

TOWN OF HAMILTON  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
JANUARY 30, 2012

Board of Selectmen met at Hamilton Town Hall at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, January 30, 2012 with Jennifer Scuteri, David Carey, Jeff Hubbard, Marc Johnson and Jeff Stinson present. Town Manager Michael Lombardo and Finance Committee Chair John McWane also present.

Accept minutes (January 3, January 9, and January 17, 2012)

Board clerk Jeff Hubbard entertained a motion for Board to approve January 3, 2012 regular session minutes. Jeff Stinson so moved. Jennifer Scuteri seconded motion. VOTE: 5-0.

Hubbard entertained a motion for Board to approve January 9, 2012 regular session minutes. Stinson so moved. Scuteri seconded motion. VOTE: 5-0.

Hubbard entertained a motion for Board to approve January 9, 2012 executive session minutes. Stinson so moved. Scuteri seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0.

Hubbard entertained a motion for Board to approve January 17, 2012 regular session minutes. Scuteri so moved. Stinson seconded motion. VOTE: 4-0-1 with Marc Johnson abstaining since he did not attend meeting.

Public Comment

None.

Town Manager's report

Town Manager Michael Lombardo commended Hamilton police officer Karen Wallace for work with Wenham police relative to armed robbery at Harrigan's Package Store last Saturday. Town budget is nearly completed. Retreat will be held on March 30 to address Capital Improvement Plan.

Chairman/Selectmen reports

Stinson spoke about Interim Superintendent of Schools Peter Gray having been interviewed for permanent position. Decision will be made mid-week as to whether or not interviews will be conducted with a wider pool of candidates.

Also mentioned was possibility of a zero-based budget coming from schools. Stinson participated in fire training with Hamilton Fire Department.

Johnson reported that the Facilities Assessment Steering Committee is looking to issue an RFP for a consultant to help synthesize existing facility assessment reports with projections of how the facilities may need to change to accommodate future educational, technological, and life skill needs.

Scuteri mentioned articles to be written by Budget Process Committee to insure community receives accurate information. She is writing an article on shared agreements and noted there are many including one addressing crossing guards.

#### Finance Committee update

Finance Committee Chair John McWane provided progress report on preliminary budget numbers developed with Lombardo, Finance Director Deborah Nippes-Mena and Town department heads. Level service budget will include all details about police and fire departments (i.e., salaries, expenses, stipends for each employee) to be transparent and understandable to public. Finance Committee is working with Lombardo and plans are to use same format for schools.

Financial consideration in FY'13 budget process is revenue for Hamilton is down \$380,000 although state cherry sheet will be level funded. Thought is being given to putting \$200,000 of free cash into budget since Town has a strong free cash position. Funding will also be required for senior tax reduction program.

Discussion about Town benefitting from mild winter where less snowplowing dollars from \$125,000 budgeted annually has been spent to date. Unspent money from this line item can flow to free cash.

Real estate valuations are low with tax rate at \$17.65. This does not affect tax bills due to well-managed spending.

Discussion was about first budget put forward by school, which is level services and shows an expected \$1.2 million increase in school budget. Ways to reduce number are being investigated, including dropping teaching assistants. Similar school districts are expecting a lesser increase. Teacher salary raises and steps as well as increasing cost of health insurance are uncontrollable factors.

Discussion was on the excess and deficiency account and the fact that at almost \$1.5M it exceeds 5% and if \$500,000 was not given back to the Towns last year, how it would be over \$2M. McWane met with Finance Working Group Chair, Dacia Rubel of School Committee's finance group.

Discussion on providing school budget information that everyone understands. Gray is determining where school budget money was allocated during previous administration. Auditors discovered money raised from athletic fees in music department budget, so it is being moved to correct place.

Discussion about how we will focus this year on spending, not funding. Also, depending upon state revenue, and preliminary school budget expected from school district Feb. 15.

