

**Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
2/9/2016**

In attendance: Committee Members Anderson, Baltera, Belyea, Coughlin, Hancock, Haskell, Kelley, Kutsch, MacKay, Pyles, Reale, Sharkansky, Smallwood, and Taylor, and Town Accountant Nickerson.

Chairman Pyles called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

Questions from the Public on Items Not on the Agenda: None

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes of the regular meeting on January 21, 2016 were approved as amended by a vote of 11-0-2. David Anderson abstained, as he was not in attendance at the 1/21 meeting. Donna Smallwood also abstained.

The minutes of the regular meeting on January 28, 2016 were approved as amended by a vote of 10-0-3. David Anderson, Eryn Kelley, and Chris Reale abstained, as they were not in attendance at the 1/28 meeting.

Warrant Articles

Article V – Road Building

Tom Belyea introduced this Article, and Town Engineer Roger Fernandes explained the road-building plan, referencing the Five-Year Bond Allocation Plan and street-paving schedule that was distributed. He is proposing a bond issuance of \$2,242,713 to supplement appropriations from the operating budget over the next five years, including Chapter 90 State Funding. \$1,852,635 would be applied directly to the infrastructure, and \$390,078 would be used to fund a new staff member in the Engineering Department.

The program would allow the Engineering Department to accelerate the repair/reconstruction of Town roads, especially those that currently are in fair or poor condition. At the end of the five years, i.e., 2020, the expectation is that 92% of the Town roads would be in good to excellent condition. Going forward, road building could be funded with approximately \$1M, i.e., funds from the operating budget and Chapter 90 would be sufficient, and additional funds would not be necessary.

The Engineering Department currently has 2.5 staff members. Roger noted that he needs another person to handle the workload now, not only for the five-year road building program but also for the future. At the end of the five years, Roger would request an additional permanent position to be funded through the operating budget. AdCom members indicated that Article V combines funding for capital and personnel purposes, and the funding of personnel through available reserves or borrowing is contradictory to the Town Financial Policy. Operating expenses should be funded via the operating budget, but it is unlikely that the FY 2017 operating budget can accommodate additional expenses. Another issue to consider is the impact of Article V on the Town's debt service, given that the Town already has exceeded the limit on debt service. Eric Haskell asked if the project could be completed in fewer than five years. Roger replied that he could prepare such a plan, but the AdCom did not ask him to do so.

Robert Blucke (Town resident) attended the 2/9 AdCom meeting and urged support for Article V. He noted that the poor condition of his road has caused injuries to neighbors and damage to cars, and explained that the only way his road will be fixed is via Roger's road building program. He shared photographs showing large potholes and broken asphalt.

The BOS did not reach consensus on this Article when they discussed it in early February. One Selectman suggested funding the program for two years, thereby lowering the additional request to \$1.2M, and perhaps staging the work one year at a time. Roger said that this would not allow enough lead-time for adequate planning.

Tom Pyles noted that there are two or three possible funding mechanisms for Article V, including borrowing and Fund Balance. He suggested that AdCom members need to have a conversation about whether surplus Fund Balance is available for any purpose before deciding to spend it on this Article. AdCom will vote on Article V at a subsequent meeting.

Article Z – Hingham Harbor Park Project and Building

Article AA - Bathing Beach Bathhouse and Refreshment Stand

Chris Reale introduced these Articles, which are inter-related, and Bathing Beach Trustee Edward Johnson presented the details, referencing a map of the Harbor. It is possible that the new bathhouse will be constructed on land belonging to the Selectmen (0 Otis Street) rather than the Bathing Beach Trustees. Current plans call for an approximately 2,500 square foot building that would house the bathhouse, a snack bar, and space for a display of Hingham's maritime history plus a possible meeting room. The town would lease the snack bar to a vendor who would pay the operating costs of running the building. (The lease agreement would determine what the lessee controls and what the Town controls.) Utility and septic issues could be addressed more easily on the Selectmen's Parcel than at the current Bathing Beach Bathhouse.

Ed noted that the list of current CPC projects includes a request for \$150,000 to fund architectural and engineering design for the new multi-purpose building. The total project cost is estimated to be \$850,000. The Town has applied to the Seaport Economic Council for a grant in the amount of \$700,000, and the requested amount of \$150,000 would serve as the Town's required 20% match.

