taken and maintained by the business for a minimum of 1 year

- The condition under Section 4 involving the electronic copy of the record (of transaction) being forwarded to the Police Department have the added requirement of “the method of transmission is at the discretion (in writing) of the Chief of Police or his/her designee or similar language
- Require the use of video showing the sales/public area of the shop and that it be retained for at least 30 days

Lt. O’Shea explained that these additional requirements would allow information of transactions to be forwarded to a regional database such as the MA State Police and would serve to protect the seller and the residents of Hingham. He further explained that many other towns have similar requirements and that it is not unusual.

The applicant, Mr. Matt Chiaramonte, 670 Gowing Drive, Hanson, MA, stated that he was comfortable with the modifications to the license agreement as presented by Lt. O’Shea. He also noted that his shop would not be operating as a pawnshop since he is not authorized to loan money and because that would require a different license.

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to approve the issuance of a Dealer in Old and Second-hand Metals and Precious Metals license to Carson City Coins c/o Matthew Chiaramonte, 38 Whiting Street, effective through April 30, 2021 unless sooner revoked. This approval is subject to Article 13 of the Town of Hingham By-laws and the following additional conditions and restrictions as recommended by the Hingham Police Department:

- A clear color digital photo of the article being purchased or received along with a clear color digital photo/digital scan of the seller’s ID be taken and maintained by the business for a minimum of one year.
- The condition under Section 4 involving the electronic copy of the record (of transaction) being forwarded to the Police Department have the added requirement of “the method of transmission is at the discretion (in writing) of the Chief of Police or his/her designee.”
- Require the use of video showing the sales/public area of the shop and that it be retained for at least 30 days.

Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Charles B. Livery: Renewal of Livery License

Mr. Mayo explained that this agenda item is the approval of license renewal and noted that all paperwork was in order. Ms. Power asked for information relative to the applicant’s COVID-19 protocols.

Mr. Charles Sands, 106 Morningside Pass, Weymouth, MA, explained his COVID-19 including wearing of masks and sanitizing of the vehicle after each passenger. Mr. Fisher asked about insurance and Mr. Sands indicated that he had the proper insurance for the vehicle and driver. Mr. Mayo added that Chief

Jones has conducted a CORI for Mr. Sands and a safety inspection of the vehicle and was satisfied with the results. The Town has also received a copy of his license, registration and insurance information.

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to renew the Limousine license to Charles Sands d/b/a Charles B. Livery effective through December 31, 2021. Mr. Ramsey seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Review of FY22 Department Budget: Recreation Department

Ms. Power welcomed members of the Recreation Commission and Director of the Country Club, Kevin Whalen. Ms. Power explained that, historically, the Town of Hingham has only had budget responsibility for a small portion of the Recreation budget, the Director's salary. As a result of the field study that Town Meeting authorized (using Community Preservation Funds) and that was commissioned last year, the discussion of this budget would focus on recommendations that would allow the Town to begin implementing some of what was recommended by Weston and Sampson in that study.

Mr. Mark Thorell, Recreation Director, recommended a budget of \$108,096 for the salary of the Recreation Director. He explained that all expenses are self-funded from the Recreation Revolving Fund. Mr. Thorell reported an additional budget request of \$241,180 for a Field Maintenance Plan. He said that Weston & Sampson, as a result of the 2020 Hingham Athletic Fields and Outdoor Courts Study, recommended this maintenance plan. The Field Maintenance Plan would include the following:

- One maintenance plan for all Board of Selectmen, Recreation, and School Fields.
- \$70,400 for 4 Recreation seasonal employees to perform infield grooming
- \$128,000 for field expenses (utilities, infield openings, irrigation, and materials)
- \$182,780 for field applications (fertilizing, liming, aerating, over-seeding, and top dressing)

