

**Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
2/16/2017**

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

Chairman Taylor called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

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

Warrant hearing

Article W – Change in Number of Selectmen

Member Haskell recused himself from this discussion. Baltera and Strehle summarized their research on this citizen-initiated Article, which would increase the size of the Board of Selectmen from three to five. The Town has considered an increase in the number of Selectmen a number of times over the past 25 years, opting to stay with the current Board size each time. It was suggested that if the Town wishes to consider an increase, it may be prudent to have a government study committee examine the question again.

The research also disclosed that proponents see a larger Board as offering broader representation, decreasing Selectmen's workloads, and providing the opportunity for broader outreach to citizens. In addition, they believe the change would facilitate improved communication among Selectmen since two could speak with each other without violating Open Meeting Law requirements.

Opponents believe the current Board size is working and see no reason to change. They express concerns about the impact of a larger Board on Town staff and budget, along with questions about adequate numbers of candidates, reduced urgency for the Board to reach consensus, and less transparency in Board deliberations.

Judy Kelley, the Article's sponsor, described the Selectmen as a part-time Board with a full-time agenda. She then provided background information and responded to AdCom questions. Fifteen of 17 benchmark towns have five-member Boards of Selectmen. Former Selectman Edna English urged support of the Article seeing a larger Board providing better oversight of responsibilities delegated to the Town Administrator. Bill Reardon summarized former Selectman Kathy Reardon's statement in opposition to the Article at the recent Selectmen's meeting. In her opinion, the current Board size requires Selectmen to represent the whole Town rather than any subset.

AdCom members asked questions about potential advantages and disadvantages of the proposed change including its impact on transparency in decision-making, Open Meeting law requirements, election mechanics, input from previous Selectmen, Selectmen's roles as liaisons to other Town committees, and the balance of responsibilities in Town government.

Article Y - Town Hall Architectural Engineering

Belyea and Town Hall Facilities Study Committee Chair Tom Carey reviewed this Article, which would authorize \$50,000 for professional services to evaluate the expanding space needs and operational requirements of government functions at Town Hall. Funds would finance a traffic/parking study, structural engineering assessment, and systems evaluation.

The background information developed with this funding will enable the Town Hall Facilities Study Committee to come back to the Town with a decision tree including current departments' status, space and operational needs, and options on how to address them.

Warrant hearing and vote

Article K - Dept. of Elder Services Revolving Fund

Strehle outlined this Article's three purposes:

- To change the Town's By-law consistent with the newly enacted State Municipal Modernization Act;
- To re-establish the Department of Elder Services Revolving Fund until the By-law change becomes effective;
- To set the Fund's cap for FY 2018 at \$60,000.

In future years, Town Meeting will only need to set the Revolving Fund's cap annually. AdCom members approved Article K by a vote of 13-0-0.

Capital Outlay presentation

MacKay introduced Capital Outlay Committee Chair Libby Claypoole who presented this year's Capital Budget recommendations. The Committee proposes total funding of \$3,213,217, with \$2,009,462 from the tax levy, \$72,000 from Fund Balance (mooring permits), and \$1,131,755 from user rates and charges (these fund capital requests of the Sewer and Recreation Departments along with the South Shore Country Club). This year's recommended budget represents 2.7% of the Town's operating budget, within the 2-5% range set by Hingham's Financial Policy.

After beginning with requests exceeding \$4.2 million, the Committee reviewed project costs and priorities to arrive at its recommendation, which is below the \$2.25 million target from the tax levy carried in the Forecast. The Police Department removed a \$218,000 vehicle request late in the process.

Claypoole observed that Hingham has building assets worth \$210 million, not including their contents. While the Town may have debt capacity in the coming years, new projects will require funding to maintain these assets. Capital Outlay sees the need for personnel and systems to monitor and manage the Town's assets. She urged balancing long-term needs with constraints on capital in the short term.

AdCom members discussed elements of the proposed Capital Budget including School technology requests, grant opportunities for Fire Department equipment, and turnover of Police vehicles.

Warrant hearing and vote

Article CC – South Shore Country Club Golf Carts

Belyea noted that South Shore Country Club seeks to borrow \$283,756 to purchase 70 new golf carts and 10 utility maintenance vehicles. The Club will repay the debt to the Town in five annual payments from operating revenues. After suggesting two refinements to the Recommended Motion, AdCom members approved the revised Article CC by a vote of 13-0-0.

Reserve Fund transfer request

Member Baltera recused himself from discussion of this item. AdCom members considered this Reserve Fund Transfer Request of \$8,850 to the Town Accountant's Part-time Salary account that will fund the Benefit Coordinator's position through June 30, 2017. This position will assist in transitioning Town employees to health care through the Group Insurance Commission. AdCom voted 12-0-0 in favor of the transfer.

Warrant hearing calendar review

Taylor reported that the School Committee is advancing a Warrant Article seeking feasibility study

funding of \$750,000 for Foster School, contingent on the Massachusetts School Building Authority's approval of Hingham's Statement of Interest. AdCom and the Selectmen will hear the Article February 28, 2017 in a joint session. Taylor will provide a calendar with revised dates for consideration of the School budget and other updates next week. He asked members to hold March 14, 2017 in case an additional AdCom meeting becomes necessary.

Liaison Updates

AdCom Liaisons provided the following updates:

- Unleashed dogs in Bare Cove Park (Curley) – The Selectmen voted 2-1 to recommend no action on Article T.

Matters not anticipated within 48 hours: None

Adjournment

The Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 10:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna M. Smallwood
Secretary

Documents:

Agenda - AdCom Meeting 2/16/2017

Article K - Department of Elder Services Revolving Fund

Article W – Change in Number of Selectmen

Article Y - Town Hall Architectural Engineering Study

Article CC – South Shore Country Club Golf Carts and Utility Vehicle

Board of Selectmen – statement by Judy Kelley 2/16/2017

Members of Hingham Boards and Committees – Judy Kelley (slides), 2/16/2017

FY2018 Five Year Capital Plan

Reserve Fund Transfer – Benefits Coordinator, \$8,850, 2/6/2017