

**TOWN OF HAMILTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
FEBRUARY 24, 2014**

The Board of Selectmen met at Hamilton Town Hall at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, February 24, 2014 with David Neill, Jeff Hubbard, Marc Johnson, Scott Maddern and Jennifer Scuteri present. Town Manager Michael Lombardo and Fin Com Chair John McWane also present.

Call to order

Marc Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Public Comment

Discussion ensued with Ed Howard about recent house fire on Bridge Street and complexities associated with fire hydrants due to snow and ice. Hamilton Fire Department used the next nearest fire hydrant as quickly as possible during event. Town Manager Michael Lombardo explained that the Town's fire hydrants are tested and flushed annually and both hydrants were operational when tested. Also discussed were water studies done by the Town where David Neill recommended to Howard that he check the water study that was done before the water treatment plant was built.

Rudy Pizzano, Essex Street, spoke to the citizen's petition for a \$25,000 warrant article for ATM relative to Essex Street pedestrian bike path to clear the area of dead trees, stumps and boulders to enable pedestrian use. Town officials noted that consideration for improvement of the path should be done as part of capital improvement plan.

Town Manager's report

Town Manager Michael Lombardo urged residents to keep fire hydrants near their homes free of snow and ice. He along with Town employees Dave Hanlon and David Dolan had recently observed some of Hamilton's fire hydrants that were installed too short or too tall and will be fixed.

Chairman/Selectmen reports

Town officials noted that the focus in the last few days for Hamilton has been the fire on Bridge Street. The Board expressed concern for the family who have been coping well in part due to supportive response from community and Selectmen noted that issues raised related to the event would be addressed.

CONSENT AGENDA

Johnson read item on Consent Agenda.

Approve Minutes – January 27, 2014 – BOS & Fin Com Working Session;
February 3, 2014 – BOS & Fin Com Executive Session.

Johnson entertained a motion to accept the Consent Agenda as read.
Scott Maddern so moved. Jennifer Scuteri seconded the motion. VOTE:
Unanimous.

AGENDA

Discussion re **Snow & Ice Removal Budget – Deficit Spending** and vote to approve additional funds to cover deficit.

Discussion ensued about how the Town would be in a deficit position on the Snow & Ice removal account after vendor bills come in for last storm.

Johnson entertained a motion to approve spending in the Snow & Ice removal account 15423 in the amount of \$50,000 for the purpose of purchasing salt and sand for snow plowing operations, overtime for employees and for paying independent contractors for snow plowing. Maddern so moved. Neill seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Discussion of Long Term Financial Picture

John McWane, Chair of Fin Com, stated if the Town can keep its Town budget (\$6 million) spending at new revenue amount of \$700,000 (\$510,000 for the HWRSD and \$190,000 for Town) or 3 percent, and how this would allow Hamilton to stay below the 2 ½ percent levy limit relative to the tax rate. The HWRSD budget represents 73% of what the Town spends (\$16 million). The Town budget is increasing by \$200,000. Also mentioned was that some funds allocated for the schools have been returned to the supporting communities so

the Town can sustain over 3 percent spending increase without an override. John McWane explained that HWRSD is proposing a net budget increase of 5.2%. Also mentioned was per pupil expenditure of \$15,750 which is higher than peer communities and HWRSD enrollment has dropped by 300 students in 8 years. In addition, if the supporting communities could work on a long range financial plan with HWRSD this could bring down the per pupil cost similar to peer communities then the Town could reduce its tax rate while supporting programs.

Discussion addressed how expense growth needs to be slowed, the Town will be looking at capital costs and spending to occur over a few years, and that other sources of revenue (i.e., housing at Patton Homestead property) need to be defined. Also mentioned was what education or services (i.e., number of foreign languages and full-day kindergarten) the Town wants to offer relative to Hamilton household income and HWRSD spending and what residents can afford. Discussion addressed how the community and HWRSD have to look at facilities relative to declining enrollment and planning for fewer students. Discussion was also about how the School Committee and District Administration is finally the right team to change the structure of our district's education plan so that it has a chance to operate within the Town's long-term financial constraints.

Discussion was on what is a realistic goal for the tax rate (i.e., unlikely to be \$15 per thousand) and effect on property values and what could be done to make Hamilton a more desirable place to live (i.e., level service budget, analysis to reduce duplicate services and improving downtown). Also, importance of getting budget resolved early so there is no discrepancy on how the two supporting towns approach paying for HWRSD.

Discussion with Bill Dery, Chebacco Road, was on what factors result in the 3% increase including teacher salaries, low class to teacher ratio, SPED costs, all day kindergarten, and \$190,000 for school maintenance. Discussion ensued about proposal for \$750,000 in new HWRSD programs and how this seems high and that there should be a balance between taxpayer and HWRSD needs.

