

**Advisory Committee  
Meeting Notes  
September 29, 2022  
Hingham Town Hall**

**In Attendance:** G. Danis, N. MacDonald, T. Sherwood, C. Kirk, A. Macdonald, A. McElaney, S. Melia, K. Curley, J. Price. C. Tully, J. Griffin, B, Black, D. Cooper, L. Kruzer, A. Macdonald, Town Accountant S. Nickerson

**Absent:** K. Curley, K. Dziergowski, S. Melia

The meeting was called to order at 7:02pm and read the following statement

*This meeting is being held in person and/or remotely as an alternate means of public access pursuant to Chapter 107 of the Acts of 2022 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.*

**Questions from the public on items not on the agenda**

None.

**Approval of Minutes from September 13, 2022, meeting**

The minutes from the 9/13/22 Advisory Committee meeting were unanimously approved.

**Review and Discussion: Updated draft comments for Articles A, B and C**

**Article A – The New Elementary School**

The Article was distributed and comments have been received. A. Macdonald would like to add an additional section that discusses possible consequences to the Town and the school system if this Article does not pass. AdCom was joined by Dr. Margaret Adams, Superintendent of Hingham Schools; Michelle Ayer, Chair of School Committee; Linda Hill, Chair of School Building Committee; and Ray Estes, Vice Chair of School Building Committee.

M. Ayer explained that there are no plans solidified as to what will happen if the Foster project does not pass, but the building is coming to the end of its useful life. The school cannot be renovated or remodeled. Dr. Margaret Adams noted that the bones of the building; piping and conduits and general structure cannot be renovated. Another option could include finding another place for the students. To lease something for a short period of time would not be a long-term solution. The third possibility would be to consider redistricting to the other three elementary schools. This option could impact space needs and is not likely to be a long-term option. Another option would be to look at modular classrooms, but we would need to find space to build them and the price is high. Modular classrooms last between 5 and 10 years –

Approved 10/6/22

they are not built for long-term use. The current Foster School potentially has three useful years left.

R. Estes, stated that the Building Committee looked at a potential renovation project for Foster School. A renovation would need to be done in phases which would disrupt students' learning. The current school would remain in the existing flood plain. In terms of redistricting, prior to East being built – there were over 700 students at PRS – which could be comparable to the numbers now. The MSBA enrollment study suggests that there will be growth. When Hingham built the Middle School, they used 6 modular classrooms which cost \$700k. When the building was demolished, it cost \$50k to remove them. Modular classrooms are exponentially more expensive now than they were in 2008.

If the Town does not get an affirmative vote within the prescribed time, we would have to start the process again, and if we wanted to include the MSBA, it would take 5+ years. Failure to pass is significantly more expensive than the option we have before us now. Additionally, it would be a significant disruption educationally if we had to redistrict the students among the three schools.

G. Mangurian, Citizen – The committees should be prepared to answer: What is your confidence that you are going to be able to build the school for \$113mm? What is your confidence that you are going to be able to borrow at the interest rate you have stated?

#### **Article B – Public Safety Facility Building**

Changes have been made within the comment to address Hingham's commitment to a Net Zero energy goal. The financing language in the Article was changed to be consistent with the Foster and Stabilization Fund Articles. Included in the summary point, the Article seeks to note that this project addresses three spacing challenges that the Town is facing: the North Fire Station, the Police Department and the Senior Center.

#### **Article C – Stabilization Fund**

The group has worked with Rick Manley, Bond Counsel and John Coughlin, Town Counsel on specific legal language required for this Article. It was noted that the last sentence of the first paragraph would read more clearly if it stated the Article seeks to “mitigate anticipated tax increases”, as opposed to “avoid raising taxes.”

AdCom discussed how much of our Financial Policy should be included in the Article.

#### **Liaison Reports**

Strategic Budget Task Force – The Task Force is revisiting PILOT (Payments in Lieu of Taxes) Agreements; looking at other towns and how they are used. The group is also discussing the future of the Task Force and its purpose. Should the group continue to do research, or work on implementation of current recommendations? Also, there is an ongoing review of town-owned real estate with values of at least \$50,000 - with a total value of approximately \$13mm. The Task Force also received the information on the Schools' staff audit, which was shared with AdCom members.

CPC – Received 17 applications in the preliminary round. The first meeting was to vote on the eligibility of the proposed projects, and John Coughlin, Town Counsel, was at the meeting to provide direction. Eight applications were about Community Housing, 5 were for Historic Preservation and 4 were focused on Recreation. In terms of the proposed projects, one was rejected as not eligible. Several from housing were eligible on their face, but require more research. Two applications were for private property owners, but must be shown to be used for a public purpose. The final applications are due October 11, 2022 and CPC will vote on which projects will move forward on 10/12. Currently, there are over \$3.8mm in asks.

Hingham Light Board – Jack Ryan resigned before the end of his term and Tyler Herald was appointed into his place. The Board discussed revising rebate programs and considering “Opt Out” programs, which other towns have been doing successfully – where the HMLP raises rates by a small percentage in order to raise funds for green projects, and residents will have the option to “opt out” of the program.

The Board recently had a public meeting to discuss the plan to bring in a third line as back-up for Hingham’s existing transformer. It will be an underground line coming from Weymouth that will come into our transfer station. It is meant to create back-up and reliability for the Town as the existing lines are currently on a single pole.

Climate Action Planning Committee – The Committee did a virtual engagement session with approximately 35 participants. They are ready to meet with the SB to describe the pieces that will go into the plan. The Committee will write up their plan after that feedback and hope to present it in early December.

Audit Committee Meeting – The status of the Town Audit is on track to deliver their results in mid-December, which is the same as last year.

### **Discussion of Advisory Committee housekeeping items**

The School Building Committee continues to meet with the permitting boards; neither the Planning Board or the Conservation Commission have voted on this project as yet. Conservation is looking to vote at the 10/12 meeting. The Planning Board is also meeting on 10/12 with the Building Committee, and they will not be ready to vote at that time. R. Estes requested that the PB vote happen prior to the Special Town Meeting on November 1. The Select Board and AdCom will vote prior to the permitting vote from the Planning Board. There was discussion surrounding the possible need for a supplement for the Warrant if the Planning Board votes against the project, and whether it is necessary to put that language in the Article.

The Advisory Committee will vote at our next meeting (10/6) on the comments and recommended motions for all three Articles. The Articles need to be sent to the printer on 10/7 to get the Warrant out to the Town in time for STM on 11/1.

The Association of Town Finance Committees holds a seminar (day long) every year concerning various municipal matters relating to towns throughout the Commonwealth. It is scheduled for November 5, 2022. The Town will reimburse the \$55 fee for members who want to attend.

**Matters not anticipated within 48 hours of meeting**

None.

**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:08pm.

**Documents Distributed for this Meeting:**

AdCom Agenda September 29

SB - Projected Tax Impact Summary - 09.20.22

Advisory Committee Contact List 2022-2023

Copy of 092022\_Financial Planning Model-Master

Copy of Fall STM 2022 Planning Calendar916

Respectfully submitted,

Tina Sherwood

Secretary, Advisory Committee