

**TOWN OF HAMILTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
JANUARY 24, 2011**

The Board of Selectmen met at Hamilton Town Hall at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, January 24, 2011 with William Bowler, Jennifer Scuteri, David Carey, Marc Johnson and Jeff Stinson present. Town Manager Michael Lombardo and Finance Committee Chairman John McWane also present.

Town Manager's Report

Town Manager Michael Lombardo asked residents to keep fire hydrants near their homes clear of snow. He noted that the DPW was working hard to clean up snow piles on Town streets during particularly snowy winter conditions.

Accept donations to Crowell Flag Fund

Jennifer Scuteri entertained a motion to accept a donation of \$205 to the Crowell Flag Fund. William Bowler so moved. Jeff Stinson seconded motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Request for extension of sign – United Way

Scuteri entertained a motion to grant the United Way an extension to post its sign until February 15. Stinson so moved. Scuteri seconded motion. VOTE: 2-3-0, motion did not pass.

Near the end of the meeting Board became aware that United Way representative had attended after vote on sign request was completed. Board learned United Way originally requested timeframe for sign posting so it would not be up longer than necessary but was told an extension would be possible.

Bowler moved to have the Board vote to reconsider based on newly presented evidence on the United Way sign. Marc Johnson seconded motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Scuteri entertained a motion to allow the United Way sign to stay up until February 15. Stinson so moved. Scuteri seconded motion. VOTE: 3-2-0, Stinson, Scuteri and Carey for, Bowler and Johnson opposed.

Appoint Mark Gates to Capital Management Committee

Scuteri entertained a motion to appoint Mark Gates to the Capital Management Committee. Stinson so moved. Bowler seconded motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Old Library usage

Discussion initiated by Edwin Howard about old library usage resulted in his mentioning interest in Town's emergency preparedness plans. Howard wanted to know what could be done for senior citizens during an extended power outage (i.e., temporary shelter).

Board discussed protocol of first speaking with Town Manager Michael Lombardo on topic. Howard will schedule meeting with Lombardo. Town manager said he would work with Fire Chief Phil Stevens and Police Chief Russell Stevens to present a formal emergency preparedness plan. Board of Health has such a plan in place as well as an inventory of cots and supplies.

Selectmen discussed possibility of using old library for purposes outside of municipal functions and related liability. Chris Lindberg, assistant to Town manager, is developing bulleted list of requests from non-governmental organizations interested in using facility. Also discussed was the possibility of installing a metal grate to allow for access to the new library meeting room when the main library is not open.

Open Warrant

Scuteri entertained a motion to open the warrant for Annual Town Meeting scheduled for Saturday, May 14. Bowler so moved. Stinson seconded motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

FY 2012 Budget

Discussion was on FY 2012 level service budget: \$100,000 has been reduced from former draft budget (\$50,000 in salaries and \$50,000 in operating costs). A \$75,000 reduction was found since cosmetic maintenance on ladder truck was deferred. Additional stipends (i.e., EMS for call firefighters) should not be budgeted.

Local revenue is down \$100,000. The Town's expenses are higher than expected revenue by \$341,000 (not including school budget impact).

For school budget, Hamilton's share is expected to go up by \$47,000 since there is a shift in number of students from Hamilton versus Wenham enrolled in regional school district. Also, there will be an \$11,000 increase for North Shore Vocational School. Resident George Lamontagne asked Town officials not to increase the tax rate.

Hamilton is currently \$400,000 under levy limit. For FY'11, \$184,000 in unspent levy limit will be carried forward. New growth is \$116,000. Money from sale of tax title parcel on Hatfield Road is not reflected in budgeted numbers.

Town expects to receive a 7% reduction in local aid compared to amount received last fiscal year. Of all communities in Commonwealth, Hamilton is 331 in terms of the amount of local aid it receives. Hamilton's tax rate is expected to go up by 13 cents to \$17.32 per \$1,000 for FY'12.

Two financial warrant articles for Annual Town Meeting will consist of \$136,000 to cap the landfill as part of an expected cost of \$250,000 to \$300,000 to complete the work by 2014 and transfer of meals tax revenue to Stabilization Fund.

Lombardo is currently working on changes in Town's healthcare insurance plan structure to save money. He is also evaluating long-term need for ladder truck, considering restructuring departments in six to nine months, analyzing capital planning that has been deferred, developing a working draft document that identifies needs in Town for services, and creating community survey to receive citizen input on Town services (this could promote scheduling future charette).

Lombardo will send a revised budget rollup to Selectmen for review.

Accept Minutes: Regular and Executive Session: January 10, 2011; Regular Session January 18, 2011

David Carey entertained a motion to approve the executive session minutes for the Board of Selectmen meeting held on January 10, 2011. Scuteri so moved. Bowler seconded motion. VOTE: 4-0-1 with Johnson abstaining because he did not attend.

David Carey entertained a motion to approve the regular session minutes for the Board of Selectmen meetings held on January 10 and January 18, 2011. Bowler so moved. Scuteri seconded motion. VOTE: 4-0-1 for January 10 with Johnson abstaining because he did not attend. VOTE: Unanimous for January 18.

Other business – schedule next BOS meeting

Scuteri entertained a motion to appoint Rick Mitchell to the School Facility Steering Committee. Stinson so moved. Johnson seconded motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Selectmen reviewed the SWOTT process discussed at recent Mass. Municipal Association conference about how to analyze a community.

For Hamilton, the analysis consisted of:

- Town's strengths were indentified as high-performing schools, open space, Town services, highly educated population, Green community and low unemployment,
- Town's weaknesses are high property taxes; infrastructure does not foster economic growth, need for new water supply, no Town planner, no sewer and no commercial access,
- Opportunities for the Town consist of Great Estate by-law, no longer politically locked up where residents are resistant to change, contributions from Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary and potential future use of seminary site, institutional partners and CPA legislative changes,
- Threats to the Town were ongoing litigation, Myopia Hunt Club property becoming Chapter land so the property tax payments would be greatly reduced, high tax rate and impact on quality of schools (this is not sustainable), Massachusetts business climate where people and jobs are leaving state, diminishing state returns causing reduced local aid and unfunded mandates,
- Trends that could be reversed for the Town include beefing up Chapter 70 formula litigation, different housing in the downtown, and cutting positions and services. The Town has already seen a reversal of anti-growth measures and a cessation of school overrides.

Board thought the following Annual Town Meeting warrant articles should be discussed with chairs of Town boards at an upcoming Selectmen's meeting:

1. Five tax title parcels for sale (Scuteri, Johnson),
2. Affordable Housing Trust funded through Community Preservation Act (Carey),
3. Economic Development Corporation (Bowler, Stinson),
4. Pay As You Throw (Lombardo),
5. Expanded overlay district in the downtown (Peter Clark and Bill Gisness),
6. Meals tax – planning how to spend money (EDC),
7. Community Preservation Committee projects (i.e., Essex County Trails -- Discover Hamilton).

The Selectmen’s next meeting will be held on February 7.

Discussion was on need for new volunteers in Town to serve on committees and boards. Johnson suggested possibility of holding Town-wide event to identify residents interested in serving.

Scuteri entertained a motion to adjourn at 8:45 p.m. Johnson so moved. Stinson seconded motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by Jane Dooley, Minutes Secretary

ATTEST: _____
Clerk