

**TOWN OF HAMILTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
APRIL 6, 2015**

The Board of Selectmen met at Hamilton Town Hall at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, April 6, 2015 with Scott Maddern, Marc Johnson, David Neill, Jennifer Scuteri, present. Town Manager Michael Lombardo, Finance Director Deborah Nippes-Mena, Finance and Advisory Committee members Rick Sprenkle and Nick Tensen also present.

Call to order

Scott Maddern called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Public Comment

None.

Chairman/Selectmen reports

Marc Johnson and David Neill commended the League of Women Voters for a conducting a successful candidates' night. Jennifer Scuteri concurred about candidates' night and noted that Hamilton's Fire Department celebrated its 100 year anniversary. Maddern mentioned awards given to Fire personnel, Wenham signed 25-year pool agreement assuming Hamilton and Wenham agree to fund pool project, gave commendations to pool working group and FinCom, and noted upcoming agenda item about potential \$800,000 amendment on Town budget on Town Meeting floor.

Town Manager's report

Town officials are scheduling dates with AFSCME administrators union for contract renewal negotiations, and police union contract is up on June 30, 2015 so there will be executive sessions with BOS and FinCom to discuss parameters. [Michael Lombardo discovered that the Police contract actually expires June 30, 2016.] Also, there may be amendments on policy for uses of Senior Center since a number of small, non-profits/Hamilton-based service groups (i.e., HW Garden Club) are interested in using the facility. In addition, Town officials had a discussion with Chebacco Road residents relative to the road's alignment and whether or not it should be paved because the condition of road where it is unpaved has been compromised by winter weather and some residents were unable to get mail delivery. Conversation will occur with Manchester on the matter. Discussion ensued about most residents living on unpaved

portion of road being not concerned about prospect of paving but alignment of road. A neighborhood representative is working with Town to reach agreement.

CONSENT AGENDA

- The Town of Hamilton was named as beneficiary to the life insurance policy of former Hamilton resident Barbara A. Peterson, who died on November 30, 1998. Vote to accept MetLife check for \$3,930.87.
- **Appointment:** E. David Wanger to Board of Health to a term expiring June 30, 2017. Mr. Wanger will complete the term of Karen Zagorski, who resigned in November.
- The Asbury Camp Meeting Corporation seeks permission to use Town roads for two athletic events: a 10K race Monday, June 29, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. and a Duathlon on Saturday, July 25, 2015 at 8 a.m.
- **Approve Minutes:** March 13, 2015 – Regular Session.

Discussion ensued with David Neill putting a hold on appointment and as liaison to the Board of Health he will speak to Mr. Wanger and make a recommendation to the Board at an upcoming meeting. The March 13, 2015 minutes were not drafted yet. Maddern entertained a motion to approve acceptance of life insurance check and permission for Asbury Camp Meeting Corporation to use Town roads for two athletic events. Johnson so moved. Scuteri seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

AGENDA

- Patton Homestead Non-profit update presented by Carin Kale

Carin Kale thanked LWV members for the thoughtful questions at the League's recent candidates' night, and encouraged residents to vote in upcoming Town election. Kale then updated Selectmen about meetings that have occurred with three of the five proposed members relative to establishing board of incorporators for Patton Homestead non-profit. Two members are needed for the board. The key questions being addressed by the incorporators are: legal action to create non-profit since no money can be raised until non-profit is a legal entity as well as a name for the organization, and what other assistance is available to bring in grant money in the long term (i.e., grants from veterans' organizations and Mass. Cultural Council).

Research is being done on what other communities have done and meetings are occurring with other non-profits such as the Community House. Discussion was on how the Patton Homestead property could be a good location for outdoor weddings

followed by reception at the Community House. Restrooms are a priority for the Homestead site so events could be held. The incorporators will create a document that summarizes existing information such as highlights from the Patton Advisory Committee report and evaluation of additional ideas. The incorporators are encouraged that there could be avenues for raising revenue with intent to raise enough funds to cover the ongoing costs of non-profit to shift costs away from Town.

