

TOWN OF HAMILTON  
HAMILTON and WENHAM Boards of Selectmen  
OCTOBER 25, 2011

The Hamilton and Wenham Boards of Selectmen met at Wenham Town Hall at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 25, 2011 with Hamilton Board of Selectmen Jennifer Scuteri, David Carey, Jeff Stinson, Jeff Hubbard and Town Manager Michael Lombardo and Finance Director Deborah Nippes-Mena present.

One Day Liquor Licenses –Gourmet Delights Catering

Jennifer Scuteri entertained a motion to grant One Day Liquor licenses to Gourmet Delights Catering for events to occur at the Community House on November 5 and November 12, 2011. David Carey so moved. Jeff Hubbard seconded motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

One-time funding from state

Town Manager Michael Lombardo said Hamilton would receive \$41,088 in one-time funding from the state.

Hamilton Special Town Meeting Overview

Lombardo summarized results from October 22, 2011 Hamilton Special Town Meeting. Financial actions went well, warrant article changing Annual Town Meeting date passed, \$5,000 was approved for Patton Park playground equipment seed money, \$2,500 was approved for downtown decorations, and voters were in favor of expansion of liquor license hours on Sundays and holidays although license holders still have to go through approval process.

Scuteri noted that there is a parallel Wenham Special Town Meeting warrant article regarding changing Annual Town Meeting date that will be voted on at Wenham's STM on November 8. Intent is to hold ATMs earlier in year on Saturdays with Hamilton's occurring at 9 a.m. and Wenham's at 1 p.m.

SMART Program

Lombardo reviewed program options and explained that Hamilton Selectmen had approved bi-weekly solid waste pickup and weekly single stream and organic recycling for the Town.

He noted that Wenham had an opportunity to join Hamilton in a joint service agreement for rubbish disposal/recycling that would provide savings and enable continuation of organic recycling program as well allow for single stream recycling.

Lombardo also mentioned that waste disposal program could be structured in such a way to potentially cover cost of new recycling bins. He is investigating possibility. A grant from Department of Environmental Protection to cover cost of these bins is unlikely. Also noted was that existing recycling bins being used by residents would be adequate for continued use in new program that would not be implemented for a few months.

Wenham selectmen unanimously voted in favor of a combined rubbish disposal/recycling contract with weekly solid waste pickup and weekly single stream and organic recycling in Wenham. That community expects a \$5,400 increase in cost with an anticipated net savings of \$25,000 annually.

Finance Department Discussion

Wenham Finance Director Nichole Hagstrom is leaving on November 4 to take another position. Discussion was about opportunity not to hire new finance director in Wenham and to consider using an intermunicipal agreement to consolidate and reorganize finance operations in Hamilton and Wenham.

Municipal officials believe shared financial operations could provide a viable solution moving into the future.

Proposal would allow for innovation and operational efficiencies in how financial services are provided for the two municipalities.

This idea was initiated in part due to dwindling pool of candidates for finance director positions, where filling a position can be competitive and cost as much as \$91,000 in annual salary. Hagstrom is currently being paid \$65,000.

The proposal would not change the process the two communities use to develop their budgets.

A joint finance department would continue to work with community budgets where a large percentage is dedicated to regional services (i.e., Wenham 60% and Hamilton 70%). Hamilton and Wenham operations would not be comingled. Taxpayers would receive budget information in the same way they are currently in Town Meeting warrants.

The proposal involves using the same financial operations head count but moves around personnel. Between the two communities there are currently 2 FTEs in finance and administration, 4 FTEs in treasurer/collector, and 2 FTEs in accounting. By using the dollars differently, the municipalities could add a benefits/payroll coordinator position at no additional cost. If proposal were approved, this person would be hired as soon as possible.

Information will be provided to the two Boards of Selectmen in the next two weeks so a decision can be reached on proposal. If Selectmen approve the proposal, a municipal agreement would be signed and appointments made in November. Followed by a preliminary operational reorganization with transitions in the accounting, treasury, collections and finance functions to occur by December 1.

Hamilton's Finance Director Deborah Nippes-Mena would oversee the shared financial operations by running parallel FY'13 budget processes for the two towns and refining implementation.

Also done would be a migration to the same financial software for both communities and adjustment to procedures and processes by June 30. This would allow municipalities to use cloud computing technology and move away from using backup servers as well as have access to financial data from any location.

Nippes-Mena said governor is in favor of ideas like Hamilton and Wenham regionalizing financial operations and funding may be available to assist with software migration. The cost for Wenham to convert to Munis software is around \$200,000, which could possibly be covered by a grant. An application will be submitted to state by October 31.

If the municipalities approve consolidating financial operations, an announcement is expected at the Mass. Municipal Association meeting in January. This combined financial services model is being used in other jurisdictions in the commonwealth including Franklin County.

An additional benefit to the proposal is Wenham residents could do business on Friday afternoons in Hamilton. Likewise, Hamilton residents would be able to address Town affairs at Wenham Town Hall on Tuesday evenings.

Some selectmen from both communities expressed concern about potential fiduciary conflict of interest, wanted legal counsel to opine on the proposal and questioned whether or not payroll and human resource responsibilities could be outsourced.

Many selectmen were in favor of consolidating financial operations and the two Boards agreed to have municipal officials update them in the subsequent two weeks about next steps.

Scuteri entertained a motion to adjourn the Hamilton Board of Selectmen meeting at 8:30 p.m. Hubbard so moved. Carey seconded motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by Jane Dooley, Minutes Secretary

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

Clerk