

**TOWN OF HAMILTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
FEBRUARY 23, 2009**

The Board of Selectmen met at Hamilton Town Hall at 7:03 p.m. on Monday, February 23, 2009 with Richard Low, David Carey and William Bowler present. Town Administrator Candace Wheeler also present.

Annual Town Elections

The following Town positions are open and candidates will be elected on May 14: Selectmen – three-year term, Town Moderator – one year term, Board of Assessors – three-year term, two for the Planning Board – five year terms, Housing Authority – five year term, two for Library Trustee – three year terms.

Papers can be taken out from now until March 24. March 26 is the deadline for submitting papers with the required signatures.

The Housing Partnership Committee needs a member to be appointed.

Finance and Advisory Committee Recommendations

Last year's tax rate was \$13.39. This year's is \$15.23. The Department of Revenue has asked the Town to add the pro rata part of the override to the tax bills in the first and second quarters as well as the third and fourth. This could be applied in August through work done by the Assessors and Treasurer/Collectors offices. Town Administrator Candace Wheeler will follow up on this.

Richard Low thought the Town should convert to bi-weekly payroll. Also the 28-day pay period will be addressed in regard to the fire department next week. It was agreed that the finance department and Treasurer/Collector's office would conduct reconciliation of receivables on a monthly basis. Also transfer workmen's compensation to the accounting department. The finance director can assign the formal budget calendar.

There was discussion about the Town administrator signing off on employee status changes this is mostly done now. The Selectmen would have to delegate authority to Wheeler. This includes appointments and would be done to avoid errors.

Also discussed were personnel payroll file guidelines that should be added to the personnel policies.

The Hamilton Foundation

Loretta Cusick reviewed how the Hamilton Foundation works to help citizens with an immediate need to pay a bill up to \$500 when they are experiencing hardship after a divorce, job loss, death or severe illness. The foundation received 62 calls and helped 54 people. Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary has internal resources to help support its seminarian students.

EBSCO publishing helped produce brochures that were disseminated in Town. Contributions to the foundation are tax deductible.

Unsung Heroine Awards

Low entertained a motion to nominate Annette Janes for the Sixth Annual Unsung Heroines of Massachusetts award. David Carey so moved. William Bowler seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Draft ATM Warrant

The Board reviewed the draft Annual Town Meeting warrant articles that consisted of election of officers, ballot questions and reports, compensation table, general Town appropriations, water enterprise budget, water enterprise retained earnings, waste reduction enterprise budget, waste reduction enterprise expense, North Shore Regional Vocational budget, CPC budget, annual financial actions, written demand fees increase for overdue bills, Winthrop Street Bridge, transfer appropriated funds from EDC and Planning Board for landfill, fund prior year's bills, police and ECO union contracts, overlay district by-law, citizen's petition to change Town Meeting date to Saturday, lowering the age threshold on elder exemptions, Home Rule petition, excavation of public ways, historic district by-law, water by-law, M.G.L. 57 G, waste contract, and straight contract agreements.

Town Website Update

Virtual Town Hall is getting underway upgrading the Town's website.

Affordable Housing – Home Consortium Funding

Harbor Light Community Housing a non-profit developer of affordable housing has approached Hamilton. The developer is interested in the Acord food pantry property and would like to upgrade the four rental units and offer the food pantry a 10-year lease. Septic and parking variance issues need to be addressed at the Union Street property.

Community Preservation Act (CPA) money would likely be used by the developer (\$25,000 to \$30,000 per unit). In addition, Hamilton is eligible for \$15,000 of Home Consortium Funding that is managed by the city of Peabody.

The Board will enact the rule of necessity in this case since Carey is on the Harbor Light board and Low is a board member for Habitat for Humanity.

Pension Fund

The Board discussed frustration with the Essex Regional Retirement Board since it would not provide performance information on its pension fund investments for a year and a half. The corresponding state pension fund has had better return on its investment and provides comprehensive reporting information.

Wheeler will follow up with Tim Bassett from the board and discuss this with the finance director next week.

Wind Turbine

Selectmen discussed how a feasibility study for a wind turbine at the U.S. Air Force site at Sagamore Hill is going to cost \$48,000. The Massachusetts Technology Council (MTC) will pay for \$40,000 via a grant. A retired GE engineer living in Hamilton who has a background in wind energy has offered to contribute his time that would be an in-kind contribution of \$2,400. The Town needs to understand if the MTC will allow this to be applied to the project cost.

Also considered to pay for the \$8,000 shortfall for the feasibility study to be done by Meridian Associates are CPA and/or Clean Energy funds. In addition a developer interested in building a wind turbine at the site might provide \$5,600 as a risk towards the future, said Carey.

Connect CTY Agreement

Low entertained a motion to authorize him as chairman to sign the services agreement dated February 10, 2009 with Blackboard Connect for the installation of a Connect CTY notification system. Carey so moved. Bowler seconded the motion. In case of an emergency a telephone broadcast could be sent to Hamilton residents. This is the same system the town of Wenham uses at the ECO. VOTE: Unanimous.

FY2009 Goals

The Board discussed its fiscal year 2009 goals and priorities that included developing a five-year financial forecast for Town Meeting, government study and Blue Ribbon committees moving ahead, downtown charette is bogged down, AMSTAT pilot done by DPW Director John Tomasz for Hamilton evaluated for other departments, zoning overlay district for landfill, surplus Town properties, healthcare insurance options, Home Rule petition, GASB 45, old library building use, Miles River – Wheeler and Ipswich’s Bob Markel will deal with ConCom applicant (Skip Lyle) to add another beaver deceiver to New England Biolabs dam and address high water at Myopia Hunt Club driveway, Bridge Street culvert – State Representative Brad Hill is supposed to set up meeting with gas company.

Low entertained a motion to go into executive session at 8:50 p.m. not to return to open session for the purpose of discussing union contract negotiations. 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