Discussion about whether or not \$794,000 which was paid in excess cash for Cutler School boiler installation should now be funded through bonding, and impact on tax levy if bonding is used. Town Meetings in Hamilton and Wenham would have to vote to rescind vote to bond project.

Also noted was recent Supreme Judicial Court ruling on allocation formula and regional school district agreement. It takes effect in FY'13 and cost of funding schools for each community will be based on foundation formula for foundation per pupil cost and remainder according to Regional Agreement.

#### Open Warrant

Scuteri entertained a motion to open warrant for Town Meeting to be held on May 12, 2012. Hubbard so moved. Stinson seconded motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

#### Appointments to Patton Family Gift Advisory Committee

Town has received interest from eight people in serving as three at-large members of Patton Family Gift Advisory Committee. They will be appointed at next Selectmen's meeting.

Scuteri entertained a motion to appoint Peter Clark (Planning Board) to the Patton Family Gift Advisory Committee. Hubbard so moved. Johnson seconded motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Scuteri entertained a motion to appoint John Rodenhizer (Zoning Board of Appeals) to the Patton Family Gift Advisory Committee. Stinson so moved. Hubbard seconded motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Scuteri entertained a motion to appoint Tom Catalano (Community Preservation Committee) to the Patton Family Gift Advisory Committee. Hubbard so moved. Stinson seconded motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Scuteri entertained a motion to appoint John Cusolito (Recreation Board) to the Patton Family Gift Advisory Committee. Hubbard so moved. Stinson seconded motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Scuteri entertained a motion to appoint Stacy Carpenter (Conservation Commission) to the Patton Family Gift Advisory Committee. Hubbard so moved. Stinson seconded motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Scuteri entertained a motion to appoint Marc Johnson to the Patton Family Gift Advisory Committee. Stinson so moved. Hubbard seconded motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Stinson entertained a motion to appoint Jennifer Scuteri to the Patton Family Gift Advisory Committee. Hubbard so moved. Johnson seconded motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

#### Hamilton Water Study

At advice of Special Counsel Ray Miyares, Town will enter into contract with Hydrogeologist Jesse Schwalbaum to do a water study that will monitor Idlewild Brook flow and provide credible facts for approaching Department of Environmental Protection regarding Town's water withdrawal permit and registration. As well as provide information on best practices for Town regarding standards for water use that Hamilton can achieve. Using Schwalbaum's expertise for a total of \$19,300 for a two-part project would cost Town a lot less money than if it continues to litigate process with DEP.

Scuteri entertained a motion to authorize Town Manager Michael Lombardo to enter into a contract with Jesse Schwalbaum with regard to Town's water litigation and continued water study. Hubbard so moved. Stinson seconded motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

BOS Goals

Discussion on short-term goals including: adequate funding for senior services, selling Town owned land through RFP process and auction as well as investigation by Town manager into if Hamilton could assist with financing related to betterments and if residents could encumber their own property, schools, Patton gift, and education about new trash program, to be rolled out mid-March, through Q&A on Town website, brochure, and newspaper article.

Also mentioned was updating Town website, marketing plan for Hamilton, school and recreation budgets, CIP for old library to understand use of building as well as improving egress and space to maximize programming for both seniors and others as defined through Recreation Master Plan.

Discussion on long-term goals focused on if Hamilton should consider creating a municipal utility to transport and possibly generate electrical power. This could fund sinking utility lines downtown. However, this effort would have to be tied into a larger vision for downtown that could include sanitary services.

Also noted was savings that could be realized from a virtual public works department. Most beneficial if Hamilton, Wenham and regional school district participate. Selectmen support concept so local agreement will be developed.

Other business

Next BOS meetings on February 6, 13 and 27. Scuteri entertained a motion to adjourn at 8:50 p.m. Hubbard so moved. Johnson seconded motion. VOTE: 5-0.

Respectfully submitted by Jane Dooley, Minutes Secretary

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk