

Board of Selectmen

March 4, 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 also announced that, “in accordance with Massachusetts General Law, the Board of Selectmen members who will be participating remotely this evening are myself, Mary Power, Chair, Joe Fisher, and Bill Ramsey.”

Ms. Power asked if anyone, besides Harbor Media, was recording the meeting. There were no responses.

Ms. Power noted that members of the Board of Selectmen who will be participating in the meeting remotely were herself, Mary Power, Chair, Joseph Fisher, and Bill Ramsey.

Approval of Minutes

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to approve the minutes dated February 9, 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 February 11, 2021. Mr. Ramsey seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

To approve the agreement with Clifton Larson Allen, LLP for Audit Services for the Fiscal Years ending June 30, 2021, 2022, and 2023

Mr. Mayo explained that this is the second contract with CLA. He noted that Town Counsel has reviewed the contract. Mr. Sue Nickerson, Town Accountant, added that the Town has been happy with their services.

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the agreement with Clifton Larson Allen, LLP for audit Services for the Fiscal years ending June 30, 2021, 2022, and 2023. Mr. Ramsey seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Transfer Station Revenue Analysis and Proposed Fees

Ms. Power welcomed DPW Superintendent Randy Sylvester. Mr. Sylvester noted that the recycling rate in Hingham has been increasing over the last 5-6 years, which has caused him to increase his budget every year in order to cover those costs. He reported that he has analyzed data from other towns who, like Hingham, are members of the South Shore Recycling Cooperative. He reported that his staff has researched the revenues and costs of participating towns. He said that their research concluded that Hingham was far below the other towns in terms of recycling costs. He said that the Town’s recycling costs were \$25,000 in 2005. He noted that today the Town’s recycling costs are close to \$130,000, even though his budget is currently \$100,000. He anticipated that the costs would continue to grow each year. As opposed to raising taxes to cover the increasing recycling costs, he proposed instituting recycling fees similar to other towns on the South Shore. Mr. Sylvester recommended the following recycling fees:

Recommended Transfer Station Fees

	Current Fees	Current Costs/Revenue	Recommended Fees	Increase in Revenue	New Revenue	Estimated Increase in Revenues
Sticker Cost	\$0 - 1 per Household \$25 - Ea. Additional \$25 Replacement \$25 - Part Time Res per Yr	No Change	No Change	No Change		
Pay as You Throw	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Commercial Sticker (Hingham Debris Only)	\$50 - In Town	No Change	No Change	No Change		
	\$75 - Out of Town	\$1,125	\$150 - Out of Town	\$1,125		\$1,125

C&D/Bulky Waste Fee (Hingham Debris Only)	Resident \$120 Per Ton \$15 min under 250 lbs.	No Change	No Change	No Change		
	Commercial \$120 Per Ton \$15 min under 250 lbs.	\$75,000	Commercial \$320 PerTon \$45 min under 250 lbs.	\$100,000		\$100,000
Appliances	\$0	\$4,050	\$15 Per Item		\$34,500	\$34,500
Electronics	\$0	\$27,710	\$15 Per Item		\$14,000	\$14,000
Mattress/Boxsprings	\$20 / \$20	No Change	No Change	No Change	No Change	
Furniture	\$0	\$1,700	\$15 Minimum (Scale Only)		\$2,250	\$2,250
Tires	\$5 - Passenger \$10 - Trucks +\$5 w/rim	No Change	No Change	No Change	No Change	
TOTALS				\$101,125	\$50,750	\$151,875

Ms. Power asked how residents would pay the fees. Mr. Sylvester explained that residents would pay at the scale via credit card. There was some additional discussion amongst the Board members. He said that there would be no change for residents to use the scale, but there would be costs for commercial businesses to use the scale. Mr. Ramsey noted that he was in favor of the proposed fees. Mr. Sylvester hoped to implement the changes starting on May 1, 2021, pending approval by the Board. Mr. Fisher emphasized the need to socialize the changes with the public. He also asked about Covid protocols. Mr. Sylvester felt that their current protocols could continue to be implemented, even with the proposed fee changes. Ms. Power noted that the cost of trash disposal has gone up by \$90,000 over the past year. She suggested that the new fee structure be posted on the Town's website. She also suggested holding off on voting for 2 weeks, in order to give the public time to contact the Board of Selectmen with any questions.

2021 Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article Discussion

Article BB: Citizen's Petition: Amend General By-laws Article 2 and 3

Ms. Power announced that Mr. Tom Patch who proposed Article BB had joined the Board. Tom Patch, Mr. Patch, 9 Ship Street, reported that his proposed Article is seeking to improve on the tradition of recognizing deceased Town employees since the previous Town Meeting. He suggested including elected officials, appointed volunteers, and members of the School Department. He felt that it would be a sign of respect to recognize their contribution to the Town. He also felt that this would encourage civic engagement and good citizenship. He reported that he has discussed his proposal with the Town Clerk who did not anticipate this putting a strain on her department. He noted that the Town would not have an obligation to seek out which people had deceased since the last Town Meeting. Mr. Mayo

clarified that, currently, the Town announces all employees who have passed since the previous Town Meeting. Because the School Department has a different retirement system than the municipal government, the Town is not able to access the names of School Department employees who have passed since Town Meeting.

