

HAMILTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

MINUTES OF MEETING

Teleconference

May 26 2020

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

Selectmen Absent: Chair Jeff Hubbard

Town Manager: Joe Domelowicz

** This meeting was conducted via Zoom teleconference with all the above participants remaining in their homes.*

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Vice Chair Rosemary Kennedy called the Board of Selectmen (BOS) teleconference to order at approximately 6 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Ms. Kennedy took roll call; four of the five BOS members were present. Chair Jeff Hubbard was absent.

Public Comment

None.

AGENDA

Updates—Selectmen/Town Manager Reports

Shawn Farrell said he'd approached David Wanger of the Finance and Advisory Committee (FinCom) and David Smith of the Board of Health (BOH) about helping the Recreation Department move forward in letting residents know the status of the summer recreation program and Town pool. Decisions need to be made about "new normal" and best practices.

William Olson reported the Town Meeting steering committee had held two meetings. He provided details of what has been done pertaining to Town Meeting proposed for June 20. He talked about spacing chairs eight feet apart. He said the School Committee's Zoom meeting generated a lot of interest in the school budget. The next step was to conduct a survey to gauge how many people expected to attend Town Meeting. Ms. Kennedy asked if citizens would be expected to bring their own masks; he said yes, but about 200 masks would be provided at check-in. He discussed automated vote counters and how they will

help streamline the meeting. Mr. Farrell inquired about Wi-Fi. Mr. Olson said they are exploring how to give people an opportunity to text a question by phone rather than having to go up to the microphone. Mr. Domelowicz said they were trying to figure out how they could take questions from those attending the meeting, but not from the outside.

Town Moderator Bill Bowler said the Moderators Association had put out a best practices and commented that one thing necessary is to be well-organized and get people out of the meeting quickly when it's over while maintaining also social distancing, rather than having people linger and congregate.

Ms. Kennedy asked how many people could be accommodated at six-feet apart rather than eight-feet. Mr. Olson said that's why they need to do the survey, to know how many to expect. He shared good news that the State would be reimbursing for associated meeting expenses. Mr. Domelowicz said the survey will go online tomorrow. Mr. Olson said Wenham decided not to hold its Town Meeting until at least July.

Ms. Dale had no report.

Ms. Kennedy asked to put the issue of the poor condition of the cemetery grounds on a future BOS agenda. Mr. Domelowicz commented the area didn't get a lot of water due to a lack of irrigation and there are grubs. The Department of Public Works is gathering quotes for a small irrigation line to help the grass. Mr. Farrell recommended exploring the idea of a specific type of seed. There is a cemetery fund they can use.

Mr. Domelowicz asked that Mr. Smith be allowed to provide an update to the BOS on a public health issue that happened this past weekend. Mr. Smith said a testing program was carried out, triggered by four positive tests occurring over two days. The testing done showed no more positive tests being found. Mr. Smith remarked about how well-served the Town is by its employees and how great they'd all responded. He said he had a conference call with the State Department of Health this evening that covered topics such as tennis courts, swimming pools, golf, yoga, public porta toilets, and he said the process for evaluating the reopening of public facilities is continuing.

Discussion of Final ATM Warrant—Possible Updates to Votes

Mr. Domelowicz shared the warrant and went through some of the articles and votes taken by BOS and FinCom at the last meeting. Mr. Olson said he thought they should focus now on the articles they had questions about. FinCom Chair David Wanger said he had nothing new to offer, that all views had been expressed at the prior four-hour meeting. Mr. Olson noted Article 2-3, which generated the most conversation, as well as the Citizen's Petition. Mr. Domelowicz said, according to Town Counsel, the BOS needs to leave the Citizen's Petition on the warrant. Mr. Wanger said the proponent agreed to move to pass over this item at Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Domelowicz said most of the votes taken last week were unanimous, but said anyone can take up any article for reconsideration of the vote this evening if they chose. Ms. Kennedy said she thought there was confusion regarding Articles 2-3 and 2-4 (regarding the school budget). Mr. Olson pointed out that only four of the five

BOS members were there this evening for a vote. Ms. Kennedy said there wasn't anything they could do about that and she thought they should discuss. Mr. Wanger noted the School Committee did not adopt a budget last week; June 3 is their next meeting. So far they haven't made any changes to the budget previously proposed in February. He said if changes were made, it might cause FinCom to want to review its prior votes. Ms. Dale suggested the BOS have a meeting following the School Committee's meeting. Mr. Domelowicz said they could schedule a joint BOS and FinCom meeting for Thursday eve.

Mr. Domelowicz suggested the BOS take action on Article 2-3 this evening and look at Article 2-4 after the School Committee finalizes its budget. Also, he noted many things were up in the air pertaining to Special Town Meeting (STM) in the fall.

Mr. Bowler said any votes either of the two towns take on their joint programs (including the schools) are contingent on them passing by the other town, and that caused him to have some uncertainty pertaining to the 1/12 budget. He said whatever Hamilton passes at Town Meeting is what they are responsible for if there is no quid pro quo from Wenham. Mr. Domelowicz said if Hamilton passes a portion of the school budget and Wenham does nothing, then they would have a failed school budget until Wenham acts. Therefore the School District would have no choice but to operate under a 1/12 format, but once the full budget was passed, they would be responsible for that which was passed. He said on the Town side, there were five union contracts with two expiring on June 30. He said while they have agreed to extend the two contracts by one year, it needs a vote at Town Meeting. He was concerned it could create low morale if COLAs [cost-of-living adjustments] went to some and not others.

Ms. Kennedy asked if they should see how the School Committee meeting goes tomorrow and then schedule a meeting. Mr. Olson said he didn't think that would be changing the BOS vote and stressed the importance of the Schools to the community. Mr. Farrell said Michelle Baily of the School Committee just commented on the Zoom chat that the School Committee would not be voting on its final budget tomorrow. Mr. Wanger said given the issue's importance, it might be appropriate to have five people present for the vote.

Ms. Dale questioned what happens if the Schools end up getting an infusion of State or Federal money. Mr. Domelowicz said if they got new revenue, they would have to appropriate it at a future Town Meeting. Ms. Dale said she heard there may be (Cares Act) money coming for the schools. Mr. Domelowicz said at this point, Cares Act funds can only be spent on things related to the pandemic not covered by FEMA [Federal Emergency Management Agency] and can't be used for revenue replacement. Mr. Domelowicz said the votes they are looking for tonight are primarily to close the warrant and enable it to be mailed out. However, he said the BOS can always make an amendment or recommendation later or on Town Meeting floor.

Mr. Bowler said if the BOS were unclear, it could say in the warrant that the BOS would make a recommendation at Town Meeting rather than put something in writing on the warrant now and have to change it later. The four members of the BOS thought that made sense. Ms. Kennedy wanted to go that route for Articles 2-2, 2-3, and 2-4; Mr. Olson

disagreed on including 2-2. Mr. Farrell clarified that Ms. Kennedy was OK with the Town budget, but not the School budget at this point. Mr. Olson said they had already debated and agreed on Article 2-2, so he wasn't comfortable re-voting it. Ms. Kennedy said it was her perspective she had only voted to split the articles, and had not voted the actual budget amount. She said the budget needed to take into consideration current circumstances and she said the Schools hadn't done that. Mr. Olson said he thought they had. Ms. Dale stressed they don't know what school will look like in the fall, whether there will be online learning or shifts happening. She suggested they take it slow and find out what it will take to educate the kids. Mr. Olson noted the BOS vote was (5-0) in favor of Article 2-2. Mr. Wanger said FinCom had also voted (5-0). Mr. Olson said he had a hard time letting the warrant go out without a BOS recommendation. When Mr. Olson asked about whether they could change the split in the amounts, Mr. Domelowicz said that would require going back to the FinCom for a discussion. He didn't expect the Schools would come down to less than the 5% that's in Article 2-2, and if the School Committee didn't vote until June 3, after that the BOS would still be in the same boat it is in now.

Mr. Farrell proposed the BOS make a recommendation for the Town side of the budget, but not make the recommendation for the School side yet. Mr. Olson had a problem with that because it would make it look like he was against the school budget, which he was not. He also thought it was being made too complicated for the public. Suggestions were discussed about what language to put on the warrant, for example, noting that at the time of printing of the warrant, the School had not yet voted on its final budget.

Article 2-2 Decision:

Mr. Farrell made a favorable recommendation on Article 2-2, the Town appropriation part of the budget. But he said the BOS is waiting and hoping that the School Committee comes in with some other number that the BOS can agree or disagree with on the floor of Town Meeting, or if they can make a recommendation earlier, they will do that. Ms. Dale seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with "ayes" from Ms. Dale, Mr. Farrell, Mr. Olson, and Ms. Kennedy, (4-0) unanimous among those present.

Articles 2-3 and 2-4 Decision:

Mr. Farrell made a motion that the BOS make its recommendation when the School Committee has approved a budget, which may be before or at Town Meeting. Ms. Dale seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with "ayes" from Ms. Dale, Mr. Farrell, Mr. Olson, and Ms. Kennedy, (4-0) unanimous among those present.

Mr. Olson asked if there would be a meeting between now and Town Meeting. Mr. Domelowicz said yes. Mr. Wanger said it might be appropriate for a joint discussion with the FinCom. They agreed a joint meeting will be scheduled after the School Committee meets (most likely on June 8).

Vote to Close ATM Warrant

Decision:

Mr. Olson made a motion to close the warrant. Darcy seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with "ayes" from Ms. Dale, Mr. Farrell, Mr. Olson, and Ms. Kennedy, (4-0) unanimous among those present.

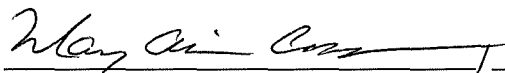
Consideration of Topics for Discussion at Future BOS Meetings

- Discussion on possibly extending BOS appointments. Mr. Domelowicz noted Wenham had extended some of its appointments until September. He said he would email all Board and Committee members to see if they were willing to extend their roles for a few months.

Adjournment

Ms. Dale made motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:32 p.m. Mr. Olson seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with "ayes" from Ms. Dale, Mr. Olson, Mr. Farrell, and Ms. Kennedy, (4-0) unanimous among those present


Prepared by:

 7-29-20

Mary Alice Cookson
Minutes Secretary

Date

Attest:

 07-29-2020

Darcy Dale
Board of Selectmen Clerk

Date