

**Hingham Advisory Committee
Library Project Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes
February 9, 2019, 4:00pm**

Subcommittee Members in Attendance: Eric Haskell (chair); Julie Strehle; Libby Claypoole.

Others in Attendance: None

The subcommittee meeting came to order at 4:01pm in the Fearing Room at the Hingham Public Library. Mr. Haskell volunteered to keep minutes and advised subcommittee members not to deliberate on the Library-related articles with each other outside of publicly-posted subcommittee meetings.

The subcommittee reviewed the warrant articles relating to the Library construction project, noting that the consolidated Article FF appeared likely to be dropped in favor of separate Articles KK (proposing creation of a Building Committee) and LL (proposing approval of project and an appropriation of funds), based on the discussion at the February 7 hearing on those three articles held by the Board of Selectmen.

The subcommittee also discussed the process that it will use to evaluate articles KK and LL. Specifically, the subcommittee determined to:

- 1) Compile a list of further information and documents that it wishes to consider in its deliberations, and to provide that list to the articles' proponents and opponents;
- 2) Hold a hearing at a mutually-convenient time on either Saturday 02/16/19, Sunday 02/17/19, Monday 02/18/19, or Tuesday 02/19/19, at which the proponents and opponents will be invited to express their views about the articles and to answer questions from the subcommittee; and
- 3) Hold an additional meeting on a date to be determined, at which the subcommittee will deliberate over a draft comment and recommendation that the subcommittee can present to the full Advisory Committee.

In discussing the process for evaluating Articles KK and LL, the subcommittee members identified the following points about which they wish to receive more information, in order to aid their consideration of Articles KK and LL:

- Why was the option of pursuing a multi-town library ruled out? On this point, Mr. Haskell recalled that at least one former member of the Advisory Committee had been very interested in the possibility of a multi-town library arrangement with the Town of Hull in the 2015-16 timeframe, but that former Town Administrator Ted Alexiades had informed the Advisory Committee sometime around 2016 that such an arrangement would not be viable. Ms. Strehle offered to do further research into the fate of that possibility.

Approved by AdComm Library Project subcommittee: 02/20/19

- Are updated documents and information available concerning the “alternative” concepts for library construction? On this point, all subcommittee members agreed that the documents shared by the Library with the Advisory Committee on or about October 16, 2018, were sufficient to allow the subcommittee members to evaluate the “Article LL” proposal as against the “alternatives.” The subcommittee members, however, wished to obtain all updated or additional information that is available about the “alternatives.”
- Details regarding the Library Board of Trustees’ track record of private fundraising, such as number of unique donors over time and actual amounts of money raised, including but not limited to during the capital campaign related to the 1999-2002 renovations to the Library.
- Details regarding the disruptions and impacts that Article LL is expected to cause—both to the Library’s operations and to the surrounding neighborhood—while construction is ongoing;
- Details regarding whether the construction contemplated by Article LL should be expected to increase operating costs of the Library;
- Whether Article KK (i.e., building committee) ought to go forward if Article LL and/or any required debt exclusion ballot question do not succeed; and
- What ought to be the composition and appointing authority(ies) for any such building committee.

The subcommittee members also identified the following documents that they wish to receive and review, in order to aid their consideration of Articles KK and LL:

- The “late January” 2019 letter from Selectman Mary Power to the Board of Library Trustees, referenced by Ms. Power at the recent Board of Selectmen hearing;
- An unabridged copy of the Library’s application for the Mass. Board of Library Commissioners grant;
- Access to the Excel-based debt service modeling tool (“Model”) created by John Asher and others in the summer of 2017 upon the request of the Advisory Committee, and apparently referenced by Ms. Power at the 02/07/19 BOS hearing on the Library project. Mr. Haskell noted that he spoke with Ass’t Town Administrator Michelle Monsecur on the afternoon of 02/07/19 to request a time that he could use the Model to run scenarios to project the tax and debt service impacts of the proposed Library project. Ms. Claypoole stated that she might request a similar opportunity to work with the Model. All members of the subcommittee agreed that, in view of the large number of capital projects expected to compete for limited Town funding in the coming years, the opportunity to use the Model to gauge the impact of the proposed Library project would

be a very important component of their deliberations on Articles KK and LL. Mr. Haskell further noted that the “tax increase” figure cited by Ms. Power at the 02/07/19 BOS hearing was different from figures provided by Mr. Mayo to Linda Harper in the autumn of 2018, and that Mr. Haskell wished to understand the cause of that difference.

Mr. Haskell agreed to communicate those requests for information and documents to the articles’ proponents and opponents in preparation for the upcoming subcommittee hearing process.

Mr. Haskell also encouraged the subcommittee members to engage in their own research and to independently brainstorm the facts, arguments, opinions, and other points that ought to be incorporated into the forthcoming draft subcommittee comment and recommendation. Mr. Haskell emphasized that the final subcommittee comment and recommendation will be a team product.

The subcommittee meeting adjourned at 4:55pm.

Respectfully submitted by Eric A. Haskell, subcommittee chair