Mr. Thorell reported that athletic fields in Hingham fall under three different jurisdictions: the Board of Selectmen, the School Department, and the Recreation Department. The turf maintenance, scheduling, and permitting of athletic fields is also managed and performed by several different entities which results in inconsistent field conditions and a lack of clarity on when fields are booked. Mr. Thorell said that the results of the field study recommended that the Town centralize all maintenance on fields Town-wide and across jurisdictions to ensure maintenance at an equitable level throughout the Town. It was also recommended that the Town simplify and centralize its permitting process for all field to provide better transparency on when fields are booked and when they are allowed to be used. He also reported that the DPW performs 3 non turf maintenance tasks on Town athletic fields. They cut the grass, weed whack, and pick up trash. These services are fully covered in the DPW operating budget and would remain in place. He said that turf maintenance tasks on Town athletic fields, with the exception of the High School and Middle School fields, are rarely performed. Infield grooming on Recreation and BOS fields is performed by SSCC staff or an outside vendor and has been performed inconsistently. The School Department is not able to fund maintenance for fields at Plymouth River School or Foster Elementary. He also noted that the BOS and the Recreation Department do not have a budget for turf maintenance and rely on user fees. The Weston & Sampson

study found that user fees are not able to cover the cost of turf maintenance. The study recommended that the Town increase its annual maintenance budget for fields to a level that appropriately enables staff to maintain facilities at a level that satisfies the needs and demands of Hingham. It was determined that the Recreation Department would become the central command for both the permitting process and turf maintenance protocols. Mr. Thorell felt that this would simplify processes and provide transparency. He recommended a Town-wide turf maintenance budget of \$381,180 and noted that \$140,000 of this budget would be offset by revenue. The final additional request was \$241,180. Mr. Thorell added that regular turf maintenance would expand the capacity of the existing athletic fields and would protect future capital investments recommended within the study.

Ms. Michelle Monsegur, Assistant Town Administrator, pointed out that the field study conducted by Weston & Sampson stressed the importance of having the right maintenance program in place prior to the implementation of any of their recommended capital projects.

Mr. Kevin Whalen, Director of the South Shore Country Club, felt this was a positive first step in putting in place recommendations by Weston & Sampson. He added that the SSCC would be willing to help in any way during this process.

Mr. Tom Mayo added that the requests and new processes under consideration until FY22, starting on July 1, so there would be the entire spring season, including prep work and ongoing maintenance to be done until that time.

Mr. Fisher felt this request was long overdue and was in favor of it. He asked for specifics on the policy on hardship exemptions due to COVID-19 or for other reasons for some groups to pay for user fees. Mr. Thorell requested that parties call him directly for more information. While there is no formal policy in place, he said he was willing to work with any groups in need. There was some additional discussion on how youth sports coordinates the use of fields by different groups. There was additional discussion regarding the renting of fields to groups or businesses. Mr. Fisher also asked if parents regularly volunteer to help get fields ready for teams. Mr. Thorell said that there was a vast network of parent volunteers who help to prep fields for games.

Mr. Ramsey thanked Mr. Thorell for his work on the Field Maintenance Plan. Mr. Ramsey liked the idea of hiring seasonal employees and hoped that this plan would allow some highly used fields to get some needed rest. There was some additional discussion regarding the centralized permit and fees. Mr. Thorell indicated that he would like this to be up and running this spring.

Ms. Power felt that the proposed Field Maintenance Plan was a good way to demonstrate to the taxpayers that the Town is making the best use of its fields and taking care of its assets while making conditions safe for athletes. Ms. Power asked why Mr. Thorell decided to outsource the field maintenance. Mr. Thorell felt that using outside contractors would provide financial flexibility for the Town. Ms. Power suggested a 6-month or one-year look back to assess results vs. what was anticipated. Ms. Power recognized the efforts of the Recreation Department and their part-time staff for the safe summer program they ran in 2021 and for their continued efforts to provide creative recreational activities to residents. Additionally, Ms. Power asked if the proposed plan would meet or exceed the recommendations of Weston & Sampson. Mr. Thorell noted that the filed study budgeted

\$460,000 for the Field Maintenance Plan and the additional request is \$80,000 less than that recommendation. He felt that outsourcing the maintenance helped save some money. He felt that the additional fund request was a strong place to start.

There were additional questions and comments residents Mr. Mark Cignetti, 6 Del Prete Drive and Mr. Joe Kelly, 7 Independence Lane who were both supportive of town-wide scheduling and permitting.

Ms. Power noted that the Recreation Budget packet is available for review at www.hingham-ma.gov.

