

Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: March 9, 2021

Place: Remote Meeting via Zoom

In attendance: Committee Members Bob Curley, Julie Strehle, Andy McElaney, Evan Sheehan, Dave Anderson, Davalene Cooper, Kristin Dziergowski, Victor Baltera, Tina Sherwood, Libby Claypoole, Alan Macdonald, Brenda Black, Eryn Kelley, Nancy MacDonald, George Danis, and Town Accountant Sue Nickerson.

Absent: No one

1. ***Call meeting to order:*** Chair Curley called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm 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 Chairman 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.

2. ***Comments from the public on items not on the agenda:*** None

3. ***Warrant Article hearings and potential votes:***

- a. Article Z- Repair/Reconstruction of Town Pier. Libby Claypoole and Harbor Development Committee (HDC) Chair Bill Reardon presented this Article which seeks to obtain funds to repair and reconstruct Town Pier to address safety issues and to mitigate against a rise in sea level due to climate change.

Chair Reardon presented a map of the harbor and identified the five Town-owned wharves and gave a brief description of their condition. In 2015 the (HDC) received a report from Kleinfelder on the anticipated impact of sea level rise on the Town owned wharves through 2030. The report showed the likelihood of spillover onto roadways and surrounding streets from water and waves exceeding the height of the wharves. Based on the report, the HDC identified Town Pier, Barnes Wharf, and Veteran's Wharf as being the most vulnerable. Town Pier, at 7 feet above North Atlantic Vertical Datum (NAVD) was determined to be the most critical and the HDC selected it as the first wharf to be repaired and reconstructed to a height of 11 feet NAVD. The HDC engaged the firm of Beals + Thomas to design the reconstructed Town Pier. The final design includes

a base sufficiently strong as to support the addition of another layer of stone, if determined to be needed in the future. The additional layer would bring the Town Pier to 12 ½ feet NAVD.

HDC cites four primary goals for the redesigned wharves:

- I. Safety- the wharves are currently in a state of disrepair due to the continuous action of tides and need to be repaired irrespective of the rise in sea levels;
- II. The wharves are an important historical asset of the Town and need to be preserved;
- III. The wharves are an essential part of the Harborwalk;
- IV. The wharves should be designed consistent with other elevations in the Harbor area.

In the Fall 2020 the Town Conservation Commission raised several issues with HDC regarding the proposed height of the wharves and potential damage to surrounding areas caused by wave action from the reconstructed wharves. HDC commissioned Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute to study the effects of wave damage on surrounding areas. That report will be available in late April 2021.

The estimated cost of repairing and reconstructing Town Pier is \$5,659,000. Grants are available on both State and Federal levels. If the Town secures one or more grants, the Town's cost for the repairs would obviously be lowered. Moreover, a State or Federal grant would accelerate the timeline for repairing the remaining wharves. Chair Reardon noted that the Board of Selectmen has prepared a letter to the State Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, which administers a grant program of up to \$3.0 million, in support of the Town's request for a State grant.. Chair Curley, while noting that the AdCom would not vote this Article until receipt of the Woods Hole Report, offered to submit a similar letter if Chair Reardon felt it would be helpful. Chair Reardon expressed appreciation and felt that the support of the Town's Advisory Committee would be beneficial.

- b. Article W- Waterways Fund Transfer. Chair Curley stated that the AdCom would defer voting on this Article;
- c. Article L- Acceptance of Easements. This Article, which grants the Board of Selectmen authorization to accept easements through April 30, 2022 has already been approved by the AdCom. The date of April 30 was inserted in the Article because Town Meeting is typically held on the last Monday of April.. However, recognizing that the 2021 Town Meeting is currently scheduled for May, Real Estate Counsel for the Town raised the question of whether the date in the

Recommended Motion should to be changed. After some discussion of whether to change the Recommended Motion to extend authorization until the end of the fiscal year, or the end of the month in which Town Meeting is held, it was decided to ask for guidance from Town Counsel.

