

TOWN OF HAMILTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
NOVEMBER 14, 2011

Board of Selectmen met at Hamilton Town Hall at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, November 14, 2011 with Jennifer Scuteri, Jeff Stinson, David Carey and Jeff Hubbard present. Town Manager Michael Lombardo and Finance Director Deborah Nippes-Mena also present.

ECTA hike at Donovan Fields

Approximately 150 people participated in hike at Donovan Fields last weekend. Town Manager Michael Lombardo said gate is being locked when fields are not in use to prevent people from driving on fields. He is working with Recreation Director Sean Timmons to identify locations to place boulders to prevent vehicle access on to fields.

Purpose of BOS working session meetings

Lombardo said a result of recent Selectmen retreat was for Board to hold working sessions on alternate Monday nights (2nd and 4th) to formal BOS meetings (1st and 3rd) where action items are voted so other Town issues can be vetted in a more casual setting.

Ribbon cutting at 69 Willow Street

Acord Food Pantry board member Anne Marie Cullen thanked Town for use of former Hamilton Public Library building to house food pantry until construction was completed at 69 Willow Street. A ribbon cutting was held today commemorating completion of affordable housing project that contains four units in addition to food pantry. Ninety applications for units have been received and two occupants were selected thus far.

Food pantry is busier than ever and it needs non-perishable, not expired, and unopened food donations. Volunteers are being lined up to move food pantry inventory from The Meeting House building back to 69 Willow Street location.

SMART Program Update

Lombardo has received requests for additional information on SMART trash program so he is working on educational campaign, one-page explanation and small catalog brochure, that describe how new program works and what residents need to do, when to expect new bins and probable start date. Also included will be comparison with savings expectations between former trash program and SMART program along with quantified assumptions and Lombardo's spreadsheet will also compare Hamilton's SMART program including the savings and costs to other programs. Solutions are being considered for families with diaper disposal needs.

BOS Goals and Objectives

Board reviewed status of BOS Goals and Objectives for Town Manager Michael Lombardo and Selectmen.

Lombardo is responsible for investigating new shared services opportunities. He is working with Hamilton and Wenham town officials on proposed shared finance services since current way function is supported is unsustainable for both communities. Wenham's finance director recently left that community.

As part of proposed shared finance services plan, a junior benefits/payroll coordinator person would be hired at no additional cost to communities to allow Lombardo, Hamilton Finance Director Deborah Nippes-Mena and her associate Dyan Katz to focus on other local government finance matters.

It appears that sharing these services would be funded 65% by Hamilton and 35% by Wenham. Details on how many bills are processed, how to allocate costs and how much time is required from finance staff are being determined.

Lombardo and Wenham Town Administrator Jeff Chelgren plan to send updated proposal information to two Boards of Selectmen early next week.

By mid-December Town officials should know if proposal would be implemented until end of calendar year and possibly for long term. A deal breaker could be if Wenham does not receive approximately \$200,000 in grant money to pay for that community's transition to MUNIS software. Another deal breaker is if Wenham requires the position to be posted.

Information from Lombardo will include from a Hamilton perspective: pros and cons of intermunicipal agreement, description of economic and non-economic benefits, deal killers, what Town gains or loses and a timetable.

Lombardo explained that two intermunicipal agreements would be developed, one that ends March 1 and a second that ends June 1, that address whether there will be a transition or not, and how this impacts Town's budget, so by yearend it will be known if Wenham decides to recruit to fill its finance director position.

Discussion initiated by Jeff Hubbard was about Hamilton currently outsourcing its payroll while payroll responsibilities such as timesheets and accruals are done in-house. Also addressed was impact of bringing on another staff person to do benefits and payroll coordination in tight budget times when there is a slow national economic recovery. Selectmen will take a vote when all aspects of combined finance services proposal are fully understood.

Lombardo is investigating other opportunities for shared services with help of consultant, Management Partners, including local government restructuring and analysis that suggests there could be additional merged operations (i.e., regional Board of Health). He should have report ready for Board's December 12 meeting.

Discussion about Lombardo receiving interest from neighboring town regarding participation in Hamilton's ECO that would be fortuitous for Town since Wenham is leaving local ECO to join state's regional dispatch center to be built in Middleton. He plans to follow up with state politicians to see if there is interest in sharing Hamilton's ECO from any other communities.

Jennifer Scuteri suggested it could be useful to understand what surrounding communities do for dispatch services. Selectmen plan to vote on whether or not Hamilton should join Middleton regional ECO on December 5. Hubbard offered to pursue a conversation with Wenham on ECO issue.