FY20 Fund Balance Memo

Town Accountant, Ms. Sue Nickerson, reported that the total Fund Balance for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2020 is \$42,189,077, which is an increase of \$3,691,239 from the FY19 total Fund Balance of \$38,497,838. She further reported total annual expenditures per the Town's FY20 Financial Policy of \$119,142,820. The percent of Unassigned Fund Balance to total expenditures is 25.3%. Ms. Nickerson noted that Fund Balance is comprised of the following 5 categories:

Nonspendable		\$0.00	0.00%
Restricted		\$1,250,000	2.96%
Sale of Hersey House			
Committed:		\$4,011,857	9.51%
Stabilization Fund	\$2,513,004		
Special Articles	\$288,878		
Lincoln School Apartments	\$1,000,000		
Unused Non-Excluded Debt	\$209,975		
Assigned		\$6,780,774	16.07%
Encumbrance	\$1,997,437		
Subsequent years expenditures	\$4,783,337		
Unassigned		\$30,146,446	71.46%
TOTAL FUND BALANCES		\$42,189,077	100.00%
Total Annual Expenditures per Town's Financial Policy		\$119,142,820	
% of Unassigned Fund Balance to Total Annual Expenditures		25.30%	

Ms. Nickerson attributed the surplus of forecasted revenue to an increase in State and Local Receipts. The main categories for the surplus in Local Receipts were Investment Income and Ambulance Fees. Total General Fund Expenditures were as follows:

Budget Surplus	Amount	%
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Public Works	\$1,141,179	43.45%
Public Safety	\$373,795	14.23%
Debt Service	\$347,683	13.24%
General Government	\$191,718	7.30%
Education	\$186,961	7.12%
Human Services	\$132,397	5.04%
Culture & Recreation	\$116,000	4.42%
Employee Benefits	\$102,227	3.89%
All others	\$34,394	1.31%
TOTAL BUDGET SURPLUS	\$2,626,354	100.00%

Ms. Nickerson concluded with a detailed analysis of FY20 Fund Balance as shown below:

RECAP	Unassigned	Assigned	Committed	Restricted	TOTAL
FY19	\$30,515,193	\$2,753,625	\$3,979,020	\$1,250,000	\$38,497,838
FY20	\$30,146,446	\$6,780,774	\$4,011,857	\$1,250,000	\$42,189,077
Difference	(\$368,747)	\$4,027,149	\$32,837	\$0	\$3,691,239

There was some additional discussion regarding the restricted nature of the funds from the sale of the Hersey House. Ms. Nickerson explained that the Department of Revenue proceeds from the sale of an asset, and that use of said funds is restricted for projects with a like purpose.

Ms. Power pointed out that part of the budget surplus is due to the cost savings measures taken across the Town following the outbreak COVID-19. She added that, the \$2.6 million represents 2% of the annual budget, suggesting a 98% forecast accuracy.

Ms. Diane DiNapoli, 16 Gardner Street, asked about the parameters regarding using Fund Balance to fund the schools. Ms. Power explained that the Town's \$30 million in Unassigned Fund Balance is subject to parameters set forth in the Town's Financial Policy, created by the Advisory Committee. This policy is available at www.hingham-ma.gov. Ms. Power stated that generally, Unassigned Fund Balance is not to be used for ongoing recurring operating costs.

2021 Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article Discussion

Article G: Transfer from Stabilization Fund

Ms. Nickerson explained that the Stabilization Fund is comprised of bond premiums before the Modernization Act, including the old Police Station and the Light Plant. These funds are used to lower the tax rate. She reported that the amount in the Stabilization Fund is currently \$178,836. She noted that this fund would be depleted in 2035.

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to recommend favorable action of Article G. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Article H: Disbursement of Electric Light Department Receipts

Mr. Mayo explained that this is an annual payment in lieu of taxes to the Town from the HMLP to the Town. The amount is calculated using a formula based on the kilowatt hours sold by HMLP the prior year, generally \$500,000. There is a guarantee that the annual amount will not drop below \$450,000.

