

Board of Selectmen

April 13, 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 asked if anyone else was recording or taking photographs. There were no responses.

Board of Selectmen members who were participating remotely were Mary Power, Chair, Joe Fisher, and Bill Ramsey

Approval of minutes

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to approve the minutes dated March 23, 2021. Mr. Ramsey seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

To sign the contract extension with T.L. Edwards for Roadway Management Work

Town Engineer J.R. Frey said that the Town would like to extend by one year last year’s contract with T.L. Edwards, in order to complete some work from the previous year prior to paving. He noted that the total value of the contract is approximately \$1.2 million, with the possibility of an additional request for an extension once the Town secures funding for some roadwork in Route 228 in the area of East Street where National Grid had previously done some trench work. Mr. Ramsey asked about the quality of their work. Mr. Frey felt their work has been exceptional. Mr. Fisher asked about the value of the contract as opposed to past years. Mr. Frey explained that the contract extension includes \$759,000 in new funds and \$441,000 that had been rolled-over from past contracts.

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the contract extension with T.L. Edwards for Roadway Management Work in an amount not to exceed \$1,273,031.00. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

To sign the contract with Mass Pavement Reclamation, Inc. for Equipment Rental and Labor

Mr. Frey explained that this is an on-call equipment rental contract. Equipment could be rented for jobs including excavation in the streets prior to paving, utility work necessary to be conducted by the Town, site work around the Bathing Beach or other various jobs. Mr. Frey did not anticipate using the full \$692,250 of the contract and noted that Mass Pavement Reclamation was the low bidder for the contract. He said that they have been working with the Town for quite some time and complete their work efficiently.

Vote; Mr. Fisher made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the contract with Mass Pavement Reclamation, Inc. for Equipment Rental and Labor in an amount not to exceed \$692,250.00. Mr. Ramsey seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

To sign the contract with Specialty Vehicles, Inc. for a Class 1 Emergency Medical Vehicle (Ambulance)

Chair Power explained that, due to a surplus in FY21, the Board of Selectmen and the Advisory Committee have recommended accelerating the purchase of a new ambulance. She said that the purchase had been deferred in FY21 and once again recommended for FY22. Ms. Power stated that given the pressure on the FY22 budget, and an expected surplus in FY21, recommending the purchase at this time feels like the right thing to do. She noted that Hingham's ambulance service generates approximately \$1.4 million annually, which offsets 25% of the Fire Department budget. Having reliable vehicles is important for quick response times and to meet the needs of the community and also helps with Town finances. Fire Chief Steve Murphy further explained that this is an agreement to purchase a vehicle almost identical to one currently in service, which the staff has been very happy with. He explained that it would be purchased through a State contract with the Fire Chiefs' Association. He anticipated a longer than normal manufacturing timeframe, due to Covid, with payment with encumbered funds upon receipt of the vehicle. Chief Murphy hoped to keep it in service for eight years, which is the length of the warranty. Ms. Power recognized the men and women of the Fire Department for their service during the past year, often transporting Covid patients and for putting themselves in harm's way for the benefit of the community.

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the contract with Specialty Vehicles, Inc. for a Class 1 Emergency Medical Vehicle (Ambulance) in an amount not to exceed \$370,924.00. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:**Mr. Fisher: yes****Mr. Ramsey: yes****Ms. Power: yes****Discussion of 2021 Annual Town Meeting Zoning By-law Warrant Articles**

Ms. Power announced that the Annual Town Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, May 8, 2021 at 2:00 pm, outdoors at the High School multipurpose field. She explained that the Board of Selectmen makes recommendations to the Advisory Committee on all Warrant Articles, with the exception of Zoning Articles. She said that it is customary, after the Warrant is sent out, that the Board of Selectmen invite the Planning and Zoning Departments to explain their Warrant Articles and to summarize discussions for the Board. Ms. Power welcomed the Chair of the Planning Board, Kevin Ellis and Real Estate Counsel Susan Murphy.

