

Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: March 18, 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, Alan Macdonald, Brenda Black, Eryn Kelley, Nancy MacDonald, George Danis, and Town Accountant Sue Nickerson.

Absent: Libby Claypoole

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 L- Acceptance of Easements:** Andy McElaney presented an update to the Recommended Motion on this Article which the AdCom approved at its February 23, 2021 meeting. The update related to the expiration date for the authorization granted to the Selectmen by this Article. Mr. Baltera suggested that the expiration date be extended to the last day of the fiscal year. Subsequently, Real Estate Counsel for the Town approved this suggested change and Mr. McElaney changed the Recommended Motion to reflect this date. The AdCom voted 12-0-2 to accept this change (Libby Claypoole and Evan Sheehan were absent for this vote);
- b. **Article Y- HMLP Transmission and Substation Distribution Facilities:** Eryn Kelley and Hingham Municipal Lighting Plant (HMLP) General Manager Paul Heanue presented this Article under which the HMLP asks the Town to deed a piece of property at 0 Hobart Street to HMLP and provide funding for the purposes of building a sub-station on that location. The sub-station is needed in conjunction

with HMLP's plans to add a third high voltage electric transmission line into the Town.

Mr. Heanue stated that the new sub-station and transmission line are necessary to continue to supply the Town with reliable, low-cost energy. Currently, HMLP has two transmission lines that supply electricity to the Town. The two lines travel the same route and share a common set of supports and poles. The fact that both lines share a common route and support system places the Town in a vulnerable position in the event of an accident or natural disaster that impacts both lines. Additionally, Mr. Heanue noted that the Town does not currently have sufficient electric capacity to meet the needs of the proposed "net zero" Hingham Climate Action Plan.

The proposed new line would be underground and it would be sourced from a different supplier thereby providing the Town with true redundancy in its electricity distribution system. The proposed transmission line would connect to HMLP's distribution system at the proposed new sub-station. The Town-owned parcel at 0 Hobart Street was chosen after a review of other Town-owned properties, including space at the Town Transfer Station. The properties not selected had wetlands issues, were open space lands, or were significantly more expensive than the 0 Hobart Street property. Additionally, Mr. Heanue stated that Department of Public Works Superintendent Randy Sylvester indicated that the Transfer Station does not have sufficient space to allow HMLP to build a new sub-station, or expand the existing sub-station within its footprint.

Opponents of the project include the abutters to the proposed location. The abutters claim the project lacks transparency, that HMLP has not sufficiently pursued all available options, that construction of the facility would be noisy and disruptive, and that their property values would decline

Ms. Kelley did not have a Recommended Motion. Chair Curley polled the members to get a sense of how the AdCom felt about the project and most members were undecided. Chair Curley stated that the AdCom would plan to vote the Article at its March 23, 2021 meeting;

- c. Article D- Report of the Personnel Board: Chair Curley stated that the Board of Selectmen (BOS) had not yet voted this Article and so the AdCom would defer action on this Article until after the BOS vote;
- d. Article E- Salaries of Town Officers: Chair Curley stated that the Board of Selectmen (BOS) had not yet voted this Article and so the AdCom would defer action on this Article until after the BOS vote;

- e. Article Q- Citizens Petition: Amend General By-Laws: Gender Neutral Terms:
Davalene Cooper presented this Article which seeks to replace personal pronouns with gender neutral ones in all Town communications and documents. The Article will also change the name of Boards, and positions, as appropriate, to gender neutral ones. For example, the Board of Selectmen will be renamed to be the Select Board and the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen will henceforth be referred to as the Chair. Liza O'Reilly, representing the Hingham League of Women Voters, the Article sponsor, presented a slide show and an overview of the Article's purpose and intent.

AdCom members raised questions about certain language in the Recommended Motion. Ms. Cooper stated that Town Counsel had provided the language but offered to raise member concerns with him. Additionally, the AdCom voiced concern over unintended consequences from changing pronouns that might lead to ambiguity in the By-Laws. Ms. Cooper will confer with Town Counsel and will update the Comment and Recommended Motion. The AdCom will review the changes at its next meeting.

4. *Review, discussion and potential vote on Advisory Committee Policies and Procedures:* Chair Curley noted that the AdCom will defer consideration of this item until after the Warrant and budgets are finalized.

5. *Further discussion of Forecast, Financial Policy, Fund Balance, federal funds, overrides and debt exclusions:*

Town Accountant Sue Nickerson presented an update to the Town financial forecast that included an update to revenue, expenses, and the use of one-time money (combination of fFnd Balance and federal stimulus) to create a balanced budget that fully funds both the School and Municipal budgets. Chair Curley noted that this is one option for the AdCom to consider when it meets to approve the Municipal and School budgets.

6. *Review and approval of Minutes from March 11, 2021:* Approved, with edits, by roll call vote of 13-0-0 (Libby Claypoole was absent).

7. *Warrant Articles update:*

- a. Chair Curley noted that Article AA, 32 Rockwood Road Transfer was being pulled from the Warrant;
- b. Julie Strehle noted that the request from the Bare Cove Park Committee for a bathroom facility was being pulled from Article M, the Community Preservation Act list of recommended grants.

8. *Liaison reports:* No update

9. *Discussion of Advisory Committee housekeeping items:*

- a. Meeting times: The AdCom will next meet March 23 and March 25, 2021;
- b. The forecast group will convene on March 19, 2021 for an update;
- c. Town meeting and related deadlines: Chair Curley noted that the Massachusetts State Legislature had approved the date of June 26, 2021 for the Town election. Mr. Curley further noted that this date was selected based on the possibility of an override and that, since no override is currently contemplated, the Town election could be moved to an earlier date.

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

11. **Adjourn:** Motion to adjourn at 10:48 pm approved by roll call vote of 13-0-0 (Libby Claypoole was absent).

Respectfully submitted,

George Danis, Secretary

List of Documents Distributed for this Meeting:

- Agenda
- Warrant Articles
- March 11, 2021 meeting minutes
- March 18, 2021 forecast
- March 18, 2021 Forecast Sensitivity Table
- Citizen email's regarding Warrant Articles

Approved with revisions on 03/25/2021 by roll call vote 13-0-0 (Libby Claypoole was absent)