

Select Board

April 19, 2023

Present:

- Select Board: Mr. Bill Ramsey, Chair, Ms. Liz Klein, and Mr. Joseph Fisher
- Mr. Tom Mayo, Town Administrator
- Mr. Art Robert, Assistant Town Administrator for Operations

6:00 PM: Call to order

Mr. Ramsey 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 Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023 and all other applicable laws temporarily amending 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.”
No one indicated that they were recording.

He announced that Select Board members participating in the meeting were himself, Bill Ramsey, Ms. Liz Klein, and Mr. Joseph Fisher.

Executive Session

Declaration by Chair: “Before I entertain a motion to go into executive session under item 2 of the agenda, I hereby declare that discussion of this agenda item in an open session may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the Town.”

Motion to enter executive session: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to enter Executive Session under MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(6) to discuss potential acquisition of real estate. The Board will reconvene in Open Session after the Executive Session. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

6:46 PM: Return to Open Session

Mr. Ramsey reconvened the meeting of the Select Board in open session and reminded the public that the Board has already read the Open Meeting Law language at the start of their meeting.

Approval of Minutes

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to approve the minutes dated April 13, 2023. Ms. Klein seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Klein: yes

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Warrant Article Discussion

Article 27: Purchase of 30 Summer Street: Town Administrator Mayo explained that the Town was recently approached by the owner of 30 Summer Street who asked if the Town would be interested in purchasing the property for an asking price of \$1.55 M. Article 27 suggests that the property could potentially be used for a maintenance facility or office for the Harbormaster, public restrooms and showers for folks returning from the mooring field and heading into the downtown area, a location for Recreation Department programming, public access to the harbor, municipal parking, or a private lease or rental. The Town has conducted an appraisal (\$1.2M) and a Phase I Environmental Site Analysis, which discovered the potential for some site contamination, given that it was the site of a former gas station. Subsequently, a Phase II Environmental Site Analysis was performed. Preliminary feedback from the vendor that conducted the Phase II Analysis suggests that there may be some contamination on site, but the Town has not yet received the full Phase II report. The building on the property has been inspected by the Hingham Building Department and it has been deemed safe to occupy and in good condition. Mr. Mayo reported that there are other potential bids on the property at this time.

Ms. Klein asked for some information on the property from a climate resiliency perspective. Ms. Susan Murphy, Special Real Estate Counsel, reported that a survey of the property has been conducted. Based on information from FEMA, the existing building is in an “elevation 11” and in a flood zone. It was determined that, if the Town had control over the property and could raise the seawall, the purchase of the property would add to the Town’s resiliency efforts. The wall and a one foot strip of land along the water, however, would likely not be conveyed in the purchase.

Mr. Fisher asked Mr. Mayo to discuss potential costs to the Town. Mr. Mayo reported that the annual cost to the Town would be approximately \$81,000 with a 30-year borrowing schedule, assuming a 3.5% interest rate, though he hoped that the actual rate would be lower.

Mr. Marco Boer, 33 Elm Street, Chair of the Harbor Development Committee, felt that this was a once in a generation opportunity for the Town to purchase a property on the waterfront with an existing permitted structure that could allow public access to the harbor. Given the rising number of senior citizens in town, he felt that the property and the building could be a site for much needed year-round recreational activities for residents. He reported that the Harbor Development Committee and the Trustees of the Bathing Beach have both voted in favor of acquiring the property, mostly because it supports the harbor’s Master Plan vision. His unofficial calculations assumed that the taxpayer impact of the acquisition of the property would be about \$9.00 per year. He was strongly in favor of the purchase.

Mr. Mayo clarified that this is not being proposed to the Town as a debt exclusion and that there would not be a direct impact on the taxpayers’ rates. Mr. Ramsey said that he feels that the timing is not ideal for this project given the proposed override and the debt exclusions from the fall, but he was in favor of the project. He felt that the potential purchase is a once in a lifetime opportunity and did not feel that the purchase would be overly burdensome to the Town. Mr. Fisher agreed that the timing is not ideal, but he felt that the Town should look to the long-term while moving forward. He also noted that

additional due diligence is still needed. Ms. Klein struggled with the timing of the opportunity. She felt it would be difficult for her to recommend moving forward with the purchase given the other financial obligations the Town is facing at this time.

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article 27. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Fisher: yes

Ms. Klein: no

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Ms. Klein had to leave the meeting at this time.

Article 11: Transfer to the Reserve Fund: Ms. Sue Nickerson, Town Accountant, anticipated that five departments will have shortfalls this fiscal year. Her estimates are as follows:

- Fire - \$550,000
- Legal - \$297,444
- Workers Compensation - \$305,367
- Town Meeting - \$137,074
- Unemployment - \$62,200
- Contingency - \$50,000

She asked that Article 11 appropriate for \$749,194 to cover these shortfalls.