Mr. Fisher asked Mr. Patch if there were any other towns that he knew of that had similar language in their by-laws. Mr. Patch was not aware of any. There was some additional discussion regarding the estimated number of elected officials, Town volunteers, and School employees and the suggested way for them to be recognized. Mr. Ramsey was concerned, while he felt the intention was good, that people may be omitted inadvertently. Ms. Power felt that the proposed article had good intentions, but had some concerns regarding its implementation. Mr. Ramsey noted that he was not quite ready to take action at this time. He requested additional time to gather more information from the Town Clerk and the Veterans Officer. Ms. Power suggested that the Board have additional discussions regarding Article BB at the March 9, 2021 meeting.

Article Y: HMLP Proposed Transmission and Substation Project

Mr. Paul Heanue, General Manager of HMLP, presented. He explained that the first step would be the approval by Town Meeting for the transfer of land for the sub-station. He anticipated the entire process, including the approval by several State regulatory boards, to take about two years. Mr. Fisher felt it was very important to address the questions and concerns of residents. Mr. Ramsey felt that residents have had some valid concerns. Mr. Ramsey noted that Mr. Heanue has articulated the need for this project very well, but Mr. Ramsey had concerns that the project was moving very quickly. Ms. Power echoed Mr. Ramsey's comments.

Mr. Mayo suggested that additional research regarding the proposed location could be conducted by a consultant prior to Town Meeting. He felt that additional information provided to the Board regarding the location could be informative. One option he suggested was that HMLP could ask Town Meeting for an amount of money that would allow the light plant to do its due diligence regarding site assessments, preliminary design work, feasibility, etc. He suggested that HMLP collect evidence that the proposed site is the correct one. He suggested that the Article could be proposed to the 2022 Town Meeting. There was some additional discussion regarding the language in the proposed Article. Mr. John Coughlin, Town Counsel, suggested that the motion by the Advisory Committee could have the potential to narrow the scope of the proposed Article. Ms. Power noted that she would be interested in confirming that the proposed location is the correct one. Mr. Fisher commented that the proposed Article gives the impression that the Board of Selectmen has determined that this is the right site. Ms. Power noted the importance of the opportunity for citizens to engage in the process. Ms. Power proposed giving HMLP a little time to rewrite the Article and to discuss additional options.

Mr. Phil Resca, 198 Hobart Street, noted that he did not know about any emergency management plans for the proposed sub-station. He also raised the issue of the unknown location of the line coming in from Weymouth that would be connected to an existing line in Hingham. He noted that he was unsatisfied with the many unknowns regarding this project. He raised the question of other locations that could be suitable for the project.

Mr. Jack Whittemore, 200 Old Hobart Street, had concerns regarding the size and scope of the project, as well as the location.

Ms. Kelly Achille, 194 Old Hobart Street, noted that she is a direct abutter of the existing Transfer Station. She was very concerned that the proposed new sub-station is 25 feet from her property. She was opposed to the proposed location of the project for several reasons, including the safety of her family and the value of her and her neighbors homes.

Ms. Natalie Whittemore, 200 Old Hobart Street, asked how the Town could authorize additional commercial construction in a residential area. Mr. Mayo did note that the proposed construction would be allowed under current Zoning regulations.

Ms. Power suggested that the Board not vote at this meeting. She felt that it was important for residents to feel comfortable with the process and with opportunities to engage in that process as important decisions are made.

Article Z: Reconstruction of Town Pier

Ms. Power announced that members of the Harbor Development Community and Chair Bill Reardon had joined the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Mayo gave an overview of the project so far. He explained that the Town has engaged the Woods Hole Group in a contract to evaluate some concerns raised by members of the Conservation Commission. Mr. J.R. Frey, Town Engineer, noted that the results of this contract should be available in six weeks. He said that the results would help to inform the Selectmen in their decision to ask Town meeting borrow money to move forward with the project. Mr. Reardon added that the Advisory Committee had projected the cost of the project to be approximately \$5.65 million. This number represents an inflation adjustment and a careful analysis. Mr. Reardon reported that he has done quite a bit of research regarding funding sources outside of the Town through State and Federal grants, some of which could be as much as \$3 million.

Mr. Fisher noted that the safety and climate change issues related to this project have not gone away and he noted that he was in favor of the Article. Mr. Ramsey echoed his comments and thanked the Harbor Development Committee for all their work. Ms. Power felt that the Woods Hole Study could inform things that could be addressed during the permitting process. Ms. Power concluded that this is the right time to bring this Article before Town Meeting and cited valuable interest rates as a consideration.

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

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Public Comment

“The Board of Selectmen has set aside up to 15 minutes for public comment for items not on the Board’s agenda, but within the purview of the Board of Selectmen, during which time we typically follow the guidelines of open meeting. We encourage speakers to present remarks in a respectful manner and

not to indulge in personalities. The Public Comment time is not a period of debate for the Board of Selectmen and the Board is neither adopting nor endorsing any of the comments made during the Public Comment period.”

Ms. Power extended her appreciation to all of the Town’s dedicated staff. She thanked Mr. Mayo and Ms. Monsegur for their continued dedication to the Town.

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 9:02 PM.

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