Discussion re Commonwealth Community Innovation Challenge Grant for \$90,000 won by Hamilton, Wenham and HWRSD to continue to develop a shared public facilities and infrastructure department

This grant helps support the shared facilities infrastructure between Hamilton, Wenham, and HWRSD and includes buying and implementing software to track

costs, expenses and labor. Also mentioned was Collins Center report that provides departmental recommendations for some of the facilities including options such as not combining water departments. The report analyzed all of the union contracts to understand if there are any barriers to prevent some of the consolidation across departments. In addition to analyzing the budget and equipment to determine if the departments could be staffed in a better way and to deliver better quality (i.e., there is clear qualitative versus quantitative savings). The Board will review the report and schedule a next steps discussion that could possibly influence FY'15 budget but any changes would likely occur at STM in fall.

Discussion addressed how the Town would not postpone hiring a DPW director and that Hamilton has received minimal response to posting for the position. Focus will done quickly on the Collins Center report relative to what Hamilton plans to do with Wenham and how agreement would address service expectation and delivery as well as staffing. Also addressed was HWRSD budgeting \$190,000 for maintenance and that the three entities should have a management meeting to discuss report and recommended direction for the three entities before hiring occurs in school department.

Update on status of the Pool at Patton Park

An update was presented on public meetings associated with proposed pool project at Patton Park, that project bids are expected back by March 20, scope of work has been reduced with alternates on work that could include (i.e., zero entry area, maintenance, UV treatment of water, starting blocks, heating). Also addressed was consideration of parking improvements (i.e., flow and increase in spaces as well as cross walks). The Joint Recreation Board is continuing with public input on proposed project.

Discussion addressed how bids are coming in soon and Recreation Board is managing project and will make recommendation to Selectmen. Also mentioned was if project is being financially driven rather than by a wish list. Discussion ensued about the public community process to meet today's community demand rather than when the existing pool was built since residents have become more active. Also, that planning is being done relative to response from ATM on cost and size of project.

Discussion was also on proposed location of pool and that the volley ball court, horseshoe pit and log fence are on Myopia Schooling Trust land. Town officials

have been conversing with Myopia officials as part of an information gathering process on the property line and encroachment matter relative to the existing property lease and if a long term lease, agreement or easement for septic location can be implemented to rectify the property boundary issue. It was noted that Westin & Sampson will also prepare a pool and septic alternative design in which the facilities are located entirely on Town-owned land. Also mentioned was that in a September meeting with Town officials, the club management expressed flexibility about the log fence and lot line (fence does not demark the line). Discussion addressed how the club's 86 acres of schooling field land has chapter land status resulting in a loss of property taxes for Hamilton.

Update on the RFP for Patton Homestead Land Acquisition and Development

Discussion ensued about Town officials meeting at Patton Homestead with four development companies with one having an affordable housing interest, where there were access questions and appreciation shown for historical aspect of site. Two developers expressed interest in submitting bids that are due in March 14 timeframe. Town Counsel Donna Brewer attended to address legal issues.

Set date for next Board of Selectmen meeting

On March 3, Selectmen will review warrant articles and close warrant with FinCom providing recommendations on articles. Discussion ensued about Board having many meetings in the next six weeks. Lombardo will create schedule for these meetings.

NEW BUSINESS

Consideration of topics for discussion at future Selectmen's meetings

Jeff Hubbard moved that the Board of Selectmen spend 30 minutes reviewing the following topics: potential cost savings in Recreation Department, downtown maintenance, 2014 legal costs, outsourcing other services, who is responsible for what items downtown and related budget items. Neill seconded the motion with understanding that Hubbard would not go over 30 minutes. Maddern amended the motion stating that Board stick to what was agreed to with Joint Recreation Board in December where Hubbard would speak to the Recreation Board before he discusses outsourcing recreation. Hubbard explained that he has provided paperwork to the Recreation Board and is willing to discuss.

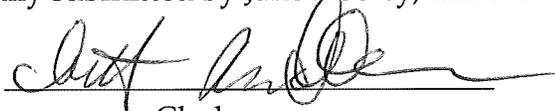
Scuteri stated that this request will take time from Town staff to review the requested information. She suggested Hubbard provide his concerns to the Town departments in writing to which they could respond.

Discussion addressed legal expense budget as a recommended amount by Town officials based on anticipated costs. Also that interim public works director attended a recent Board meeting to address downtown maintenance. Discussion reiterated amended motion that discussion be 30 minutes and Hubbard has to speak to Recreation Board on recreation outsourcing. VOTE: 3-2, Johnson and Scuteri opposed.

Johnson entertained a motion at 9:02 p.m. to go into Executive Session pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, sec. 21(a)(2) for a strategy session regarding negotiations with AFSCME union not to return to open session for the purpose of discussing current and future negotiations with the AFSCME union. Hubbard so moved. Scuteri seconded motion. Roll call vote: Scuteri, yes, Neill, yes, Johnson, yes, Hubbard, yes, Maddern, yes.

Respectfully submitted by Jane Dooley, Minutes Secretary

ATTEST:



Clerk