Mr. Ellis summarized the two Zoning Articles as follows:

1. Article 27: This Article would amend the Zoning By-Law to update the floodplain protection overlay district. This Article would ensure that the Town meets the minimum requirements of membership in the National Flood Insurance Program, as required by FEMA. FEMA has updated the floodplains over the past several years and the Town must adopt them. Mr. Ellis noted that these updated maps would not affect any homes in Hingham. He added that the Town is also incorporating some language into the by-law from a model by-law proposed by the Massachusetts Flood Hazard Management Program, which administers the National Flood Insurance Program in Massachusetts, which the Town most adopt. The Planning Board is recommending adopting Article 27 so that the Town complies with that.

Mr. Ramsey thanked the Planning Board and Susan Murphy for all the extra work they have undertaken with this project. He felt that adopting this by-law would be a way to protect residents from issues involving flood insurance. Mr. Fisher asked if he had heard any concerns from the public. Mr. Ellis reported that he had not heard any concerns. Mr. Ellis thanked Loni Fournier in the Conservation Department for coordinating this project.

2. Article 28: This is a citizen petition brought forth by resident Ray Estes asking to amend the Zoning By-law's "accessory dwelling" language. The goal of this Article is to amend the "Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)" to allow for ADU's in unattached structures. He reported that the Planning Board held five hearings on this matter and had talked extensively on its presentation and potential changes that might be necessary to accommodate concerns made by the Board. Ultimately, the Planning Board recommended a study committee because they felt that there were a number of unresolved issues. He noted that the Warrant Article contains a list of these concerns. He said that the Board felt they should get more input from all the constituencies, including Elder Services and Veterans Services as well as getting feedback from younger residents to gauge interest levels. The goal of the study committee would be to conclude a report by October 1, 2022. Mr. Ellis reported that all members of the Planning Board felt that ADU's are something that should be considered by the Planning Board, but they wanted to obtain more information before coming to a decision.

Mr. Ray Estes, 92 Fort Hill Street, felt that there was much robust discussion throughout the five public hearings, but the conclusion was that additional information and discussion would be required. Mr. Estes felt that this issue could benefit the entire town.

Mr. Fisher offered a short history of the existing ADU by-law. He noted that the small number of applicants after the adoption of the existing by-law did not reflect little interest by residents, but rather an indication of how few families might qualify. He was glad that there would be a review of the by-law, but also noted that a concern is that having too many ADU's could have an impact on the look and feel of the town. He was looking forward to a proposal from the study group. Mr. Ramsey added that one issue that the Planning Board looked at during the review of the existing by-law was adults with disabilities who need to live with family members. He was looking forward to more discussion. Ms. Power hoped that they study committee could look at how to expand the existing by-law and encouraged more public visibility and discussion on the topic. She thanked Mr. Estes for his continued engagement and for bringing forth this Article. Mr. Ellis added that the study committee would be comprised of seven people.

Mr. Fisher asked if a model by-law from another town had been identified. Mr. Ellis answered that while they have not identified a "model" by-law, they have identified several that approach the issue in various ways. There was additional discussion regarding Town Meeting vote requirements, whether ADU's would change the Town's quota of affordable housing, as well as a potential charge for the study committee. Ms. Susan Murphy provided counsel on these matters.

To adopt and sign the 2021 Annual Town Meeting Warrant

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to approve, adopt, and sign the warrant for the 2021 annual town meeting as presented hereto. Mr. Ramsey seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Ms. Power recognized the collective effort of staff and volunteers that went into preparing the Town Warrant.

To consider an adjustment of the Town of Hingham 2021 Annual Town Meeting quorum requirements pursuant to Section 7 of Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2020

Mr. Mayo remind the public that the Town had adopted a quorum reduction from 300 to 200 for the Annual Town Meeting last June and for the Special Town Meeting in November. He reported that the Board was being asked to adopt a similar reduction for the upcoming Town Meeting on May 8, 2021. He explained that this reduction is allowed by State law as an acknowledgement that the pandemic is not over yet and some residents may not feel comfortable attending. He reported that he has received approval for this quorum reduction from the Moderator.

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion that, pursuant to Section 7 of Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2020, the Board of Selectmen hereby vote to prescribe the number of voters necessary to constitute a quorum

for the Town of Hingham 2021 Annual Town Meeting at two hundred subject to approval of the Town Moderator. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Inside Town Finances: Volume 13 – Capital Improvements

Ms. Power presented the thirteenth in a series of presentations on Town Finances: Capital Improvements. The entire presentation can be found online at www.hingham-ma.gov.

