

**Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
3/3/2016**

In attendance: Committee Members Anderson, Baltera, Belyea, 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 February 23, 2016 were approved as amended by a vote of 9-0-0. Victor Baltera, Craig MacKay, and Chris Reale were not present for this vote.

The minutes of the regular meeting on February 25, 2016 were approved as amended by a vote of 10-0-0. Victor Baltera and Craig MacKay were not present for this vote.

Warrant Articles

Article Y – Tax Exemption for Deployed Military (Hearing and Vote)

Dave Anderson presented Article Y for a vote. Keith Jermyn, Director of Veterans' Services, was present for the discussion. This Article authorizes a two-year extension of the exemption that expired on 6/30/2014. It will be necessary to renew this exemption every few years. AdCom members approved this Article by a vote of 12-0-0.

Article LL – Solar Panels at the Landfill (Hearing)

Craig MacKay presented Article LL. Paul Heanue, General Manager of the Light Plant, and Dierdre Lawrence, Attorney, were present for the discussion. Paul reviewed a handout concerning the Solar Array at the Hingham Landfill. He explained that the Town would buy electricity from the owner of the solar array, and the owner would make a Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) to the Town. Hingham would buy 100% of the energy generated by the solar panels. The cost to the ratepayer would be similar to the cost of power from other renewable resource projects. Hingham currently receives 15% of its electricity from renewable resources and is working to increase this percentage.

AdCom members considered the possible impacts of the solar array on neighbors, including glare and aesthetics. Craig noted that the Board of Selectmen requested that the AdCom include citizens' concerns in the Article Comment. Anne Fanton, a resident of the Ridgewood Crossing development, spoke on behalf of herself and her neighbors. She requested that the Comment include the following concerns:

- 1) The Town should specify that the developer is responsible for mitigating the environmental impact, if feasible.
- 2) The designated surface will be limited to that particular use (solar).
- 3) The Town will stay involved in the process, especially with regard to the draft agreement between the Board of Selectmen and the Light Plant.

Brad Moyer, Chair of the Hingham Energy Action Committee, stated that his Committee is not interested in wind turbines on this site. He said that this project is Hingham's best opportunity to install solar panels and could lead to additional solar opportunities in Town. Laura Burns, Co-Coordinator for the local chapter of Mass 350 (Statewide volunteer climate action network) spoke in favor of the solar panels and noted that this project would give the Town some practical experience in a low risk environment.

Article N – Fire Station Building Committee and Renovations (Hearing)

Eric Haskell presented Article N. Guests attending from the Fire Station Building Committee included Bob Olsson (Fire Chief), Tom Carey, and Karen Griswold. Tom Carey explained that the current North Station site is inadequate for renovation and expansion due to poor soil composition and lot size. Consequently, the Committee recommended a new station site. The Committee has spent about \$87K from last year's appropriation (\$500K) for North Station and has requested \$296K in additional funding. The combined amount is to be used for site evaluation for a new North Station, site evaluation for a new station in South Hingham, and design costs for a new North Station. The Committee plans to bring a construction bid for North Station to the 2017 Town Meeting. Eric emphasized the broad scope of the Article and the intent to look at fire service and coverage throughout the Town. If the North Station site moves to the Fort Hill Street area, then this will improve coverage on the south side of Town. This may impact the location of South Station or eliminate the need for a fourth station.

Article VV – Lehner Property (Hearing)

Bob Curley and Carol Pyles (Chair and Co-Chair of the Community Preservation Committee) described the history of Article VV and recent changes in the language. They stressed that the real value of the land purchase is the protection of the Town water supply. The Lehner property is the largest piece of unprotected and undeveloped land remaining in Hingham. If the Town approves the purchase, then the closing will occur by 12/30/2016, after the State decision on the LAND grant program application. The purchase price of \$5M will be covered by CPA funds minus any outside grants that the Town might receive. The deposit of \$500K will be sourced from available CPA funds this year. The rest of the necessary funds (a maximum of \$4.5M) will be acquired via borrowing, to be repaid with CPA funds over 20 years. Given the anticipated interest rate, the debt service will average 20% of annual CPA revenues over the term of the loan. This means that substantial CPA funds will be available for other projects.

AdCom members asked about the risks of purchasing the property. The Town debt service is already above the recommended ratio stated in the Financial Policy. What will this purchase do to the debt ratio? Do rating agencies look at debt funded by CPA funds the same way as debt funded by more traditional means? Regarding property taxes, the Lehnners currently pay \$24K in taxes on 50 acres. The house and two acres will be carved out and not included in the parcels to be purchased by the Town. Thus the potential loss in tax revenue will be less than \$24K per year. AdCom members also asked about the amount of the LAND grant and about public access to the Lehner property and contiguous conservation land.