Articles Z and AA do not include a request for funding. These Articles will allow the Town to site the new building on the Selectmen's Parcel should that prove to be the best location. The Town must receive Legislative approval to build a structure on the Selectmen's Parcel and execute a lease on this property. AdCom will vote on Articles Z and AA at a subsequent meeting.

Article O – Community Preservation

Lucy Hancock introduced this Article, and the Community Preservation Committee liaisons (Lucy, Donna Smallwood, Victor Baltera, and Tom Belyea) presented the 12 projects therein. CPC Chairman Robert Curley and Vice-Chairman Carol Pyles provided additional information, aided by a hard copy set of slides outlining the planned spending of CPA funds and showing maps of the Lehner Property and the Harbor. AdCom members raised questions on the following topics:

- Affordable housing, the Hingham Affordable Housing Trust (HAHT), and the Hingham Housing Authority (HHA).
- The renovations to the Hingham Community Center and the amount of funding to be contributed by this private entity.
- The Lehner Property and the possibility of the Town purchasing it this year via an installment plan.
- The Maritime Center and the need for a meeting room and museum space.

Bob Curley commented on the projects that did not receive approval or were phased over the last few years. There are currently no "carry-over" projects. He noted that the CPC asks for five-year plans from the Hingham Historical Commission and the Open Space Acquisition Committee. The only big project on the horizon is the Lehner Property. CPC finances look good for the upcoming years.

AdCom will vote on Article O at the 2/11 meeting.

Liaison Updates: None

Miscellaneous Comments

Tom Pyles referred AdCom members to the new forecast in their folders. The deficit is now \$2.4M. Sue Nickerson announced that, due to the decrease in fuel costs, departments have revised their Fuel and Utilities Worksheets. This resulted in revised operating budgets, which are included in the folders. Sue also noted that health insurance premiums might increase. The next forecast meeting is scheduled for 2/18. At that point, the Town will have more accurate State aid data and Mayflower (health insurance) info. It will be a big challenge to balance the budget this year. The only expected surplus for FY 2016 is in Group Health Insurance, but several other budgets need reserve fund transfers.

Tom Pyles mentioned that there are 9 Articles that include requests for funding. AdCom will have to decide if any of these Articles will be funded using monies from Fund Balance. Jim Sharkansky requested that AdCom allocate time at an upcoming meeting to discuss Fund Balance again. Tom Pyles suggested that this might best be done jointly with the BOS, but he expects that this will not happen in the current budget cycle.

Tom Pyles advised that Assistant Town Administrator Betty Foley is the gatekeeper on legal advice. If AdCom members need to communicate with counsel, they should contact Betty and not go directly to counsel.

Matters Not Anticipated within 48 Hours: None

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:17 PM by a vote of 13-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lucy N. Hancock
Secretary

List of Documents Distributed at this Meeting:

- Agenda for AdCom Meeting of 2/9/2016
- Revised Draft Minutes from 1/21/2016 AdCom Meeting
- Draft Minutes from the 1/28/2016 AdCom Meeting
- WASS dated 2/8/2016
- BOS Presentation – Five-Year Road Building Bond & Spending Plan (including letter to BOS from Roger Fernandes and 5-Year Bond Allocation Plan)
- Article O – Community Preservation
- Letter from Fire Chief Robert Olsson regarding Planning/Zoning Article OO (Common Driveways) with amended text for Article
- Revised List of Proposed Warrant Articles
- Revised Article K – Building Department Revolving Fund (\$250,000 added to Recommended Motion)
- Planning/Zoning Articles MM, NN, OO, PP, QQ, RR, SS, TT, and UU
- CPC 2016 Overview for Advisory Committee 2/9/16 (package of 6 slides)
- Five-Year Forecast v1.2 dated 2/4/16
- Revised FY 2017 Operating Budgets for Assessors, Community Planning, Bare Cove Park, Town Hall, GAR Hall, Police Department, Fire Department, Harbormaster, Town Engineering, Public Works, Landfill/Recycling, Sewer Commission, Health Department, Elder Services (all due to revised Fuel and Utilities Worksheets)
- Revised Town Administrator Budget Recommendations (due to revised Fuel and Utilities Worksheets)