

HAMILTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

MINUTES OF MEETING

November 6, 2017

Members Present: Shawn Farrell, Scott Maddern, Bill Wilson, Allison Jenkins, Jeffrey Hubbard

Town Manager: Michael Lombardo

Members Absent: None

Chairman Bill Wilson called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. There was a quorum.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Board and Committee Openings:** The Council on Aging has one open position. The Recycling Committee has one.

Public Comment

Duke Seaver, 402 Essex St., asked that votes of the various boards be specifically recorded so people know how board members voted when it comes time for re-election. For example, rather than write "the board approved the project," write "the board voted 3-1 to approve the project" and spell out who voted for/against.

Marc Johnson, Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust (HAHT) member, said the HAHT wanted to make it known that it is time for the BOS to step up and be more proactive on affordable housing. Rather than push the Longmeadow issue back to the School Committee, while he knows the Schools have a role, there's room to have positive comments from the BOS for Longmeadow because it is hard to see how it will go forward without BOS support. Mr. Wilson, who also sits on the HAHT, asked who was requesting this and said the topic will be on the next meeting agenda. Mr. Johnson apologized that he missed the part that it would be coming back to the BOS for review. Allison Jenkins clarified that the BOS had taken a vote about whether there was any interest in purchasing the land as a municipality. She said she understood the Trust's goals and thinks they're wonderful and make sense, but, as a board member, she thinks the Longmeadow Way property is privately owned and it will be a private transaction so she doesn't know if the BOS should be supporting or not supporting a private transaction. Mr. Johnson's responded this is an undefined "friendly

40B," which means political bodies have to evaluate it and come to a conclusion. He just wanted to make sure it was on a future agenda. Mr. Wilson assured him it was.

Selectmen/Town Manager Reports

Jeff Hubbard he had nothing to add.

Scott Maddern reported he met with Michael Lombardo to go over the outcome of Town Meeting. They discussed the three-year forecast (an agenda item for tonight's meeting) and reviewed budget messages, which will be even more conservative than last year. They talked about support for the Council on Aging, both for aging communities and market housing evaluations coming up. Regarding financial policies—the Department of Revenue (DOR) will be working with Finance Director Marisa Batista on determining financial policies. Regarding apportionment—there's been discussion with the Schools, but so far there's been no meeting schedule and no consolidation of all the input the BOS provided. He's concerned whether they will be able to accomplish this for April Town Meeting if they don't get that work wrapped up by January or February in time to get the information out to the public.

Shawn Farrell reported there is a Cultural Council meeting tomorrow evening at Wenham Town Hall. They will discuss and vote on the applications received through the Cultural Council and the Massachusetts State Cultural Council. They have close to \$15K requested and have about \$10K to give. On Thursday, the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) will meet. They will do a wrap-up of Town Meeting and talk about finances and current open projects.

Ms. Jenkins announced that on Nov. 11, Veteran's Day, a breakfast will be held at A.P. Gardner Post followed by a parade of sorts from Town Hall to the cemetery and back. The first leaf pick-up is Nov. 18, and they will have an additional one in December. There is usually no brush drop-off in November, but they will have one Nov. 8 because of the recent windstorm.

Mr. Wilson had a call with the Superintendent of the Schools and they are hoping to get the Longmeadow Study Group and School Committee together at the next Longmeadow Study Group meeting. He should have some good feedback to bring back at the next BOS meeting. The HAHT will meet next Wednesday to talk about Longmeadow. There will be a joint meeting with the Finance Committee and the Schools most likely on November 30.

Town Manager Michael Lombardo went to a training last week for the Massachusetts Cultural Council grants, which are coming up in January. He will be working with the folks at the Patton Homestead to assist them with the grant process. The Patton director position will be posted tomorrow. He is working with Department of Public Works to address storm

water problems at the local business Honeycomb Hamilton; he sent a letter of support to the State. There may be another brush drop-off date following the one on Nov. 8. The A.P. Gardner Post has applied for a Keno license. The BOS has an obligation to voice any objections within 21 days. Ms. Jenkins said the lottery does substantial research and requests a lot of documentation from the Keno applicant. BOS members said the A.P. Gardner post is a great corporate neighbor and have no issues regarding the application.

