

TOWN OF HAMILTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
AUGUST 1, 2011

The Board of Selectmen met at Hamilton Town Hall at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, August 1, 2011 with Jeff Hubbard, Jeff Stinson, Jennifer Scuteri and David Carey present. Town Manager Michael Lombardo and H-W Public Library Director Jan Dempsey also present.

Public Comment (3 minutes on topics not already on agenda)

Edwin Howard expressed his opinion about the Fire Chief in Hamilton serving as Emergency Management where he believes a police sergeant would be more palatable in the position.

Lombardo noted that Fire Chief Phil Stevens is serving in the position and managing to NIMS protocol. He added that Stevens would coordinate staff in the field if an emergency occurred. Lombardo has experience dealing with emergency events (i.e., 500-year flood in Iowa). He said the Town has just received up to \$7,000 in grant money and plans to apply again for this grant.

He mentioned that Town personnel monitor the federal register to identify applicable grants for Hamilton and the Town could probably get more grants if it had the manpower and expertise to write grant applications.

Lombardo said the fieldwork is being done now to find efficiencies in Town government to address shortfalls without raising taxes.

Discussion was about ongoing emergency management planning in Town with manager, public safety and health department personnel. Lombardo said they are working on additional plans where there could possibly be changes in staffing. Howard asked that the public be notified if an evacuation route has been established for residents to use during an emergency.

Town Manager's report

Lombardo reported that an organizational review is underway and a draft report should be ready on this topic in four to six weeks. It would identify the potential

for change in how the Town does business. No later than mid-September will proposals be made for restructuring.

Lombardo is meeting with Senator Bruce Tarr next week and director of the regional dispatch center proposed to be built in Middleton. Selectmen need to finalize an answer on this matter since Wenham has opted to leave the joint ECO with Hamilton and join the regional ECC.

He is also analyzing how to make the organic recycling program sustainable and used throughout Hamilton and is in the process of creating a draft plan.

In addition, Lombardo is in the bargaining process for four union contracts with Town employees including three AFSCME units and the fire department. He hopes to have the contracts negotiated and done in early September, the organizational review will add to the discussion.

Chairman/Selectmen reports

Discussion was about Selectmen receiving email from public and how to respond without Board deliberation via email to avoid violating the Open Meeting Law. Suggested solutions included having Selectmen discuss topics raised in emails in the Board's open session meetings or for the Town manager and Selectmen chair to develop a response.

Jeff Stinson is working with National Grid to start process of eliminating double poles located throughout Hamilton. Apparently the utility has used some double poles in Town but Verizon has also used many double poles in Hamilton. Massachusetts Municipal Association is developing legislation to address issue.

Jan Dempsey – Hamilton-Wenham Library

Jan Dempsey, Hamilton-Wenham Library director, presented to the Board and mentioned that staff tries to provide all types of library content to public. The library's website is updated daily and has various links (i.e., Hamilton-Wenham Patch). Copies of a painting of the library building done by Jean Buckley, library trustee, will be available for purchase. Dempsey noted that gala would be held on November 6 to celebrate library's tenth anniversary.

The number of items circulating at the library has grown continually through the years and that borrowed books remain strong. The Friends of the Library

provide the funding for all programs offered. She stressed the importance of databases available through library that can be used by patrons to track ancestry or for children to generate school reports.

The library does not charge fines but does charge for damaged items. Patrons are notified of overdue items via email, telephone calls or letters. Hours of operation have not been reduced although there is a small staff. Dempsey could use more personnel and it is hard to keep part time help with no benefits offered. Library is not open on Sundays due to the lack of funding. There is interest in having library open on Sunday afternoons.

Discussion on interest in using the multi-purpose room at public library building although it is limited since library closes at 8 p.m. due to a staffing issue. Senior citizen work-off program is used. A grant from Library Association was received for green issues; a related program begins in October.

Selectmen Liaison to Other Boards and Committees -- Update

Discussion was on Selectmen liaisons working towards same vision for all Boards and Committees. Board members Jennifer Scuteri and Marc Johnson recently met with Assessors regarding how open space is valued in Town and with representatives to get Budget Process Committee activated.

Selectmen received report from ConCom Coordinator Jim Hankin about conservation function being funded by wetland application fees and about conservation work going on at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary and Pingree School.

The Board is having ongoing conversations with Finance Committee and Planning Board. It is not known if the Open Space Committee is actively meeting.

Scuteri, liaison to the Veteran's Administration, is working with Terry Hart to acknowledge Hamilton residents currently serving in the military.

Discussion was with Ed Howard about Planning Board working on cottage by-law and possibility of trying to have it ready for voters at Special Town Meeting in fall. Selectmen support the proposed by-law and offered to assist with a presentation on the concept to educate residents.

David Carey discussed his liaison efforts associated with community economic development entity and meeting planned for August and that Town is trying to provide affordable housing with Harbor Light project on Willow Street.

Lombardo mentioned that Metropolitan Area Planning Council is looking at joint programs with Wenham. MAPC is revitalizing Winchester's downtown.

Other items noted by Carey: Streetscapes organization model in Quincy could be used for Hamilton downtown, meeting with Hamilton Foundation scheduled for fall, cultural activities will occur in Hamilton in September or October, MBTA has not responded to inquiries to clean area in Town near transformer, and Recycling Committee is analyzing how to consolidate recyclable materials and cut costs.