Vote: Ms. Power made a motion to recommend favorable action of Article H. Mr. Ramsey seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Article B: Assume Liability for DCR

Mr. John Coughlin, Town Counsel, advised that this is the annual approval to allow the Town to indemnify the State's Department of Conservation for any damage resulting from any takings. He was not aware of any upcoming work and noted that this is an annual Article.

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to recommend favorable action of Article B. seconded. Mr. Ramsey seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Article L: Acceptance of Easements

This Article allows the Board of Selectmen to accept easements so that a Special Town Meeting is not necessary in the event that an easement is needed.

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to recommend favorable action of Article L. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Article A: Hannah Lincoln Whiting Fund

Mr. Mayo explained that the Hannah Lincoln Whiting Fund allows the Town to designate a rotating board member that is assigned to appoint a 3-year on the Hannah Whiting Board, whose responsibility is

to disperse the proceeds of a modest account that is intended for the funding of those in need in South Hingham. This year's designee is Laurel Cosman.

Vote: Ms. Power made a motion to recommend favorable action of Article A. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Article C: Committee Reports

Mr. Mayo explained that this Article represents the acceptance of the Town's Annual Report. Mr. Mayo reported that this Article has been modified to reflect the creation of some new committees and boards. He also explained that, due to the acquisition of the water system, the Water Supply Committee has been discharged of its duties with gratitude after approximately 46 years. Ms. Power thanked the past and present members of the Water Supply Committee for their service to the Town.

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to recommend favorable action of Article C. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Inside Town Finances: Volume 4

Ms. Power presented the fourth in a series of presentations on Town Finances, Property Tax Bills. The entire presentation can be found online at www.hingham-ma.gov. Ms. Power concluded by saying that she hopes the series will help inform residents in municipal finances as Town Meeting approaches.

COVID-19 Update

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

“COVID-19 Data

According to [public health data](#) from the MA Department of Public Health (DPH) released last week, the Town's designation remains “yellow,” indicating a “medium risk” of spread in the community. The average daily incidence rate for the Town of Hingham is 63.7 per 100,000 residents, about even with the prior week. According to DPH, there have been 214 new cases of COVID-19 in the community over the past 14 days. There have been a total of 1,347 cases in Hingham since the start of the pandemic. As of today, confirmed COVID-19 cases in Massachusetts have risen to 502,378. Please continue to avoid high risk activities, especially indoor social gatherings. In addition, all Massachusetts residents remain under orders from the Governor to wear masks at all times while in public.

Vaccine Rollout

Earlier today, the Town released a COVID-19 vaccine [pre-registration](#) form for people 75 years of age and older who live or work in Hingham. Once someone pre-registers with the Town, they will be added to our list. The Town will follow the State's prioritization process for vaccines, with people 75+ years old

eligible first in Phase 2. Once the Town receives vaccine doses from the State, local health officials will set up clinics in town. We will email pre-registrants on a first-come, first-served basis with instructions to schedule your vaccine appointment. Please note that our ability to hold vaccination clinics is dependent on vaccine availability. We are prepared with staff and a vaccination site, but we are receiving a limited number of vaccines each week. People can access the vaccine pre-registration form on the Town's website at hingham-ma.gov/COVID19. For those who need help accessing the form online, we have set up a dedicated phone number that people can call for assistance with pre-registration. If you need help pre-registering, please call 781-804-2292 and leave a message with your name, address, and phone number. We have a team of Senior Center and Library staff who are checking these messages and returning calls as soon as possible in the order in which they are received. Please leave only one message so that we can get back to everyone as quickly as possible. We are publicizing the 781-804-2292 number through a pre-recorded message that went out from our Director of Elder Services to over 3,000 seniors age 75+ this afternoon. We are also sharing that phone number through public service announcements that Harbor Media will run on local TV starting tomorrow. In addition, we are asking for everyone's help reaching out to friends, family members, and neighbors in Hingham who may be interested in pre-registering and may need some assistance doing so online. Please remember that the Town's ability to hold vaccination clinics is dependent on vaccine availability. If you can access a COVID-19 vaccine through other means, you should do so. If you end up receiving the vaccine through another organization and no longer need to be on the Town of Hingham list, please let us know as soon as possible by emailing CovidQuestions@hingham-ma.gov. Thank you for your patience as we work through this process. Much of the guidelines and vaccine distribution capabilities are controlled by the State. We encourage all residents to continue to follow the state's official COVID-19 website for the most up-to-date information. This page can be found by visiting mass.gov and clicking on the COVID-19 link.