Vote: Mr. Fisher made a motion to recommend favorable action on Article 11. Mr. Ramsey seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Klein: absent

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

To consider adoption of the Municipal Single-Use Plastic Water Bottle Policy

Mr. Mayo explained that the group Cleaner Greener Hingham approached the Town asking for support for two warrant articles that addressed the sale and use of single-use plastic water bottles by both individuals and the municipality itself. At the time, the Select Board voted unanimously in favor of both articles. After those votes were taken, there was considerable discussion about whether or not it was more appropriate that the latter of the two articles, the procurement, sale and distribution, of single-use plastic water bottles would be better addressed as a Select Board policy rather than a Town By-law. There was considerable support for this and the warrant article has been withdrawn from the Town Warrant. The one thing that was added to the original article is an exemption for first responders who may need access to water during emergencies. The official name of the “Cleaner Greener Hingham” group is the Long Range Waste Disposal and Recycling Committee. Mr. Fisher was in favor of the proposal.

Mr. Anthony George, 15 Blaisdell Road, member of Cleaner Greener Hingham, urged the Select Board to enact this as a policy. He felt that it would be a huge show of support ahead of asking the Town to pass the commercial bottle ban at the upcoming Town Meeting.

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to adopt the Municipal Single-Use Plastic Water Bottle Policy. Seconded. Mr. Fisher seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Klein: absent

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

Mr. Mayo noted that the Select Board policy will take effect in the schools this coming September.

Discussion of a Plan for Statewide Opioid Settlements

Ms. Susan Sarni, Executive Health Officer, presented. Opioid Settlement fund in the amount of \$1.02M will be available to Hingham through 2038. She noted that the 2023 Town Meeting will be asked to appropriate \$251K of this money. An additional \$815K of funding from five recently signed settlement agreements will be available after the 2024 Town Meeting appropriation. The initial plan for the funds will include the following:

- Social Worker - \$30-\$40K: The Social Worker would support people in accessing OUD treatment. Counseling, and recovery
- Outreach - \$25K: Funding would be used to pay for keynote speakers for events and for other community outreach
- Placement Vouchers - \$20K: Vouchers would provide funding for post-stabilization/treatment programs such as recovery programs, halfway houses or sober houses.

Mr. Robert added that this is a multi-year plan and would likely evolve over time based on experience, community input, state guidance, and emerging best practices. Mr. Ramsey asked how individual groups could apply to access some of the funds for their own initiatives. Ms. Sarni said that they intend to institute something like a grant application in the near future, which will be reviewed by the members of the Mental Health Coalition. Mr. Ramsey noted that Sen. O'Connor has indicated that there could be additional funding available to Hingham from the State in the future as well. Mr. Fisher felt that the use of the opioid settlement funds would be a good way to minimize using taxpayer funds for similar initiatives.

Appointments (for a list of Talent Bank Applicants, please visit [Hingham-ma.gov/SB](https://hingham-ma.gov/SB))

There were no appointments.

Public Comment

"The Hingham Select Board encourages community engagement and welcomes questions and comments as agenda items are discussed at the meeting. In addition, we have set aside up to fifteen

minutes for public comment for items that fall under the purview of the Select Board and are not already on tonight's agenda. If any guests wish to speak, please seek to be recognized. Once recognized, state your name and address and address your comments to the Chair. Comments will be limited to three minutes per speaker and must relate to topics within the scope of the responsibilities of the Select Board. Speakers are encouraged to present their remarks in a respectful manner and not to indulge in personalities. The Public Comment period is not a time for debate by members of the Select Board. The Select Board is not adopting or endorsing any of the comments made during the Public Comment period."

There were no comments from the public.

Town Administrator/Select Board Reports

Mr. Mayo noted that the Town Meeting on April 24th will begin at 7:00 pm. Doors open at 5:30 pm for those who would like to arrive early. Once the gymnasium seating is full, the cafeteria will open its doors. If the cafeteria fills up, seating will also be available in the auditorium. In addition, there will be a designated area in each room for spaced out seating for those who would prefer it. He also noted that there will be a new closed captioning service available in the gymnasium. There will be overflow parking and shuttle bus service at the Baptist Church on Main Street. If the parking lot at the church fills, a second overflow lot and shuttle service will be made available at Wompatuck State Park.

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

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Klein: absent

Mr. Fisher: yes

Mr. Ramsey: yes

The meeting adjourned at 7:33 PM.

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