Public Safety Report

Fire Chief Phil Stevens and Police Chief Russell Stevens gave a presentation on public safety. They detailed damage from the recent windstorm. They had 44 calls for assistance. Quite a few cars and lot of houses were damaged. Mr. Hubbard inquired about how many calls they typically have (3 to 5 on average, so 44 is a lot.) Nobody was hurt. They just got the paperwork from Massachusetts Emergency Management Association for an initial cost assessment. If the whole county meets the threshold, there will be reimbursement for labor, equipment, etc. They have been receiving training with Wenham and other towns—for example, active shooter training if a large-scale event were to happen. Area departments respond to calls together typically and it makes sense to train together.

Right now the biggest issue is manpower—a scarcity of on-call people during the day. They have 4 full-time and 23 call firefighters; in 2001 they had 4 full-time and 32 call firefighters. It is hard to get people to leave their jobs during the day to respond to a call when they make more money at their regular jobs. Also, there are fewer people on the department who work in Town. They are having trouble filling weekend positions and are paying out more overtime to the full-timers. The number of calls are remaining about the same, with the exception of the recent storm. They have had 773 calls so far this year. Ms. Jenkins wondered whether there was a way to incentivize DPW workers to respond to fires. Mr. Lombardo said that would cause too many problems. If you are on duty for the Town you cannot respond to a fire while on shift. Fire Chief Stevens says firefighters take 300 hours of training.

The biggest expense they face (capital improvement item) is that Engine 1, the truck used for first-response, has corrosion problems and barely passed emissions at inspection. The price tag on a new engine is between \$550-600K. The next pump truck after that one is about 15 years old.

Pertaining to emergency management—there's a Municipal Relief Act that has a Mutual Aid Pact. Hamilton is the only town in Essex County that hasn't signed on. It does not have to go to Town Meeting. He passed it out to the BOS for their review. Mr. Lombardo explained that the pact, which he saw years ago, seemed redundant and pledged resources the Town wasn't inclined to spend. At that time they decided not to opt in. Mr. Wilson asked Mr. Lombardo to revisit the issue and will put in on a new agenda for discussion.

The Fire Department had a safe training with the elementary schools, which went well. A bill being looked at would require high school students to have CPR training before graduating.

Police Chief Stevens said the departments have discussed how to save money but provide the same level of service by looking at what should roll and what shouldn't roll when making calls. They seem to get just lip service when they look at the issue of regionalizing services. They are looking within the existing budget to see if they can offset another full-time position. Mr. Lombardo said Essex County is large and in regionalizing, they would have to look at where to place substations. The cost is huge. They have also been looking at regional EMT and ambulance service.

Regarding the Communications Center, Police Chief Stevens said the total of public safety calls is approximately 23,000. Beverly pulled out of the regional center and they are keeping an eye on that. They have a \$25K grant from the State, which they can use for equipment, and they've updated everything. They are looking to hire an animal control officer when the current person leaves; this person also handles barn inspections. The Police Chief has the role of Town harbor master. They are seeking an assistant harbor master to replace Robert Blanchard, who recently resigned.

The Chief showed a work chart for the Police Department. He said he tries to get the officers out into the community as much as possible. He detailed community-wide events, including Public Safety Day, which attracted 300 people last year. They did free safety checks on kids' bikes. The Department participates in many parades. They are heavily involved in Special Olympics. They have an internship program. They participate in the Toy Drive and have collected approximately 800 toys in four to five years' time.

Mr. Maddern asked what can be done about distracted driving. The Police Chief said they have seen accident rates go up due to texting. He is a firm believer in educating first, enforcing second. Mr. Maddern asked if a School Resource Officer (SRO) would help. The Chief agreed that having an officer in the schools would help—involving the younger generation and encouraging them to talk to their parents. BOS members discussed various programs that target distracted driving.