Jeff Hubbard will attend Agricultural Commission, Community Preservation Committee, Economic Development Committee meetings as Board liaison and he will contact David Ketchum, representative to North Shore Vocational Technical School.

Selectman Jeff Stinson is focusing on liaison work involving BPC, Chebacco Woods, Council on Aging, HWRSD and CATV board.

Selectman Marc Johnson is liaison for the Capital Management Advisory Committee and Planning Board. Lombardo said the CMAC is looking at its structure and needs to create additional subcommittees to work on topics. Also, details are being defined for shared facilities management with schools and two towns (i.e., how decisions are made and funding). Recommendations will be made during budget process for additional changes.

Payment in Lieu of Taxes –process and approach

Discussion was on relationship with tax-exempt entities in Town and making payments in lieu of taxes. Scuteri noted that P.I.L.O.T. Committee would be restarted and could follow lead of City of Beverly. Intent is to build a partnership with these organizations, including churches, so they feel a part of community. Some could provide use of their fields or vehicles (i.e., Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary and Pingree School).

Lombardo mentioned that there could be a formal P.I.L.O.T. contractual agreement (i.e., GCTS gift) so Town could budget accordingly. He added that

convoluted state laws allowing tax-exemption for certain entities hurts local government.

Discussion was on storied history between Town and GCTS regarding promise versus contractual agreement where seminary would make out-of-district tuition payments for married seminarians' children attending public schools. This was paid for a while after married student housing was built in 1970s.

Also mentioned was whether or not it costs Town approximately \$450,000 annually to educate approximately 40 children from families of seminary students. HWRSD is obligated by state law to educate these children. A former superintendent of schools has said there is no material cost associated with this responsibility and school district has preferred not to represent costs. So this predicament has proved challenging for decades for Town since it cannot expect any payment other than possibly a gift from seminary.

Discussion about Selectmen Carey and Hubbard in conjunction with Town manager and interim Superintendent of Schools Peter Gray developing a policy to address situation such as GCTS. A proposed plan will be brought to Selectmen and community will be notified of timing of discussion to ensure their involvement.

Selectmen Goals – Activity Update

Selectmen along with Lombardo are trying to optimize DPW functionality in collaboration with Wenham and school district. Hamilton DPW Director John Tomasz has developed a spreadsheet for tracking this work.

Regarding regional ECC, Lombardo is conversing with neighboring communities about interest in joining Hamilton's ECO. He is working with public safety personnel to define projections, costs and restructuring all to provide guidance on how to proceed. He expects this to be resolved by end of September.

The intermunicipal agreement with Wenham regarding the ECO expires next May. A survivor contract could be worked out with Wenham and formalized before municipal budgets are developed. Survivorship law is being analyzed now relative to capital infrastructure and economics based on emergency service provided beyond 911 service.

In an effort to support fiscal efficiencies, costs that Town Hall has control over (i.e., Pay As You Throw) are being evaluated. Lombardo is writing a white paper on PAYT, incorporating information from the HWRSD Committee, which will be discussed in late August.

Scuteri will work with Lombardo to re-evaluate shared agreements with Wenham to ensure they are structured appropriately for today's needs versus when they were created years ago.

Hubbard will meet with Lombardo to identify unfunded mandates that impact Town departments. He'll also meet with interim Superintendent Gray. Hubbard will create a document that rank-orders the unfunded mandates by magnitude. Lombardo offered to send a memo to Town department heads asking them to provide information on impact of state laws or lack of state law related to unfunded mandates. He'll report to the Board in early September.

In regard to controlling healthcare costs for Town employees, the municipal staff agreed to go to a Tier 3 plan that is saving the Hamilton taxpayers \$60,000 a year.

Discussion on goal of increasing revenues included Canterbrook senior housing project that is being controlled by Planning Board, Carey will follow-up on what is going on with Hansbury property and staffing Hamilton Development Corporation, and Johnson is focusing on Commercial Overlay Zone.

Also mentioned by Lombardo was site walk done at landfill with five vendors interested in bidding on capping and engineering work by August 11. Proposals will be evaluated with Landfill Committee and by end of August recommendations on how to proceed will be made to Board. Intent is to get contract signed, preliminary testing and engineering done in 18 months to two years. Lombardo noted that property would likely be leased for a long period of time rather than be sold for use such as solar panel field.

Discussion was on home businesses and whether or not they should be paying the \$25 dba fee. Also, that the personal excise tax didn't appear to be viable.

In regard to Town-owned parcels identified for sale, it was noted that a lot of research had been done to make recommendations about multiple parcels that would have no future use for Hamilton.

Other topics discussed for revenue generation included: wind grant, cell phone tower, bio-digester, organic recycling and solar incentives.

Board also reviewed its goals related to Town services including facilities assessment, cell phone coverage, education fund, Chapter 70 and getting other communities on board with proposed litigation, double utility poles, and review of Town by-laws and proposal for nuisance by-law.

More Selectmen goal discussion focused on making Hamilton a better place to live by implementing a cottage by-law, recreation director developing a recreation master plan and working with residents to improve play equipment at Patton Park, consideration of more housing options in Town, marketing cultural events and continuing to support enhanced trail networks.

Other business

Next Selectmen's meeting is Monday, August 15.

Scuteri entertained a motion to adjourn open session at 8:53 p.m. Stinson so moved. Hubbard seconded motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by Jane Dooley, Minutes Secretary

ATTEST: _____

Clerk