4. *Review and Discussion of Advisory Committee Policies and Procedures:*

Davalene Cooper discussed the progress she, Julie Strehle and Alan Macdonald have made in reviewing and editing the AdCom Policies and Procedures. Primary areas for additional research and review include:

- a. The definition and role of the AdCom's subcommittees versus liaison teams as they pertain to the Open Meeting Law;
- b. Responsibility for submitting Warrant Articles;
- c. Members of the AdCom advocating for or against a candidate for Town office, a Warrant Article or an item likely to be brought to the AdCom for review;
- d. The policy regarding being recorded in opposition to the majority vote on a Warrant Article for purposes of being able to speak before Town Meeting.

Ms. Cooper and her team will continue their work and report back to the AdCom at a later date.

5. *Town Administrator Budget Recommendations:* This item was deferred as the Town Administrator was unable to join the AdCom meeting.

6. *Further discussion of Forecast, Financial Policy, Fund Balance, overrides, and debt exclusions:* Chair Curley reviewed the latest Forecast that projects a \$274 thousand surplus for the FY 22 budget. The surplus was derived by subtracting additional municipal and school spending, reducing the overlay, group insurance and legal expense costs, and non-excluded debt capacity, accelerating the purchase of an ambulance planned for FY 22 to FY 21 and adding the cost to the Recreation Department of the Fields Management program. These adjustments are based on the need to present a balanced budget to the Annual Town Meeting. Additionally, Chair Curley noted that the Town had just received notification that under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, the Town would be eligible for \$2.4 million in municipal and school aid. While details are unknown at this point, this additional aid would allow the Town to add back the items deleted in order to balance the budget.

The AdCom raised questions about this aid and how it might affect subsequent year budgets. While recognizing that details about the aid would be forthcoming there was concern with how subsequent years' budgets will be funded and the need to develop a comprehensive plan that seeks to right size the budgets of the municipal and school departments such that revenues match expenses.

7. *Review and approval of minutes from March 2, 2021 meeting:* Approved, with revisions, by roll call vote of 14-0-0.

8. **Warrant Article updates:** Chair Curley noted the following:

- Article Y: the HMLP transmission line and substation had not been voted at the March 4 BOS meeting and has not yet been scheduled for an AdCom hearing;
- Articles O and P: the Climate Action Planning Study and Climate Action Planning Committee Articles will be heard, and possibly voted, by the AdCom at the March 11 meeting;
- Article AA: the Rockland Road land transfer received a “no-action” vote by the BOS. HAHT Chair Tim White is considering pulling the Article from the Warrant;
- Article CCC: the Planning Board has withdrawn Article CCC and included provisions from that Article into Article AAA;
- Article DDD: the Planning Board has not yet voted on the citizen’s petition to allow detached accessory dwelling units , but is inclined to oppose the petition and substitute a motion for a study committee.

9. **Discussion of Mass Municipal Association presentation on Federal legislation:**

The AdCom deferred this item based on the previous discussion this evening about the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

10. **Liaison Reports:** Dave Anderson announced that the ACES sub-committee would meet on March 17, 2021.

11. **Discussion of Advisory Committee housekeeping items:**

- a. Meeting times: Next scheduled meetings are March 11, 16 and 18, 2021;
- b. Town Meeting and related deadlines: No update.

12. **Matters not anticipated within 48 hours:** None

13. **Adjourn:** Motion to adjourn at 10:06 pm by roll call vote of 14-0-0

Respectfully submitted,

George Danis, Secretary

List of Documents Distributed for this Meeting:

- Agenda
- Warrant Articles
- March 9, 2021 FY 22 Forecast
- March 2 meeting minutes
- Forecast reconciliation and requests not contained in FY 22 budget

- Information pertaining to the HMLP transmission line and sub-station Warrant Article
- Massachusetts DOR definition of free cash

Approved with revisions on 03/25/2021 by roll call vote 14-0-0