

**TOWN OF HAMILTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
FEBRUARY 17, 2009**

The Board of Selectmen met at Hamilton Town Hall at 7:03 p.m. on Tuesday, February 17, 2009 with Richard Low, David Carey and William Bowler present. Finance Committee Chairman Arthur Oberheim, DPW Director John Tomasz and Town Administrator Candace Wheeler also present.

Annual Kite Day

Richard Low entertained a motion to approve the sign for the 3rd annual kite day to be placed in front of the old library for two weeks leading up to the event on April 26. David Carey so moved. William Bowler seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

FinCom Recommendations – DOR Financial Review

Finance Committee Chairman Arthur Oberheim offered recommendations to the Selectmen that the Town could decide whether or not to act on. The first was to adjust the tax rate across the year for an override rather than the second half of the year. He said the Town should have better cash flow and take advantage of discounts.

Better control would be reached with a chart of expense accounts. This year reserve fund transfers were used for labor and software purchases. Local accountants willing to donate time could help to create a plan.

The FinCom's goals will be incorporated into the Selectmen's. Another goal is to pay the employees twice a month, 26 times a year. Expenses would be cut in half and there would be better cash flow. This would free up the treasurer's office to have more hours for the water bills. This is highly technical but once accomplished should run smoothly.

Also discussed was the 28-day pay period for police and fire. This should be done in the next week or two.

Another goal is to establish a reserve policy. The stabilization fund is \$600,000 and should be built to \$1 million. It takes a two-thirds vote by Town Meeting to take money out. Oberheim said next year there might not be any free cash as reserves.

In addition the Town should conduct reconciliation on receivables to generate more timely financial data as well as policies for checks, balances and controls.

Also determine other post employment benefit obligations (i.e., healthcare for retirees). A consultant has been hired to do this. This is in process, the Town does not have to fund it but it is a liability.

Risk assessment review is important and a policy hasn't been started. Oberheim said a disaster recovery plan is also very important.

Also discussed was sick leave buyback guidelines and how it should be switched to short-term/long-term disability insurance. This would be grandfathered for existing employees but not apply to new employees. It is not accrued. Bob Bullivant has put an outline together on this.

Oberheim said the Town should have an investment policy for the Town's funds. Also a purchasing policy and procedure so the finance director would have a lot more control. Information would be supplied to her electronically this would include a purchase order system and allow for buying office supplies in bulk possibly with other towns.

Also review all insurance contracts to understand areas to reduce cost. An insurance broker might be hired. Vendors are coming forward and volunteering.

A five-year capital budget is in process that would be handed off to the capital management committee for recommendations. Accrue separation benefits and transfer workmen's compensation administration to accounting. Formalize the budget calendar.

Develop a job description for the Town administrator. As well as develop personnel file guidelines.

Oberheim said if a Town Manager were put in place the FinCom's role would be reduced to advisory there would be a serious loss of control.

Proposed Solid Waste Contract

Oberheim said the proposed Wheelabrator new agreement is for five years and has a 5.9% reduction in disposal fees. He thought it was fair and reasonable and there was no minimum. Wheelabrator would work with Hiltz.

FinCom will provide the Board a recommendation after it takes a vote on February 25.

Carey asked Town Administrator Candace Wheeler to ask Hiltz where empty bags that contained pellets can be disposed of.

FY2009 Budget Shortfalls – EDC/PB Articles

There was discussion about the Planning Board being willing to give back to the general budget \$6,000 of \$18,000 and the EDC was willing to give as much as \$25 for general usage from its \$52,000 allocated for downtown development that was broadened for use at the landfill.

Request to proceed with procurement of energy services

Low entertained a motion to authorize David Carey to go ahead and work with Town Counsel Donna Brewer, the town of Wenham and school department to issue a RFQ in relationship to the procurement of energy services. Carey so moved. Bowler seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Draft FY'10 Warrant

This will be reviewed next week. The signing by-law will be deferred to the fall or later.

Connect CTY Agreement

Town counsel's associate Howard Mayo will review the contract before Brewer signs it. This service is currently being provided to Wenham.

Nominate unsung heroine for the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women (MCSW)

Annette Janes is being considered. The Board will consider other names and make a decision next week.

Landfill Wetlands and Town Boundary Survey

SEA submitted a document to the Department of Environmental Protection. A next step for readying the landfill for development is wetlands delineation with an accurate boundary survey.

Landfill committee member Jack Lawrence who represents the open space interest had received quotes including one from Hancock Associates for the wetlands delineation

and field survey for \$8,880. This has to be done to decide what part of the landfill site is developable.

The Town officials agreed to investigate if Community Preservation Act money or economic development money could be used to pay the \$8,880. Wheeler will check with the finance director to determine if there are any outstanding invoices from SEA.

Meeting Minutes Complaint

The District Attorney received a complaint saying the 2000 open and executive session minutes didn't comply with the Open Meeting law. Wheeler sent copies of the minutes to the DA. The Board of Selectmen believes those minutes met requirements. Bowler noted that he was not on the Board in 2000. Town counsel said the minutes provided today have more information than in the past. The level of detail is not a legal requirement but is helpful.

Low entertained a motion to authorize him as chairman to forward letters to the District Attorney and Salem Evening News and authorize him as chairman to sign the letters. Carey so moved. Bowler seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Minutes Approval

Low entertained a motion to approve the regular session minutes for October 27, 2008. Carey so moved. Bowler seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Low entertained a motion to approve the executive session minutes for February 2, 2009. Carey so moved. Bowler seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Low entertained a motion to go into executive session at 8:32 p.m. not to return to open session for the purpose of discussing union contract negotiations and continue the hearing to consider disciplinary action. Bowler so moved. Low seconded the motion. Members raised their hands for a unanimous roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted by Jane Dooley, Minutes Secretary

ATTEST: _____
Clerk