

**Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
1/31/2017**

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

Chairman Taylor called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

**Questions from the public on items not on the agenda:** None

**Approval of Minutes**

Members approved the January 17, 2017 minutes with revisions on an 11-0 vote. Members Baltera, Haskell, and Kelley were not present for this vote.

**Financial review with Ted Alexiades**

Town Administrator Ted Alexiades reviewed Hingham's financial position and provided perspective on long term planning.

For FY 2016, Hingham received an unqualified audit opinion, the highest possible, noting no internal control weaknesses and its strong Fund Balance. The Town's long term liabilities for pensions and other post-employment benefits ("OPEB") are scheduled to achieve full funding in 2035 and 2040 respectively.

Debt retirement over the next four years will reduce the Town's annual debt service enough for Hingham to re-issue debt of around \$100 million, if it chooses to do so. Cumulative debt service payments total \$3,158,179 for excluded debt and \$516,110 for nonexcluded debt over the next four years.

Alexiades will review the updated five-year forecast with AdCom members on February 9. Revenue projections for both state aid and local receipts have been increased. The revised forecast also includes the Selectmen-voted operating budget for municipal departments, exclusive of the Town Administrator's recommended additions, plus the School Department's budget proposal with adjustments to date. As a result, the FY 2018 budget currently projects a \$1.1 million shortfall.

Finally, Alexiades outlined areas of need in the Town's capital assets along with some preliminary cost estimates. Next steps include Town leaders' discussion of a process and timeline for moving forward. Funds for some feasibility studies could yield data helpful in evaluating alternatives.

**Warrant hearing and votes**

*Article A – Hannah Lincoln Whiting Fund*

Strehle presented this article that relates to the selection of one member of the Committee to have charge of the income of the Hannah Lincoln Whiting Fund. The Recommended Motion was amended to reflect the candidate's reelection. AdCom members approved Article A as amended by a vote of 13-0. Kelley was not present for the votes on Articles A, B, C, E, G, and H.

*Article B – Assume Liability for DCR on Rivers, Harbors, etc.*

LaCroix presented this perennial article. In addition, members agreed to add a sentence to all warrant article comments reflecting the Selectmen and AdCom votes on each one. AdCom members approved Article B by a vote of 13-0.

*Article C – Reports from Various Town Committees*

AdCom approved 2/7/2017

After Curley presented this article, AdCom members approved Article C by a vote of 13-0.

*Article E – Salaries of Town Officers*

Curley presented this article setting the salaries for Selectmen, Assessors, the Town Clerk, and Municipal Light Board. A Committee member suggested reordering the Recommended Motion to match the Article. AdCom members approved Article E as amended by a vote of 13-0.

*Article G – Transfer from Stabilization Fund*

As LaCroix explained, Hingham deposited proceeds from the sale of some former Town buildings along with some bond premiums, in the Stabilization Fund for future tax relief. This article would transfer \$178,836 from the Fund to reduce the FY 2018 tax rate. After correcting a typo in the Recommended Motion, AdCom members approved Article G as amended by a vote of 13-0.

*Article H – Transfer from Meals Tax Stabilization Fund*

LaCroix noted that this article would appropriate \$450,000 from the Meals Tax Stabilization Fund to reduce the FY 2018 tax rate. After substituting “appropriate” for “transfer” in the Recommended Motion, AdCom members approved Article H as amended by a vote of 13-0.

*Article I – Disbursement of Electric Light Department Receipts*

Strehle observed that the Hingham Municipal Lighting Plant (“HMLP”) self-funds its operations and provides an annual Payment in Lieu of Taxes (“PILOT”) to the Town. This year’s PILOT is estimated to be at least \$500,000. After inserting “Hingham” in the Recommended Motion’s reference to HMLP, AdCom members approved Article I as amended by a vote of 13-0-1. Kelley abstained as she was not present for the article’s discussion.

*Article J – Building Department Revolving Fund*

*Article K – Department of Elder Services Revolving Fund*

AdCom members postponed consideration of both Articles J and K to a later meeting while liaisons check appropriate Recommended Motion language for consistency with a recent statutory amendment.

**Warrant hearing calendar review**

Chairman Taylor outlined the upcoming meeting schedule, including the dates for which he is trying to arrange televising the sessions. AdCom members may want to watch the recording of the Selectmen’s meetings on February 7 and 9 when the Board will vote on many of the proposed warrant articles. AdCom’s website is up to date with its calendar and working documents.

**Liaison Updates**

AdCom Liaisons provided the following updates:

- Unleashed dogs in Bare Cove Park (Curley) – Proponents continue drafting this article.
- Schools (Kutsch) – Parents of students with special needs are seeking funds for an independent evaluation of Hingham’s special education. Taylor will distribute communications that AdCom has received on this topic electronically to AdCom members.
- AdCom communications (Taylor) – The Secretary will hold hard copy of all communications received by AdCom. The Chair will distribute communications electronically to all AdCom members unless the message disparages any individual. The Committee does not consider anonymous communications.
- Planning (Baltera) – The Planning Board considered but came to no consensus on three warrant articles at its recent meeting. It will now review all five proposed Planning articles on February 13 with its vote scheduled for February 27, 2017.
- Disclosure forms (Hancock) – Members should contact Hancock for copies of the necessary forms to disclose a potential conflict of interest or financial interest.
- Selectmen’s race (Taylor) – AdCom Member Haskell is a candidate in the upcoming Selectmen’s election. After wishing him well, Taylor reminded the group of AdCom’s neutral stance, observing

that it is best for AdCom members to refrain from taking positions on issues or candidates.

**Matters not anticipated within 48 hours:** None

**Adjournment**

The Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna M. Smallwood  
Secretary

Documents:

Agenda - AdCom Meeting 1/31/2017

Draft Minutes - AdCom Meeting 1/17/2017

Advisory Committee Meetings/Milestones 2016-2017, 1/25/2017

Financial Position and Long Term Planning – January 12, 2017 (Alexiades' slides)

Fifteen Year Debt Schedule

FY2018 Warrant Article Status Summary 1/31/2017 2 PM - LH

Article A – Hannah Lincoln Whiting Fund

Article B – Assume Liability for DCR on Rivers, Harbors, etc.

Article C – Reports from Various Town Committees

Article E – Salaries of Town Officers

Article G – Transfer from the Stabilization Fund

Article H – Transfer from Meals Tax Stabilization Fund

Article I – Disbursement of Electric Light Department Receipts

Article J – Building Department Revolving Fund

Article K – Department of Elder Services Revolving Fund

Revised Budget Book pages – Pages 87R-88R