

**TOWN OF HAMILTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
JANUARY 4, 2016**

The Board of Selectmen met at Hamilton Town Hall at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, January 4, 2016 with Scott Maddern, Marc Johnson, Shawn Farrell, Jeff Hubbard, Bill Wilson present. Town Manager Michael Lombardo, and representatives from Patton Homestead Board of Directors: Carin Kale, Georgina Keefe-Feldman, John McWane also present.

Call to order

Scott Maddern called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Public Comment

None.

Chairman/Selectmen reports

Jeff Hubbard mentioned concern he had heard from residents about the Town's decision not to hold a Christmas tree bonfire this year. Marc Johnson noted HDC priorities that will be discussed by the Corporation, and upcoming zoning hearing as part of Town's effort to make a more functional zoning by-law.

Shawn Farrell spoke to Planning Board's continued review of Canterbrook project, aforementioned zoning meeting, and his work with Conservation Commission, Open Space Sub-Committee, Planning Board, and Recreation Board to redo the Town wide survey done a few years ago. Bill Wilson mentioned pesticide exclusion and need for candidates for an opening on Board of Health. In addition, the HWRSD is continuing FY'17 budget discussion, and 5-year CIP plan, the HW School Committee will adopt a FY'17 budget on January 8, and on January 21 and thereafter budget meetings will be held. Wilson also received calls regarding the bonfire.

Maddern provided update on Chapter 40B seminar on January 25 with State Rep. Brad Hill at library. He noted that the Patton Homestead group has been discussing great ideas. Maddern thanked Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary for the \$75,000 gift from the seminary and noted that he sent the Seminary a thank you note.

Town Manager's Report

Town Manager Michael Lombardo reported that GCTS enrollment is down by 20% so the Seminary is analyzing how it delivers services to keep costs down. In regard to the bonfire, he apologized for erroneous announcement on the agenda that was supposed to be notifying residents that there would not be a bonfire due to low attendance (30+ people) at short duration event, number of trees is dwindling since many are being recycled, overtime costs for staffing, and environmental concerns. Lombardo acknowledged that notice should have been sooner.

Maddern concurred with this sentiment and suggested communication is top goal for Lombardo to work on and that this could be addressed during the Board's discussion of the Town manager's goals.

Hubbard expressed his disappointment about how the bonfire is not going to be held and that notification should have been done sooner. He opined that this is an important community event for many residents and a separate discussion on the policy decision should be done independently from Town manager goal conversation. Wilson concurred about need for early communication on the matter, and opined that discussion on policy could occur relative to the Town manager's goals

Lombardo mentioned a conversation with his counterpart in Wenham about updating joint Recreation agreement, and to reflect changes in form of government. Peter Lombardi had proposed that the Town of Hamilton as the lead town in the joint agreement arrangement take over the management of Pleasant Pond. A draft document will be reviewed with BOS, FinCom and joint Recreation Board for input. This will articulate what Hamilton is being asked to do (i.e., provide lifeguards as part of summer program) which can be addressed as at an upcoming Selectmen's meeting. Finance Director Brian Connolly has produced a first half of the year financial report which is posted online. Also staging for construction of Town pool is being put in place and preliminary work is starting. Lombardo is meeting with vendor later in the week and will get an update on when the pool parking lot will or will not be open.

Consent Agenda

Maddern read the following item:

- Approval of the December 21, 2015 – Regular and Executive Session Minutes

Wilson moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Johnson seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Agenda

- Update from the Patton Homestead Board of Incorporators – Carin Kale

The Patton Homestead, Inc. Board of Directors, 501(3)c status has been approved by IRS, and group focuses on forming a non-profit which can raise funds and works with other non-profits. The non-profit is seeking tax exempt status from the state. As well as analyzing potential uses for the Homestead, waiting for state supported facility report for projected costs of upgrades and improvements for compliance with current building laws, and identifying potential funding sources. This includes a \$250,000 CPA project application with the CPC. The Directors will provide recommendations from evaluation report at a February 22, 2016 BOS meeting. The CPC is interested in waiting to receive a recommendation from the BOS on moving forward at the Homestead before making a decision on the CPA funding application for ATM vote.

In addition, an application will be submitted to the Mass. Cultural Facility Fund for a matching grant (i.e., \$250,000 from Town resulting from sale of Patton land, and \$250,000 from CPA) for property upgrades. Information from the non-profit on the Homestead could be included in the Town's next quarterly newsletter.

Discussion ensued where Selectmen thanked the Directors for their work and expressed interest in seeing evaluation report at the end of January and assessment of capital needs and associated costs for the property. Hubbard opined that to date the gift of the Patton Homestead has cost taxpayers \$360,000 for maintenance, tax revenue loss and closing costs. He noted that the tax revenue from the housing being developed at the site will be \$160,000 a year so this will take three years for this to zero out the expense. Hubbard questioned what the return to the taxpayers is by owning the property for four years, especially because the capital costs are not known. He opined that the funds from sale of property are not benefiting taxpayers. Hubbard suggested there should be a conversation versus presentations on the Directors' progress.

Johnson noted that he did not concur with the \$360,000 spent to date, and mentioned that uses recommended by the Directors' in the future will create enthusiasm related to the capital review. Maddern mentioned that the property gift is not a burden to the Town and he looks forward to the update on February 22 relative to the financial impacts. Wilson opined that the property is not a burden to the Town and it could assist

with the branding of the Town. Kale mentioned the importance of the Patton family having lived on the property since 1928, and noted goal of non-profit to make the Homestead financially sustainable.