Other matters discussed that are under Lombardo's oversight include: memo on all parcels of Town-owned land relative to RFPs and potential sale to highest bidders, Recreation Master Plan where RFPs have been sent out to consulting firms (Patton Park pool solution would be included), permitting ice skating at Weaver Pond or another location in Town and difficulty finding anyone to maintain ice (Hubbard will speak to Town counsel/MIIA), administrative changes needed for Town website including improving history and quantifying staff time to implement, and improving management of Town Meeting with

updated Wi-Fi wiring installed at municipal buildings for improved presentations (there is no money in budget for updating software).

Jennifer Scuteri reported on her initiatives where HWRSD budget should be available for budget discussions with supporting communities earlier than in past years and budget efforts and communication to public will be coordinated with HWRSD Committee and Budget Process Committee.

She has focused on Town bylaws and enforceability. Specifically, people parking on downtown streets longer than two-hour limit are now receiving parking tickets. Parking lot near 69 Willow Street property is available for use now that construction is completed.

Lombardo said bylaws should support decisions by Town boards and he suggested Hamilton would benefit from hiring a consultant to rewrite Town's zoning and land use bylaws to mirror future vision. An update on this could be presented to Board by January 1.

Also mentioned was need for marketing plan to identify what audience should be targeted to promote Hamilton as a desirable place to live for empty nesters and families with its proximity to ocean and equestrian events. Discussion about how benefits could improve real estate property values and that they should be tied into Master Plan. Inquiries could be made with local marketing firms rather than contracting services to jumpstart marketing plan.

David Carey spoke to press coverage on new energy initiatives, new affordable housing options where Lombardo said a coordinator could potentially work on a part time basis, WIFI transmitters around Town, existing Town money for Master Plan update that would require validation from stakeholders (i.e., Planning Board) and action strategy with associated costs, and that Board should schedule meeting with Land Use boards.

Discussion was about Dodge Tree being new owner of former Hansbury site and potential conflict with local Education Fund regarding Christmas tree sales.

Board also discussed what other communities are doing for P.I.L.O.T. payments when children of federal government employees attend public schools. This does not have a direct correlation with non-profit organizations in Hamilton. Hubbard is interested in discussing with Carey possibility of revisiting Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary relative to P.I.L.O.T. payment.

Jeff Stinson has had success in Town working with National Grid utility to have double telephones removed. He has encountered difficulty with Verizon and plans to escalate situation with utility's operations department.

Other areas Stinson is addressing are: Community Preservation Committee's approved funding for ECTA network to purchase land agreements where trail would begin at Myopia's schooling field and signage posted, improving cellular telephone service in Town along with Marc Johnson, investigating possibility of "The Ride" provided by MBTA for seniors in Hamilton with a January 1 BOS discussion deadline, and working toward improving relations with school by serving on superintendent of schools search committee.

To use meeting time most efficiently Board decided to discuss BOS goals and objectives for Hubbard and Johnson at it's next working session in two weeks.

FY2013 Budget Discussion

Lombardo mentioned discussion with Johnson relative to what Selectman said at previous Board meeting regarding FY2013 budget. Town officials are working on maintenance of service budget that addresses restructuring and cost savings but does not address significant action to reduce taxes.

He wanted to be specific with Johnson and Board about intentions regarding taxes and if actions are going to be taken to bring tax rate down he needs to know that now as the FY2013 budget process is beginning.

Lombardo and staff are working hard to stabilize tax rate but are not trying to bring it down. He spoke with Johnson who does not believe Town needs to eliminate staff and services. Town officials are working on zero budgeting and preparing a capital plan that would not be sustainable if Hamilton rolled back the tax rate.

Discussion was about costs for services going up faster than property values causing a need for increased funding. Also that there are going to be budget increases such as \$60,000 for health insurance, expense to Wi-Fi public buildings, and additional consulting for Economic Development Committee.

Selectmen discussed possibility of investigating what service level surrounding communities provide and learning how they pay for those services. Board

members agreed that Hamilton does not have many opportunities to save money (i.e., SMART program). Town officials said if any cuts were made in Hamilton's budget it would have to come from reducing staff.

Scuteri entertained a motion for Board to adjourn open session at 8:50 p.m. Stinson so moved. Hubbard seconded motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by Jane Dooley, Minutes Secretary

ATTEST: _____

Clerk