

Select Board

February 14, 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 AM: 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

Approval of Minutes

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to approve the minutes dated January 31, 2022. Ms. Klein seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Vote: Ms. Klein made a motion to approve the minutes dated February 7, 2022. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to approve the minutes dated February 9, 2022. Ms. Klein seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Executive Session under MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the DPW Teamsters Local 25

The Chair States: The Board will enter Executive Session under MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the DPW Teamsters Local 25 because discussion in an open session may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Town. The Board will reconvene in Open Session.

6:29 PM: The Select Board reconvened in open session.

Memorandum of Agreement with the DPW Teamsters Local 25

Mr. Jack Manning, member of the Personnel Board, presented. Personnel Board members who participated in the negotiations were himself and Ms. Karen Johnson, as well as Town Administrator Mayo and Mr. Randy Sylvester, DPW Superintendent. Mr. Manning said that the negotiations began back in October of 2021. Their main priority during the negotiations was to take care of the DPW workers and to address their concerns. He highlighted the respect that the Personnel Board felt for these workers, some of whom have worked for the Town for decades. After a number of meetings and negotiations, they recommended an equity adjustment of 3.89%, which would place the workers at or slightly above the midpoint of those in comparable towns. He also reported a COLA adjustment of 3% for three years. In the end, they agreed upon a one-year contract followed by a three-year contract. He also reported that there were additional negotiations regarding vacation and comp time carryover. Mr. Manning felt that the agreement presented to the Select Board today was fair and took into account the best interest of the DPW workers. Mr. Ramsey was happy that it was a four-year contract. Ms. Klein was happy that they were able to raise the pay up to just above the midway point of Hingham's benchmark communities. She felt that the contract shows how much the Town values the DPW. Mr. Fisher agreed that they should proceed with approving the contract.

Vote: Ms. Klein made a motion to sign the Memorandum of Agreement with the DPW Teamsters Local 25 for contracts effective July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022 and July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2025. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

2023 Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article Discussion

Article T: Naming By-law

Article T asks Town Meeting to approve amending the General By-laws by deleting Article 40 in its entirety and inserting in its place a new Article 40. Mr. Phil Edmundson, Chair of the Naming By-law Committee presented. Committee member, Mr. Victor Balterra, was also present. Mr. Edmundson summarized the work the Committee has done since they last presented to the Select Board. He said

that they have made and voted upon some changes to the proposed by-law, which were decided upon after consultation with Town Counsel. The changes were as follows:

- They agreed with Town Counsel's advice to remove a clause restricting them to recognizing only local, national or globally significant events and names, thinking that this would widen the aperture and make the opportunity to have more private investment available to the Town.
- They agreed with Town Counsel's advice to remove a section on commercial signs, on the idea that it was duplicating other by-laws.
- They agreed to recommended changes that would show an increased level of transparency and involvement for the community.

Next steps for the Naming By-law Committee would include a draft policy statement that they would present to the Select Board for consideration and discussion. Mr. Ramsey thanked Mr. Edmundson and the Committee for moving forward with this warrant article. Mr. Fisher felt that the changes, as presented, have provided the proposed by-law more flexibility, while also ensuring some constraints. Ms. Klein said that she agreed with the changes that were made. She also mentioned that allowing for more flexibility in naming future large capital projects would make a considerable impact on the finances of the Town and is consistent with recommendations made by the Sustainable Budget Task Force.

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

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Article U: Plastic Bottle Ban By-law: Commercial Sale or Distribution

Ms. Maria Zade, Chair of Cleaner Greener Hingham, explained that the proposed by-law would limit the sale of non-flavored, non-carbonated water in single-serve plastic containers under one gallon. It would also prohibit schools and Town entities from purchasing and distributing these products. Violations would be punishable in the same manner as the plastic bag ban, with the Town Administrator as the enforcing body. Ms. Zade reported that 24 other Massachusetts communities have already taken similar actions. The purpose of Article U is to reduce the common use of single-use plastic water bottles and to promote the use of reusable bottles by consumers. Implementation of this article would reduce pollution and waste and would protect Hingham's unique beauty and irreplaceable natural resources and would also encourage residents to make small manageable changes that would help the environment. The proposed Article U, if passed by Town Meeting, would take effect on January 1, 2024. Ms. Zade went on to say that, in order to maintain the current recycling dividend points, the Town would now have to ban the sale or use of two specific single use items. Those would include plastic water bottles, plastic bags, plastic straws, polystyrene cups, polystyrene containers, disposable lunch trays (schools), and disposable utensils. She went on to report that the Weir River Water System has agreed to donate two water bottle filling stations, to be installed behind the Rec. Center and downtown. She also noted that the Town could apply for grants for many more. There was additional discussion

regarding water bottle alternatives, Hingham's responsibility as a coastal community, how the proposed by-law fits in with Hingham's net zero goals and environmental concerns surrounding the recycling of plastic bottles. She highlighted how different demographics are affected the processing of recyclables and the subsequent health effects. Additionally, she reported the results of a poll of local businesses' thoughts on the proposed by-laws as well as alternatives to single-use plastic bottles. While businesses had mixed feelings, they generally felt that it would be good for the environment.

Mr. Ramsey said that the Select Board members have received numerous emails from residents concerning this proposed warrant article. He said that they have all been read, but due to the volume, they are not able to respond to each one. Ms. Klein added that they have received 61 emails thus far in favor of Article U. One of her original concerns was with the availability of alternatives for plastic bottles. She was happy that Ms. Zade addressed that concern in her presentation. Ms. Zade added that Plymouth River School is currently piloting a similar program and have reported that it is going well so far.