In response to Mr. Seaver regarding taking care of seniors, Police Chief Stevens said they are working with Mary Beth Lawton at the Council on Agency on a procedure for those times (like during the recent windstorm) when the shelters aren't open but they need a place for people to go to stay warm, and plug in their phones and laptops.

CONSENT AGENDA—

- **Approve Minutes from the Board of Selectmen (BOS) meeting on Oct. 10, 2017.**
- **Approve Minutes from the BOS Executive Session on Oct. 10, 2017.**

Mr. Hubbard made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Farrell seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the consent agenda.

Mr. Maddern asked if there was any reason why they couldn't release the Executive Session minutes now to the public since it might be timely information for the citizens. Mr. Lombardo and Ms. Jenkins said typically in the instance of a lawsuit or negotiations, they wait until after the issue is over to release them.

Special Town Meeting Debrief

Mr. Wilson said they had a full crowd at Town Meeting. Mr. Lombardo said the unofficial number was about 378. Having people standing around the perimeter was not ideal. The overflow room was mostly full. Mr. Seaver commented that during the marijuana article, many in the overflow room didn't get a chance to vote. Mr. Lombardo said he was looking at how to have better communication link between the two rooms.

Mr. Maddern said he thought Jeff Melick did a tremendous job as Town moderator. Mr. Farrell said he liked how the moderator explained his reasons for doing things. Mr. Wilson said the BOS should perhaps have a joint meeting with the Planning Board to go over what they heard and look at next steps.

Mr. Maddern said another lesson learned is that the BOS needs to get the core presentations out earlier, perhaps even before they have the warrant hearings. He also mentioned there were a thousand young parents across the street who couldn't attend Town Meeting because of sporting events for their kids. He asked if they might consider holding the next meeting at night.

Mr. Seaver commented that seniors won't go at night. Ms. Jenkins said Town Meeting must be held on a Saturday morning (per Town bylaw) due to a petition by the seniors. She said she would like to see all those knowledgeable participants that were at the meeting get more involved with the Town outside of Town Meeting.

Ian Cookson, 89 Essex St., said the Planning Board had what they called "hearings" but they weren't hearing. He commented later in the meeting he felt the Planning Board was out of touch. They had chances to be in touch, but chose not to be, he said, adding that the hassle created over cottage housing was unnecessary.

Ms. Jenkins said if people feel strongly something isn't working, they can actively participate by writing a petition or working to effect change. For example, she heard some

people say they favored ballot voting. She said she thinks the Planning Board (a volunteer, unpaid position) is a difficult role. Everybody comes at things from a different perspective and everyone's intentions are good, she said.

Mr. Wilson said perhaps more joint meetings are needed on important warrant articles and he would push for that going forward.

Mr. Farrell brought up scheduling and that Town Meeting was held on the last day of the season for kids' sporting events. He mentioned perhaps holding a Town Warrant Information Day, where the information can get out to the public, and follow that up by a ballot vote on a different day.

Bruce Ramsey, 28 Goodhue St., said Winthrop School is not a suitable location for Town meetings. Attendance is likely to exceed 350 and it isn't reasonable to schedule a three-hour meeting where people can't sit in chairs. If you have a crowd with people standing two and three deep, you are going to jeopardize getting a good vote, he said. A moderator's job is to get the articles either disposed of or to get a good vote. A moderator can terminate a meeting if getting a good vote is not possible.

Mr. Hubbard said his takeaway—which could be a future agenda item—is that in view of the lopsided vote on zoning, they could have done a better job figuring out if a topic was worth bringing to the Town meeting in the first place. Perhaps they should work with their social media person to be more effective with what they do online to engage with the community. They have the tools to do it. The Planning Board spent a lot of time and effort on cottage housing only to bring it to Town Meeting and find that people didn't want it. If they did a better job listening up front, they could avoid a lot of time and energy wasted. He referred to the survey done and said the questions weren't the best there. They can use Facebook to ascertain what the community wants and to build momentum for getting people out to the meetings. With the Turf Field project coming up, he suggested they could use social media to get ahead of the issue. The timeline should not be Town meeting, he said, it needs to be a month or two in advance.