Mr. Fisher asked if the Town would provide transportation assistance to seniors who may need help getting to the vaccination site. Mr. Mayo and Ms. Monsegur reported that discussions are still ongoing. Ms. Monsegur encouraged seniors to reach out to the group HinghamLink for transportation assistance. It was clarified that, if a resident gets their first shot at the Hingham clinic, they would also be able to get their second shot there as well.

Ms. Susan O'Horo, 7 Wanders Drive, asked about the Board of Health criteria. She felt that the School Department was using criteria, including quarantine guidelines that are more conservative than what is being recommended by the Board of Health. Mr. Mayo and Ms. Power encouraged Ms. O'Horo to bring her questions and concerns to the attention of the School Department. Mr. Fisher added that the Board of Health sets minimum guidelines for the Town and various groups have the ability to set their standards higher than those minimums.

Public Comment

Ms. Power stated that the Board of Selectmen set aside time for public comment. She advised that any comments should be related to topics that are within the scope of responsibility of the Board of Selectmen. She reminded the public that this is not a time for debate by the Board and that they do not adopt or endorse any comments made during this time.

There were no comments from the public

Selectmen/Town Administrator Reports

Ms. Monsegur: Nothing to report

Mr. Mayo: Mr. Mayo read the following letter of commendation from Fire Chief Steve Murphy, dated February 2, 2021:

“I wanted to notify you and the other members of the Board of Selectmen that the mold clean up at the station at 230 North Street has been completed. Also, I wanted to recognize and commend several Hingham fire personnel for their work on this endeavor. The cleanup project began with Hingham Fire Department personnel moving all of the furniture and lockers from one-half of the station and relocating to headquarters. The cleanup company and electrician removed all of the old ceiling tiles, light, insulation HVAC ducts and drop ceiling. They then decontaminated and removed all mold. Once the area was mold-free, the contractors installed new insulation, lights, ceiling ductwork and smoke detectors. Once the contractors finished, Hingham Fire Department personnel spent the next few days painting the entire living quarters, then waxed and buffed the floor and installed new windows, new window shades and other minor modifications. Finally, the staff then moved everything back into the station. Many of the HFD team’s hours were while they were on duty and still responding to emergencies. Additionally, the members volunteered to work on their days off to help finish the project. I am incredible grateful and proud of the work they did. This project would not have been so successful without their effort. The cleanup helped make the station safer for them to live and work. It does not eliminate the need for a new station. Many other issues, such as space constraints, building age, and safety issues are still present. I have told my staff that I will continue advocating for the Public Safety Complex’s funding and construction. Although this project impacted everyone working at both Station 1 and Station 2, I want to recognize the following individuals: Captain David Levinson spearheaded this project and spent a significant amount of time and effort. Deputy Chief Bill Powers, Lieutenants Colby Wilcox, Dave Nickerson, Mike Geese and Mark Berlin. Firefighters Tom Chart, Alex Bailey, Jeff James, Kevin Bliss, Sarah Joy, David Perez, Kyle Keegan, Joe Dietch, Mike Crow, Mark Ripoli, Kevin Brady, and Dave Dixon.

Sincerely,
Chief Murphy”

Mr. Fisher reported that today is Groundhog Day and six more weeks of winter has been predicted.

Mr. Ramsey: Mr. Ramsey reported that Foster North (formerly St. Jerome’s School) opens this week although, unfortunately, school was cancelled today. He stressed that this should not overshadow the tremendous work that was put into the opening of that facility by the Foster leadership, the faculty, and the parents. He commended all for their efforts.

Ms. Power announced that Saturday is Lincoln Day in Hingham, honoring Benjamin Lincoln. She thanked members of the Historical Society for making a small celebration take place, despite COVID-19 restrictions.

Ms. Power announced that the next meeting of the Board of Selectmen has been scheduled for Tuesday, February 9, 2021.

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 9:11 PM.

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