

HAMILTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES OF MEETING & JOINT PUBLIC HEARING with
THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

Town Hall Memorial Room, 577 Bay Road

July 1, 2019

Selectmen Present: Chair Jeffrey Hubbard, Shawn Farrell, William Olson, Darcy Dale, and Rosemary Kennedy

CPC Members Present: Chair Jay Butler, Robert Preston, Ed Howard, and Janel Curry, Sherry Leonard, and Shawn Farrell

CPC Members Absent: Katherine Mittelbusher, Chris Currier and Neil Duggan

Town Manager: Joe Domelowicz

Jeff Hubbard called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Darcy Dale read the notice of the **Joint Public Hearing for the Board of Selectmen (BOS) and Community Preservation Committee (CPC)**, held for the purpose of obtaining community input regarding future spending of Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds. Before beginning the hearing, Mr. Hubbard asked if they could take the Consent Agenda out of order to accommodate those present.

CONSENT AGENDA

- **Approve Minutes from the BOS Regular Meeting on June 3**
- **Approve Minutes from the BOS Executive Session on June 3**
- **Approve Administrative Staff Union Collective Bargaining Agreement**
- **Approve Police Union Collective Bargaining Agreement**
- **Approve Fire Union Collective Bargaining Agreement**
- **Approve Proposal for Eagle Scout Project at Senior Center**
- **Appoint Jack Hauk to the HW CAM Committee for three-year term**
- **Approve End of Year Financial Transfers**

Decision:

Shawn Farrell made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda excluding the June 3 Executive Session minutes (which William Olson had asked to put a hold on). Ms. Dale seconded the motion.

Further Discussion:

Rosemary Kennedy had some questions for Eagle Scout Trent Blatz about the proposed patio project at the Council on Aging (COA) building. He filled in details on the size, location, and said he was working with a local landscaper and would fundraise most likely through Go Fund Me. Town Manager Joe Domelowicz told him the Town will promote it on social media. The project is expected to cost \$2,000-\$3,000 without taking into account discounts being offered. Mr. Farrell asked about procedures it will need to go through. Mr. Domelowicz said it would just need permitting.

Decision (Continued):

The BOS voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the Consent Agenda with the one exclusion.

COA Director Mary Beth Lawton thanked the BOS and said they were excited to see the project they'd be working on for almost two years come to fruition.

Joint Public Hearing of the BOS and CPC

CPC Chair Jay Butler gave a PowerPoint presentation. [*It can be found on the Town website's CPC page by clicking on the button at the bottom entitled "CPA in Hamilton" and then by scrolling down to "2019 Public Hearing Presentation."*] He listed details of the program to which 175 out of 351 communities participate that allows the communities to receive a State match that comes from fees charged at the State registries. The match has been decreasing each year as more communities join the program. Right now the match is only at about 19% and that is only because of lobbying to get the State to transfer surplus funds over; otherwise it would have been only 11.57%. If proposed legislation goes through, they expect the match will be in the 30% to 40% range in the future. Nevertheless, funds are dwindling.

Mr. Butler had crunched some numbers regarding what would happen if Hamilton increased its 2% surcharge to 3%. (Wenham has a 3% surcharge). If Hamilton did this, it would be eligible for a second and third round of funding. The way it works is that all towns are eligible for the first round. The second round is based on financial need. [Hamilton is ranked 7 on the affluence scale (with 10 being most affluent); Wenham is #4. He tried to find out how this ranking was determined but was unsuccessful.] A third round is available for those with a surcharge of 3%. Mr. Butler put together a chart of the percentages other communities are charging and calculated how much more money Hamilton would be able to offer in grants for projects by raising the surcharge to 3% (overall it would amount to an additional \$300K), as well as what the overall property tax annual increase would be divided by the number of residents (amounting to approximately \$66 more for an average-size home). The first \$100K value on a property is exempt. Also there are full exemptions available.

Mr. Butler explained bonding can only be done against the amount of the surcharge collected (not on the State match). The only bond the CPC currently has is for Sagamore Hill, approximately \$112K annually. Mr. Butler listed the categories of the projects covered by the CPC: Open Space/Recreation, Community Housing, and Historic Preservation. Then he ranked who had received the most funds from among all the organizations that have received grant money over the years. Sagamore Hill was at the top. He also went over all the anticipated grant projects on the current list and said the CPC is looking for information about additional grant proposals that may be forthcoming. Currently the CPC only has \$300K in funds to offer, and it will receive an additional \$400K in November, so at the time of Town Meeting, about \$700K will be available.

Deadline for eligibility applications for grants is July 3. The CPC will be reviewing the eligibility applications on July 11 at which time they expect to receive one from the Town Hall Building Committee as well as one from the Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust (HAHT). The vote on whether to fund the projects happens at the funding hearing that takes place after the eligibility hearing. If projects dwarf the reserves, Mr. Butler said they will need to say something to the applicants. In the meantime, he said he'd like the new Capital Committee (CapCom) to explore the idea of perhaps increasing the surcharge from 2% to 3%.

Ed Howard commented that when the Town looks at its return on investment, increasing the surcharge is well worthy of consideration. He said he's changed his mind from his original position. He also brought up his wish to see more sledding hills in Town and some investment in the Town's beach at Chebacco Lake, for example, by providing an additional porta-toilet there.

Mr. Olson asked if there are things associated with the Town Hall project that the CPC won't be able to fund. Mr. Butler replied yes, and that they do have the ability to divide the costs out in terms of what can be covered and what can't be covered. Mr. Olson brought up that the BOS was going to be offering its opinion (straw poll) later about whether or not the Building Committee should keep the historic staircase.

Robert Preston discussed that the CPC is more concerned with the envelope of the building. He referred to the Town Hall project done in Natick and said it was worth looking at on Natick's website. He thought that if Hamilton altered the outside of Town Hall, it couldn't come from CPC money, but Mr. Butler disagreed and said an addition can be covered if its purpose is for the historic preservation of the staircase.

Mr. Olson asked if any towns vote year by year on what surcharge percentage to charge. Mr. Butler said he knew some had voted it up or down but no town has ever opted to revoke its membership in the CPA [Community Preservation Coalition].

Ms. Dale asked what the process would be for voting to increase the surcharge. The response was that it would require a citizen's petition and going to the polls as it would be a ballot question.

Duke Seaver, 402 Essex St., asked if that would be a simple majority and was told yes.

Mr. Butler said they try to have the majority of the CPC members present for voting on the grants. Technically, if they have five members of their nine-member committee show up, only three people are needed to pass it, but they don't do that.

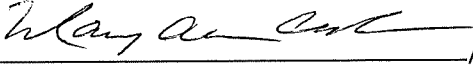
The BOS thanked Mr. Butler for his presentation.

Adjournment of the Public Hearing

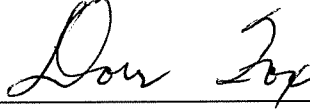
Ms. Dale made a motion to adjourn the public hearing. Mr. Olson seconded the motion. The BOS voted unanimously (5-0) to close the hearing.

CPC members with the exception of Mr. Butler left the meeting. Mr. Hubbard resumed the regular BOS meeting.

Prepared by:

 7-23-19
Mary Alice Cookson Date
Minutes Secretary

Attest:

 7/23/19
Dorr Fox Date
CPC Coordinator