Ms. Klein said that she was ready to proceed. Mr. Fisher said that "doing the right thing is not always easy," but that addressing the plastics problem is essential. He asked if any towns have passed a similar by-law and then reversed it. Ms. Zade commented that there were a couple of communities that did that on the Cape, but it was partly due to Covid. The execution of the by-law was paused until it could be voted on at a future Town Meeting. Mr. Fisher emphasized the importance of communication and socialization efforts. There was some additional discussion regarding what sports teams would fall under the umbrella of the proposed articles. It would only apply to municipal teams and school sports teams, not private teams or clubs.

Mr. Andy Ayer, 41 Hemlock Road, commented that he felt there had not been enough socialization at this time. He recommended in a municipal ban, not a warrant article.

Ms. Rebecca Sharp, 35 High Street, brought up a variety of health, environmental and financial concerns. She suggested a town-wide ban on Styrofoam products and plastic straws instead of water at the moment.

Mr. Anthony George, 15 Blaisdell Road, member of Cleaner Greener Hingham, said that he was part of the group that interviewed business owners. He said that he was pleasantly surprised with their comments. His impression was that most of them would agree with this if it were to be implemented. He emphasized the importance of education and the changing of habits. He felt strongly that it is now time to live without plastic.

Ms. Kate Boland, 338 Main Street, made some comments about issues that Concord faced when they implemented a similar ban. She reported that Concord has used CPC funding to pay for 10 water bottle filling stations. Also, she spoke with staff from Arlington, who reported that a similar vote passed with almost no opposition.

Mr. Elliott Place, 91 Kimball Beach Road, felt that this article is in line with the Town's net zero goals.

The Select Board members discussed whether an unintended consequence of this article would make less healthy alternatives to water more available. Ms. Zade said that they are not targeting water, but rather its plastic packaging. She went on to discuss some plastic bottle alternatives. She also said that they are presenting a by-law change that they know will be approved by the Attorney General and has already been supported by the State in other communities.

Mr. Andy Ayer, 41 Hemlock Road, said that he feels it will be important to provide the businesses data on the projected financial impact of this by-law.

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

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Article DD: Plastic Bottle Ban By-law: Municipal Single Use

Ms. Zade addressed this article during the discussion of Article U. There was some additional discussion regarding what sort of sports teams would be allowed to distribute plastic water bottles. Mr. Fisher voiced some concern that this article may be confusing to some people. Ms. Zade felt that, in an attempt to avoid hypocrisy, the Town should model the same behavior that they are asking of their residents. The issue of enforcement was also discussed.

Ms. Tina Sherwood, 16 Partridge Drive, member of the Advisory Committee, commented that first responders would be exempt from the ban.

Ms. Kate Boland, 338 Main Street, felt that it would be hard to ask residents to change their lifestyle and for the municipality not to change theirs.

Ms. Vicki Donlan, 12 Floret Circle, commented that she felt that it would not look good if the Town was not abiding by the same laws as the residents.

Vote: Ms. Klein made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article DD. Ms. Klein seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Article X: Senior Center Feasibility

Mr. Mayo reported that some people in the senior community feel that the Town should consider other locations for a new Senior Center, rather than focusing specifically on expanding the current location. Article X would ask for Town Meeting approval to amend the appropriation of \$525,000 previously approved under Article 14 of the Town of Hingham 2020 Annual Town Meeting to expand the purpose for which it may be expended. It would allow the Select Board to expend resources to pay for feasibility, design, architectural, engineering, and other services asks for Town Meeting approval to amend the appropriation of \$525,000 previously approved under Article 14 of the Town of Hingham 2020 Annual Town Meeting to expand the purpose for which it may be expended. It would allow the Select Board to expend resources to pay for feasibility, design, architectural, engineering, and other services, but that it would not ask for any additional funds.

Mr. Tom Carey of the Senior Center Building Committee said that “casting a wide net” would be in the best interest of the seniors in the Hingham community, which he enthusiastically supports. The Committee would continue to generate recommendations of what might be most appropriate. Chair Ramsey said that his goal was to get the best location for a Senior Center as possible so he was fully in support. Ms. Klein’s only concern was that she does not want to slow down the process of building a new Senior Center. Mr. Fisher agreed as well.

Ms. Jean Silverio, 6 Autumn Circle, reported that she has been on the Senior Center Building Committee for many years and voiced her support for this article.

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article X. 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)

There were no appointments.

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.”

There were no appointments.

Town Administrator/Select Board Reports

Mr. Fisher congratulated the Historical Society on a very successful Lincoln Day event.

Mr. Ramsey reported that he recently attended his first all-town chorus event. He was very impressed and complimented the talented children in Hingham's arts programs. He also noted that the Hingham Barker Basketball season recently came to a close. He extended his appreciation to all of the coaches and volunteers that helped make it happen. Mr. Ramsey and Ms. Klein also recently attended the Hingham High School Basketball's Senior Night. During the game Hingham's Liam McBride scored his 1,000th point and became Hingham's third high school athlete to do so. He congratulated Liam for this amazing accomplishment.

Executive Session (1) under MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(6) to discuss potential acquisition of real estate and (2) under MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(6) to discuss potential acquisition of real estate easements for 335 Lincoln Street, Hingham, MA

The Chair Stated: The Board will enter Executive Session (1) under MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(6) to discuss potential acquisition of real estate and (2) under MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(6) to discuss potential acquisition of real estate easements for 335 Lincoln Street, Hingham, MA because discussion in an open session may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the Town. The Board will not reconvene in Open Session. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

7:46 PM: The Select Board adjourned to Executive Session. M made a motion to adjourn. M seconded.

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