Article KK – Disposition of Property: Selectmen's Parcel (Vote)

Tim White, Chairman of the Hingham Affordable Housing Trust, spoke on behalf of Article KK, as he did at the hearing on 3/1/2016. He handed out two documents (Department of Housing and Community Development Ch. 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory per Town and Department of Housing and Community Development Ch. 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory in Hingham). He also agreed to provide the AdCom with the HAHT Annual Financial Report. AdCom members approved this Article by a vote of 11-0-0. Linda Kutsch was not present for this vote.

Article P – Water Company Acquisition Feasibility Continuation (Vote)

Jim Taylor presented Article P for a vote. Ted Alexiades, Town Administrator, and Kerry Ryan, Counsel, were present for the discussion. Jim noted feedback from the public regarding the Article, and he referenced changes in the Comment and the Recommended Motion. Jim Sharkansky asked if the additional \$300K would cover the total cost of the appellate process. Jim responded that the funding should cover all potential costs of this process. AdCom members approved this Article by a vote of 12-0-0.

Article JJ – Close Out Capital Projects (Hearing and Vote)

Jim Sharkansky presented Article JJ. He explained that the funds from the closed-out projects must be transferred to current borrowing projects. The Recommended Motion has to mention specifically the projects being closed out but not the project(s) that will receive the resulting funds. The only project that qualifies as a recipient is the North Fire Station Renovation (Article 14, ATM 2015), but there is no need to specify this project. AdCom members approved this Article by a vote of 12-0-0. Following the vote, Eric Haskell checked the relevant statute and recommended that Town Counsel review the language of the Recommended Motion in case a specific project must be named as the recipient of the funds.

NB: Subsequent to this meeting, Counsel determined that the transfer has to be to a specific project, so the Recommended Motion was revised to reference Article 14, ATM 2015.

Article EE – Establish the Hingham Art Commission (Hearing and Vote)

Tom Pyles recused himself for the discussion of Article EE, and Jim Taylor temporarily assumed the position of Chairman. Eryn Kelley presented Article EE, a citizens' petition submitted by Rebecca Wetzel. Eryn explained that the Article is not ready, and she recommended that it be referred to the Board of Selectmen for further study. She referenced the letter (in the folders) from Rebecca Wetzel. The BOS can create a standing permanent commission without a Warrant Article, but common practice is to ask Town Meeting to create such bodies. A vote of "referral" means that the proponents can submit the Article again next year, whereas a vote of "no action" would impose a two-year wait. AdCom members approved Eryn's recommendation (to refer Article EE to the BOS) by a vote of 12-0-0. Eryn will modify the Comment to reflect AdCom members' thoughts about the creation of this commission by Town Meeting vs. the BOS. Generally speaking, the Advisory Committee prefers that permanent commissions and committees be created by Town Meeting vote.

Article M – Transfer Funds to the Reserve Fund

Tom Pyles explained that the hearing and vote on Article M would be postponed until the night of Town Meeting. This means that there will be a supplement to the Warrant.

Article WW – Special Legislation – SPED Financing (Hearing and Vote)

Linda Kutsch presented Article WW for a vote and explained that this is a re-vote of Article 31 from ATM 2014. Ray Estes, member of the School Committee, was present for the discussion and provided copies of the current legislation on the SPED Reserve Fund. House Counsel drafted the language for the original statute and omitted the funding mechanism. The 2014 Article will expire if the current legislative session ends without the State Legislature taking action. The statute may be fixed in this session or the next session of the State Legislature. AdCom members approved this Article by a vote of 12-0-0.

Miscellaneous Items

Tom Pyles announced that the agendas for 3/8 and 3/10 would include the hearings and votes on the Planning and Zoning Articles. The hearing and vote on Article UU will occur on 3/10, unless the ZBA votes to withdraw this Article.

Lucy Hancock reported that the Capital Outlay Committee voted to approve the FY 2017 Five-Year Capital Plan on 3/3/2016.

Matters Not Anticipated within 48 Hours: None

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 PM by a vote of 12-0-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lucy N. Hancock
Secretary

List of Documents Distributed at this Meeting:

Agenda for AdCom Meeting of 3/3/2016

Draft Minutes from 2/23/2016 AdCom Meeting

Draft Minutes from 2/25/2016 AdCom Meeting

Article Y - Tax Exemption for Deployed Veterans

Article VV – Lehner Property

Article VV – Lehner Property (with suggested changes from Susan Murphy)

Article P – Water Company Acquisition Feasibility Continuation (updated draft comment)

Letter from Mary Ann Blackmur regarding Article P

Article JJ – Close Out Capital Projects

Article EE – Establish the Hingham Art Commission

Letter from Rebecca Wetzel regarding Article EE

Article WW – Special Legislation – SPED Financing

Package regarding Solar Array at the Hingham Landfill (handed out by Paul Heanue)

Town of Hingham Water Company Acquisition Study - Expenses Incurred 6/12/2012 – 2/15/2016

Department of Housing and Community Development Ch. 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory per Town
(handed out by Tim White)

Department of Housing and Community Development Ch. 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory in Hingham
(handed out by Tim White)

Current legislation on SPED Reserve Fund (handed out by Ray Estes)