

Board of Selectmen

March 16, 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 announced that the meeting was being broadcast live by Harbor Media and asked if anyone else was recording. There were no responses.

Ms. Power also said that the Board of Selectmen members who were participating remotely were herself, Mary Power, Chair, Joe Fisher, and Bill Ramsey.

Appointment of Deputy Chief of Police Ryan O’Shea

Town Administrator Tom Mayo read the following memo that outlined the hiring process for the position of Deputy Chief of Police:

“In accordance with the authority assigned to the Town Administrator per Chapter 263 of the Acts of 2016, an act relative to the Town Administrator in the Town of Hingham, I have conducted an appropriate hiring process for the position of Deputy Chief of Police, resulting in my appointment of Ryan O’Shea to that position.

On February 25, 2021 at my direction, our Human Resources department posted internally an advertisement for the position of Deputy Chief of Police. This posting closed on March 4, 2021. We received a total of one application. Upon receipt of the application materials, I performed a reference check. After receiving a positive reference, I then convened a review team of myself, Assistant Town Administrator Michelle Monsegur, Chief of Police David Jones and Fire Chief Steve Murphy. Upon review of the application materials, we determined that an interview was warranted, identified questions and scheduled the interview for March 8, 2021. Lt. O’Shea attended the interview, and answered all questions with great skill and passion. Upon completion of the interview, I asked the panel their thoughts and all members agreed that Lt. O’Shea was qualified and an excellent candidate. Following this interview, I engaged the services of Creative Services Inc., to perform a thorough background check. The background check was received with all clear results, indicating no concerns.

As a result of the above process and my own judgement of Lt. O'Shea's character, skill, readiness, professionalism and passion, and consistent with the authority of the Town Administrator, I contacted Lt. O'Shea on Friday, March 12, 2021 and offered the position of Deputy Chief of Police, which he verbally accepted. The appointment was made official with Lt. O'Shea's formal swearing-in ceremony, conducted by Town Clerk Eileen McCracken on Monday, March 15, 2021 at 4:15pm."

Chief Jones made some comments regarding the hiring of Deputy Chief O'Shea. He said that he knows Deputy O'Shea to be "fair, firm and consistent", is a good role model, and embodies the Police Department's core values of "integrity, service, excellence and leadership." Chief Jones said he was confident that Deputy Chief O'Shea would continue to uphold the reputation and level of services that the Hingham Police Department provides. Mr. Fisher said that he was very pleased with the appointment of Deputy O'Shea. Mr. Ramsey felt that Deputy O'Shea would be a great mentor for the younger officers. Ms. Power noted her endorsement of the appointment of Deputy O'Shea and congratulated him on his appointment.

Deputy O'Shea thanked the Board of Selectmen, Town Administration, Chief Jones and his fellow officers and the citizens of Hingham for the incredible opportunity. He said that he would continue to work with his fellow officers to develop the organization and to serve the citizens. He noted that he is committed to strengthening community connections as the Town rebounds from Covid and restarts civic programs. He said that he looks forward to, "listening, learning and building a town that is safe and inclusive for all citizens."

Transfer Station Revenue Analysis and Proposed Fees

Ms. Power noted the Board had previously received a recommendation to adjust selected transfer station fees and would be taking action on them this evening. She said that the majority of the proposed fee increases at the Transfer Station were related to commercial use with some modest fee increases for residents for the disposal of electronics and appliances, mostly to cover the Town's costs for disposal. Ms. Power also welcomed the Town's new Assistant Superintendent of Public Works, Matt Cahill. Superintendent Randy Sylvester reported that he has had received no questions or comments from residents regarding the proposed fees. Mr. Sylvester said that he felt May 1 would be a reasonable effective date for the fee changes. The Board expressed its support for the proposed fee increases and felt that they were reasonable, noting that the cost to the Town for the services at the Transfer Station have increased significantly in the past several years.

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to approve the request of the Public Works Department to modify the Transfer Station Fee Schedule to add or increase the following fees effective May 1, 2021:

- a. **Increase the Commercial Sticker Fee for out-of-town users to \$150 per year.**
- b. **Increase the Construction & Demolition/Bulky Waste Fee for Commercial users to \$320 per ton, with a \$45 minimum under 250 lbs.**
- c. **Add an Appliance Recycling Fee of \$15 per item.**
- d. **Add an Electronics Recycling Fee of \$15 per item.**
- e. **Add a Furniture Recycling minimum charge of \$15 (scale only).**

Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:**Mr. Fisher: yes****Mr. Ramsey: yes****Ms. Power: yes****2021 Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article Discussion**

Ms. Power announced that the Board had originally intended to discuss Article D: Report of the Personnel Board and Article E: Salary of Town Officers and said that both Articles have been deferred until the Board's meeting on Thursday, March 18, 2021.