- Semi-annual Police Department report to the Selectmen by Chief Russell Stevens

Police Chief Russell Stevens summarized events that the department had handled in Town during the year including two officers struck while working a detail, arrest of individual breaking and entering on Forest Street who stole narcotics and money, narcotics cases, and child abduction.

He also acknowledged superior work by Lieutenant Scott Janes who spoke about accreditation of the police department. Also mentioned was Jane's liaison work with senior residents including at the Hamilton Housing Authority, and condensed citizens' police academy. In addition, work is being done to establish a drug drop off site with the police department rather than just holding an annual event.

Other community services provided by the police department include: bike rodeo and RAD training overseen by Sergeant Karen Wallace, stuff-a-cruiser program and work with Hamilton Foundation managed by Sergeant Steven Trepanier, and citizens' police academy and public safety day run by Sergeant Walsh.

- Open Warrant for Annual Town Meeting scheduled for Saturday, April 2, 2016 location TBD

Discussion ensued about how Winthrop School or gym at HWRHS are being evaluated as locations for the ATM.

Johnson moved to open the warrant for Annual Town Meeting scheduled for April 2, 2016. Farrell seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

- Discuss updating annual goals and objectives

Financial management

Discussion ensued about prioritization, any changes, and ranking of the Town manager's goals (i.e., financial management, communication, prior year goals carried forward, long term guidance, future projects). The Board addressed how ranking was good and long term guidance could become the fifth goal. Discussion addressed how

completed goals should be taken off the list and whether or not the Town manager should be evaluated in 12 months versus two times a year every six months.

Discussion was on financial management including CIP, quarterly updates on spending and what was budgeted to date acknowledging that other than personnel service costs other costs are not cyclical, how robust narrative such as utility costs are lower and healthcare and snowplowing are the big drivers is useful in describing where Town is with its budget.

Discussion addressed how the Town does not budget monthly rather there is annual review of budget and sometimes half year or perhaps quarterly updates. Hubbard opined that the \$10 million budget for the Town could be budgeted monthly with fixed and seasonal costs so budget status assessment could be done. He also opined that the Town's budget has gone up 33% (\$8.7 million to \$11.2 million), that better handling is needed for increasing costs and payment of debt as well as more detail provided for the Town versus HWRSD budget, and FY'14 budget was the last certified.

Johnson noted that he did not agree with 33% increase and the escalation of costs is included in annual budget discussion where debate is on spending level and steering actions. The quarterly reports outline status of budget and are presented in a format that is easily understood (i.e., departmental level table). Farrell and Wilson were proponents of budget narrative on a regular basis and to ensure transparency for the taxpayers on the Town's financial status.

Communication

Discussion ensued about how there was justification not to have bonfire this year but timing to communicate that decision was unfortunate. Farrell recommended how to improve transparency with the community by having the Town website updated more frequently, Town Manager should update the Board more every two weeks, quarterly newsletter would include updates on current and future projects and include an event calendar, and feature departmental updates.

Discussion addressed how volunteers and department heads would be willing to create content, writing factual versus political pieces for the newsletter (i.e., Patton Homestead directors). So budget for this communication vehicle would not be an issue to bring the newsletter beyond a regurgitation of existing social media information for non-technical users. Topics for communication via social media and newsletter could include weekly updates from Town departments and if the Town manager's report at the BOS meetings

was expanded this information could be included as well. The sequence of the Town manager's report could precede BOS reports. Discussion was on how updates to be presented at a Selectmen's meeting could be defined a week prior to BOS meeting, or be part of ongoing documentation so this information could be applied to newsletter content. Hubbard opined how communication is done in a small town and revisited communication associated with bonfire and if a decision could be changed based on community interest in an event.

Discussion ensued on getting handouts a week ahead of time of a BOS meeting (i.e., Town manager's goals and quarterly report) on the Town's website so meeting attendees can review and understand discussion during a meeting. This is being done by the Planning Board and would be useful for all Town boards.

Prior year goals, Future projects

Discussion was on prior year goals: an update on what has been accomplished, and future projects: RFP for solar array, Town Hall renovation – CPA funds, assist joint Recreation Board, HWRSD and two towns to implement turf field and lights at the High School. The Town still needs to take action to evaluate bids for cell tower that Hamilton receives in response to RFP.

Long term guidance

Discussion addressed ongoing review of data set work done by BOS and FinCom (definition is needed on how this applies to this Town manager's goal), as well as initiative for a new survey of residents to assess interests (i.e., open space, senior needs, affordable housing).

- Set date for next meeting

The Board's next meeting is on Tuesday, January 19.

New Business

Consideration of topics for discussion at future Board of Selectmen meetings

Discussion ensued about topics including goals, location of ATM, cost of government and if services are duplicated in other areas, Patton property economics and if it is a burden there is the opportunity to sell property, analysis of next fiscal year's budget

especially cost drivers and identification of gaps (i.e., human resources or website content).

Maddern entertained a motion to adjourn at 9:00 p.m. Hubbard so moved. Farrell seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by Jane Dooley, Minutes Secretary

ATTEST:


Clerk