COVID-19 Update

Mr. Mayo gave the following update on the COVID-19 pandemic:

“COVID-19 Data

As of yesterday, confirmed COVID-19 cases in Massachusetts totaled 621,261. 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 90 new cases of COVID-19 in Hingham over the past 14 days, and a total of 1,832 cases in Hingham since the start of the pandemic.

The average daily incidence rate for the Town of Hingham was 26.8 per 100,000 residents, and our percent positivity rate was 2.71% for the previous 14 days.

Vaccine Rollout

According to DPH’s [daily COVID-19 vaccine report](#), approximately 1.8 million people in Massachusetts have been fully vaccinated as of yesterday. As of April 8th, approximately 27% of Hingham residents have been fully vaccinated, up from 23% last week. As of April 5th, residents age 55+ and individuals with [one certain medical condition](#) became eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine in Massachusetts. The last phase of the vaccine rollout plan will begin next Monday, April 19th, when the general public ages 16+ become eligible for the vaccine in Massachusetts.

Yesterday, the CDC and FDA reported in a joint statement that more than 6.8 million doses of the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) vaccine have been administered in the U.S. as of April 12. The agencies are reviewing data involving six reported U.S. cases of a rare and severe type of blood clot in individuals after receiving the J&J vaccine. Until that review process is complete, the CDC and FDA recommended a pause in the use of this vaccine out of an abundance of caution. As we mentioned last week, the Town had received J&J vaccines to administer to 10 homebound residents in Hingham. That program is being placed on hold until further guidance is available from the federal government. We have reached out to those residents directly to explain the situation.

Reopening of Municipal Facilities

As part of the next step in our municipal reopening process, Town Hall and the Senior Center will return to full in-person staffing on Tuesday, June 1, 2021. We anticipate reopening the building to the public in some fashion shortly thereafter. The Hingham Public Library anticipates reopening to the public in a limited capacity on June 1st, and more details will be posted on the [Library’s website](#) soon. In addition, the Recreation Department is moving forward with a wide array of spring and summer programming;

details can be found on the [Hingham Recreation website](#). June 1st was chosen as it gives Town employees and residents the time and opportunity to get vaccinated once the vaccine becomes available to the general public on April 19. As I mentioned above, as of last week, about one quarter of Hingham residents are fully vaccinated. Implementing these changes on June 1st is an important next step toward a return to normal, and we appreciate the public's patience and support throughout the pandemic. We will continue to make the health and safety of our residents and staff our top priority, while still delivering a high level of service to the community. The reopening process may vary for each municipal facility and additional updates about our reopening plans will be shared in the coming weeks on the [Town website](#)."

To proclaim Thursday, April 22, 2021 Earth Day in the Town of Hingham

Mr. Fisher read the following proclamation:

**TOWN OF HINGHAM, MASSACHUSETTS
EARTH DAY PROCLAMATION**

WHEREAS, the Town of Hingham as part of the global community is participating in Earth Day 2021 and recognizes the environmental challenges faced by all peoples; and

WHEREAS, it is understood that as citizens of the global community the Town of Hingham must step forward and take action to create positive environmental changes that will support the management and care of our environment; and

WHEREAS, environmental education along with awareness helps the citizens of Hingham develop the concern and skills to address the environmental challenges we face; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of today's environmental challenges trees will be planted as a symbol to our commitment to the good stewardship of all that is entrusted to our care.

WHEREAS, the Town of Hingham pledges to support environmental and educational initiatives in our community that encourage others to undertake similar actions.