Discussion ensued about request for people to apply for incorporator's role to fill two remaining board positions (i.e., FinCom member) with target date for having full board formed by late April. Maddern suggested there would be details to be discussed by the board including an alcohol use policy for the property relative to permitting (i.e., one-day liquor licenses for events). Also mentioned was expected proceeds from land sale at Patton property and need to understand potential expenses associated with non-profit and Homestead. Johnson noted that draft mission statement would be created for the non-profit with Town officials and incorporators and this could be done by BOS after Town Meeting. Discussion addressed how incorporators would research other non-profit collaborations (i.e., Glen Magna Farms in Danvers, Winchester, Wellesley, and Concord).

- **Clarify FY'16 Budget Misconceptions**

Discussion ensued on quasi facts that people are alleging on Town budget including in a print piece residents have received in their mailboxes from a citizen group. Johnson described how there is misinformation being circulated that is not in agreement with the Town's FY'16 budget as adopted. He addressed key points in misstatements including that the Town's tax rate is going to be \$18.07 when Town's professionals believe it will be closer to \$17.50.

Maddern mentioned that the change in FY'16 budget compared to prior fiscal year is 1.7% with revenue down given money came back from HWRSD last year. Employee expense includes some COLA adjustment. In addition, \$50,000 has been earmarked to review and update zoning by-laws.

Rick Sprenkle explained how the budget process went well with Town and HWRSD. The total budget is up 1.3% or \$500,000. Also, that there is a reduction of \$800,000 in revenue since there will not be a give back from HWRSD and \$650,000 versus \$1.4 million of Free Cash is proposed to be applied to offset the tax rate. He said there were no budget surprises and audit of Town's financials went well.

Discussion ensued about tax rate relative to property valuations that had an increase of 6% in Hamilton. Town officials stated that focus should be on tax burden to understand impact on tax bills. Scuteri noted that drop in revenue affects tax rate not expenses. She suggested a budget summary sheet be provided to Town Meeting voters to facilitate understanding when voting on Town and HWRSD budget. Johnson noted the importance of a holistic approach in looking at Town budget.

Neill stated that beyond the budget it is worrisome that people are concerned about effectiveness of form of government in Hamilton (i.e., Town manager and five Selectmen). Neill opined that this form of government is starting to work right and more smoothly (than Town administrator and three Selectmen) and that transition work in this area is not finished. He suggested that a meeting with small subset of people in Town should be done to deal with and work out issues; perhaps after Town election.

Scuteri suggested that while there was a Town administrator form of government in Hamilton, department heads would give regular updates to Selectmen, and this could be resurrected to give community a sense of Town officials.

- **Consider proposal to modify FY'16 Town budget**

Discussion ensued about how there might be a recommendation on Town Meeting floor to amend Town budget by \$800,000. Maddern had spoken to Jeff Hubbard who could not attend tonight's meeting about what is expectation and how he would follow up later on the matter. There is no formal proposal. A HWRSD budget amendment is not being proposed. Town officials have tried to prepare for where there could be anticipated adjustments in Town budget. Also noted was importance of educating public since the Town Meeting will be addressing many articles and intent is to keep the meeting moving. There was mention that two-thirds of budget spending is done jointly between Hamilton and Wenham.

Lombardo summarized how Town officials work hard to keep costs low in developing a level services budget that is less than 2% and there is not \$800,000 excess in the budget (i.e., potential layoffs). He suggested that opportunity to determine what services would be effected with budget cuts occurred during detailed budget hearings and encouraged Town not to make this type of decision on Town Meeting floor. In addition, Lombardo and Finance Director Deborah Nippes-Mena stated that they put together a conscientious budget and that a separate capital budget is in place to address deferred infrastructure work and this is has been separated from the operating budget in a separate vote, but the capital cost is part of overall tax levy. Maddern thanked Town officials for the budget process that was begun last summer including with HWRSD.

Scuteri opined that Town Meeting is a place of action and encouraged voters to either support the budget or not but not make any personal attacks to have a constructive meeting. Discussion ensued with Neill about how holds could be done in budget if someone has identified where \$800,000 would not be spent. He suggested that Town officials could explain every item in the budget to Town Meeting if necessary.

- **Set date of next Selectmen meeting**

The next Selectmen's meeting will be held on April 27.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Consideration of topics for discussion at future Selectmen's meetings**

Focus on forming Patton Homestead non-profit and incorporators' board.

Maddern thanked Neill and Scuteri for serving Town. He entertained a motion for the Board to adjourn at 8:15 p.m. Neill so moved. Scuteri seconded motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by Jane Dooley, Minutes Secretary

ATTEST: Shawn Farrell
Clerk