Article Y: HMLP Proposed Transmission and Substation Project

Ms. Power thanked Mr. Ramsey for working on this project the past week and asked him for any thoughts he had on moving forward. Mr. Ramsey reported that he had an opportunity to meet with Mr. Paul Heanue and his team at HMLP. They discussed the need for the new substation and he said that he was in agreement that Hingham needs the proposed substation. He said that they discussed the significant risks related to a power outage or a train derailment that could take out a line downtown. He was very convinced of the need for the substation. He was not convinced, however, of the proposed location. He suggested the possibility of using private property or property within the Transfer Station. He wanted to vet other locations prior to asking Town Meeting for money. Mr. Fisher asked what the costs and/or benefits to the Town if there is a delay. Mr. Ramsey reported that Mr. Heanue and he both felt that the proposed location is in the right sector of Town.

Mr. Heanue could not identify any benefits to delaying the project. He said that the risk to the Town could be catastrophic, especially if there was a power outage during cold weather. He noted that moving the location to somewhere else in Town could cost the Town millions of dollars. He was receptive to suggestions for other locations in the vicinity of Hobart Street. Mr. Fisher asked if part of the plan was to connect to a transmission line coming into Hingham from Weymouth. Mr. Heanue was not sure of the exact location (street) of the connect point but he noted that he has plans to meet with the Mayor of Weymouth to discuss this.

Ms. Power noted that she appreciated the need for the proposed substation and was pleased that HMLP was being proactive in bringing the issue to the Board's attention, but she felt that there were still many unanswered questions. She did not feel that she was in a position to recommend this to Town Meeting for approval. She felt that residents may also have questions regarding this Article and stressed the importance of bringing Articles to Town Meeting when they have the greatest chance for approval. She appreciated all the work that has gone into the project but felt that it was not quite ready yet.

Keith Jermyn, Town of Hingham Veterans Officer and a licensed electrician in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, felt that the Board should not make a decision in haste but also stressed the risks to the Town in the event of a power outage.

Mr. Robert Achille, 194 Old Hobart Street, expressed some concerns about the proposed location of the new substation. He was primarily concerned about the possibility of decreased property values for abutters. Mr. Achille also suggested a different property at 58 French Street and asked of the Town had

approached the owners to see if they had any interest in selling. He also suggested an on-site meeting for residents prior to presenting the Article at Town Meeting. He also has concerns with respect to emergency vehicles reaching his home in the event of an explosion at the substation.

Mr. Joe Kelly, 7 Independence Lane, asked if the utility provider is planning for infrastructure upgrades with the new connection. Mr. Tom Converse responded that the transmission line they are looking to tap into is a separate line and reported that they plan to bifurcate it thus creating two lines, which would increase reliability.

Mr. Phillip Resca, 198 Hobart Street, questioned the increase in cost for the project and felt that it was not ready for Town Meeting due to other outstanding questions.

Ms. Natalie Whittemore, 200 Old Hobart Street, commented that she would like more information regarding what other sites have been considered and suggested that an alternative site at the Transfer Station could be considered.

There was some additional discussion regarding the proposed transfer of the property. Mr. Ramsey noted that he had spoken with the Town's Real Estate Counsel who advised that they could not go through the permitting process without a transfer of property. Mr. Ramsey also felt that a feasibility study could be helpful.

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion of no action on Article Y. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Police Lieutenant Candidate Interviews: Steven Dearth, John Marquardt, and Nicholas Smith

Ms. Power welcomed Sgt. Dearth, Sgt. Marquardt, and Sgt. Smith and thanked them for applying for the position of Lieutenant and for engaging in the interview. She explained that the Board would not be taking any questions from the public during the interview process, but welcomed email comments or questions after the meeting. The Board asked each candidate a number of questions on various topics, including:

- Examples of mentoring other officers
- Challenges of the current working environment at the Police Station
- The effects of Police reform on the future of policing
- Things the HPD does well and areas that could benefit from improvement
- Examples of their leadership in emergency situations
- Their approach to dealing with difficult people
- How they would utilize a social working to help in situations of domestic violence, mental health crisis, and substance abuse
- Inclusivity of marginalized groups in Hingham

When the interviews concluded, Ms. Power said that the typical hiring process would also include an interview panel and a period of time for members of the public to provide input to the Board, followed by a recommendation from Chief Jones to the Board of Selectmen at an upcoming meeting.