NOW, THEREFORE, we, Mary M. Power, Joseph M. Fisher, and William C. Ramsey, Selectmen of the Town of Hingham, do hereby proclaim Thursday, April 22, 2021 as

Earth Day

Dated this Thirteenth day of April, Two Thousand and Twenty-one

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to proclaim Thursday, April 22, 2021 Earth Day in the Town of Hingham. Mr. Ramsey seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

To proclaim Friday, April 30, 2021 Arbor Day in the Town of Hingham

Mr. Ramsey read the following proclamation:

**TOWN OF HINGHAM, MASSACHUSETTS
ARBOR DAY PROCLAMATION**

WHEREAS, in 1872 J. Sterling Morton proposed to the Nebraska Board of Agriculture that a special day be set aside for the planting of trees, and

WHEREAS, this holiday, called Arbor Day, was first observed with the planting of more than a million trees in Nebraska, and Arbor Day is now observed throughout the nation and the world, and

WHEREAS, trees can reduce the erosion of our precious topsoil by wind and water, cut heating and cooling costs, moderate the temperature, clean the air, produce oxygen and provide habitat for wildlife, and

WHEREAS, trees are a renewable resource giving us paper, wood for our homes, fuel for our fires and countless other wood products, and trees in Hingham increase property values, enhance the economic vitality of business areas, and beautify our community, and

WHEREAS, trees, wherever they are planted, are a source of joy and spiritual renewal, and

WHEREAS, Hingham, Massachusetts has been recognized as a Tree City USA by The National Arbor Day Foundation and desires to continue its tree-planting ways,

NOW, THEREFORE, we, Mary M. Power, Joseph M. Fisher, and William C. Ramsey, Selectmen of the Town of Hingham, do hereby proclaim Friday, April 30, 2021 as

Arbor Day

in the Town of Hingham, and urge all citizens to support efforts to protect our trees and woodlands, support our Town's forestry program, and to plant trees to gladden the hearts and promote the well-being of present and future generations.

Dated this Thirteenth day of April, Two Thousand and Twenty-one

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to proclaim Friday, April 30, 2021 Arbor Day in the Town of Hingham. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Power: yes

Inside Town Finances: Volume 13 – Capital Improvements

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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. Monsegur reported that the following Boards and Committees are accepting Talen Bank applications: The Trustees of the Bathing Beach and the Hingham Public Library Board of Trustees. She noted that the application form is available on the Town's website and asked for all applications to be turned in by Friday, April 30, 2021.

Ms. Monsegur also announced that Kathy Reilly is the Town's first ever Procurement and Contracts Manager. She said that the addition of Ms. Reilly has added a lot of capacity to the department and has been a valued asset thus far.

Mr. Mayo announced that this week is National Public Safety Tele communicators Week (Dispatchers Recognition Week). He said that it was a good opportunity to thank the men and women who answer some of the community's most difficult calls. He said that Hingham Town Hall houses the South Shore Regional Communication Center (SSRECC), which is the regional 911 dispatch. Our Public Safety Dispatchers answer all 911 calls for four communities, Hingham, Hull Cohasset and Norwell. He thanked them for keeping our community safe.

Mr. Mayo also reported that he, and other staff members, had the privilege of witnessing the swearing-in ceremony for the three new Police Sergeants who were appointed at the last Board of Selectmen's meeting.

Mr. Mayo thanked Sharon Perfetti and Heidi Gaul of the Town Administrator's office for their help in putting together the Town Warrant and the Annual Town Report.

Mr. Fisher announced that the MBTA and the Fiscal and Management Control Office of the MBTA are in discussions about restoration of service, although no ferry schedule has been released yet. He encouraged community members to contact Jamie Tesler, the State's Acting Transportation Secretary, and ask for a quicker return of service for the ferry.

Mr. Ramsey reported that it was a pleasure to see Hingham's youth sports teams back on Town fields this week.

Ms. Power reported that she recently has the pleasure of being interviewed by Campbell Brown, an 8th grader who was working on a Scouting project. She said that they talked about the Covid testing facility in Hingham and was very impressed with Ms. Brown's knowledge and research on this matter. She added that their conversation was a nice reminder that Hingham's children are interested and engaged in their community.

Ms. Power also announced that the Weir River Water System billing would be going live tomorrow, April 14, 2021 and that residents would soon receive a letter with their new account number. The letter will also provide customers with instructions about how to set up an account and to pay bills online. Ms. Power also encouraged customers to add their cell phone number to their account and to allow text alerts for any disruptions to service and other critical information. She also reminded the public that the new Customer Service Center on Lincoln Street is open Monday through Friday, with extended hours on Tuesdays.

Ms. Power announced that the next meeting of the Board of Selectmen is scheduled for Tuesday, April 27, 2021.

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 8:25 PM.

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