Inside Town Finances: Volume 10, Enterprise Funds and Sewer

Ms. Power presented the tenth in a series of presentations on Town Finances: Enterprise Funds and Sewer. The entire presentation can be found online at www.hingham-ma.gov.

Ms. Diane DiNapoli, 16 Gardner Street, asked how HMLP and the Sewer distinguish themselves from a regular fund. Ms. Power explained that HMLP was different from an Enterprise Fund and that the Town collects from them a payment in lieu of a property tax bill. She also explained that the Sewer acts like an Enterprise Fund because it has a fee for its services, different from government entities like the Police Department. She also pointed out that only one third of Hingham residents use the sewer and only those who use the service pay for it.

COVID-19 Update

Mr. Mayo gave the following update regarding 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. There have been 85 new cases of COVID-19 in Hingham over the past 14 days, and a total of 1,657 cases in Hingham since the start of the pandemic. The average daily incidence rate for the Town of Hingham was 25.3 per 100,000 residents, and our percent positivity rate was 2.68% for the previous 14 days. As of today, confirmed COVID-19 cases in Massachusetts totaled 569,620. Public health metrics have been trending in a positive direction statewide, including drops in average daily COVID-19 cases and hospitalization rates. However, those rates remain higher than they were before the surge hit in fall 2020.

Vaccine Rollout & Reopening Plans

According to DPH's [daily COVID-19 vaccine report](#), over 946,000 people in Massachusetts have been fully vaccinated as of today. DPH has started to report vaccination rates by community each week. As of March 11, approximately 14% of Hingham residents have been fully vaccinated. This is great news. At this time, all Phase 1 priority groups as well as some Phase 2 priority groups are eligible to receive the vaccine in Massachusetts. Eligible Phase 2 individuals include:

- People age 65+;
- Individuals with two or more [certain medical conditions](#);
- Residents and staff of low-income and affordable senior housing; and
- K-12 and early childhood educators, child care workers, and K-12 school staff.

DPH announced today that they will release the schedule for all remaining groups in Massachusetts' vaccine plan tomorrow. Every resident will know when they are eligible for a vaccine. This information will contribute to the Town's reopening plans. We continue to closely monitor public health data, including the new statistic of community vaccination rates, and continue to assess our plans to reopen public buildings. We look forward to reporting back to the Board and the public on specific plans at a future meeting. It's important for everyone to continue using all the tools available to us to help stop

this pandemic, like covering your mouth and nose with a mask, washing hands often, and staying at least 6 feet away from others.

Ms. Power extended her thanks to Tom Mayo and Susan Sarni who worked hard to secure some vaccines for Hingham teachers. Ms. Monsecur clarified that the Town would be administering their first doses and the mPathy Covid Testing site on Cushing Street would be administering their second doses. Mr. Mayo thanked the Baptist Church who volunteered their space for use as a vaccine clinic. Mr. Mayo said that the Town is ready to offer that service if the State allows for it.

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.”

There were no comments from the public.

Selectmen and Town Administrator Reports

Ms. Power mentioned that she would attend the Library Board of Trustees meeting on March 17, 2021. She looked forward to reporting back to the Board on the Library’s reopening plans.

Ms. Power also reported that the next meeting of the Board of Selectmen would be on Thursday, March 18, 2021. She announced that they would be discussing several Warrant Articles and the budget. She said that they has received several letters from the public regarding budget and funding issues. She assured the community that the Board of Selectmen, the Advisory Committee and the School Department are working to develop a budget that best meets the needs of all citizens.

Mr. Shaun Galvin, 143 Fort Hill Street, asked about the rescheduling of Town Meeting and the Town Election. Mr. Mayo said that they are planning to hold Town Meeting on May 8, outside at the High School, with rain dates on May 15 and May 16. He said that the date of the election is still pending.

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Ramsey seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

The meeting adjourned at 10:09 PM.

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