Mr. Seaver commented that Election Day is a set date. He thinks the Town should pick two dates and tell the high school they are going to use the auditorium on those dates.

Mr. Farrell wanted to give a shout-out to the poll workers and all the people who worked behind the scenes.

Mr. Wilson suggested that Warrant Article 4-2 be brought back, as he thinks with some reshaping, it would be a good tool for the Town.

Mr. Maddern suggested offering to the School Committee the use of the Town's social media and website capabilities so that information gets out there and is transparent.

In these days, hearings should be virtual hearings, said Mr. Hubbard. Mr. Maddern said there are some discussions about legally starting to have that happen, but it's not there yet. Mr. Farrell said a live link to the Hamilton-Wenham Cam or a reminder to view the meetings could be put next to the Town's meeting minutes. He suggested more public invites on warrant hearings.

Mr. Hubbard said they need to do a better job "listening"—to receive information from the public.

Ms. Jenkins suggested they schedule the April Town Meeting sooner than later and "back in" the events leading to it.

Three-Year Forecast

Mr. Lombardo said they asked the Schools for their feedback on growth factors and haven't received that information yet. Mr. Wilson said in determining growth factors, it would be good to talk with all the parties about their expectations. Mr. Lombardo agreed and said he is getting this input.

Finance Director Marisa Batista explained she updated FY17 with actual amounts. She had requested the debt service information from the Schools, but did not get that yet. The numbers now represent actuals for existing debts, but don't take into account what's going to be on their capital improvement plan. She was asked to incorporate capital expenses into this forecast, but because the Town hasn't made decisions about what projects are going to go forward and how they are going to fund them (use free cash, issue debt), this was difficult to include. More information needs to be ironed out. For example the Town projects \$1.9 million as a capital expenditure, but this wouldn't be figured into just one year; there will be bonding, etc. She suggested they take capital expenses out of the picture for now to look at revenue and expenditures.

Mr. Farrell suggested asking the auditors if they can help determine best practices, such as: Would they have bonded a new fire engine or used free cash? This way when something arises, they might know best how to fund it.

Mr. Maddern said a big chunk of things needs to be funded other ways than through operational expenses. He advocated giving input to the auditors, such as saying: "We want the tax rate to go down." He said if they make changes in growth rate (personally he favors a 2% rate), but if the tax rate isn't going down, they aren't playing with the numbers in the

right way. They need to have less spending, including the schools, and be more conservative.

Ms. Batista said last year, \$900K was used to reduce the tax rate. She assumed it would be \$400K this year.

Mr. Hubbard said the Town has had a large amt. of money at the end of the fiscal year because of the budgeting. He thinks they need to look at what is an acceptable variance from budgeted to actual. The Schools' variance has been minimal.

Ms. Batista said the Town's range of free cash is 5-10%, which is what is advised by auditors. The growth factor they're projecting is lower than all the averages, which are based on actual numbers. Most communities get close to needing an override and the Town is nowhere near that point. Health and life insurance rates have increased 7.2 %, but she put it at 6%. She used that number because there was a decrease recently when the Town changed health plans.

Ms. Jenkins said she would like to invite the Finance Committee to join in these discussions in the future. At Town Meeting, she said, the majority of residents made it clear they don't want any real growth, yet they want more services, so that is why they have the tax rate they have. She suggested labeling the forecast "working tool" instead of "draft."

Mr. Hubbard said it would be helpful to have the growth factor for the totals. Mr. Lombardo will look into that. He and Ms. Batista said they welcome additional input from the Board and will make changes to the forecast and send it out to them again.

Second Reading of Section 8 of the Personnel Policies

Mr. Lombardo said he received Legal Counsel's comments this afternoon and asked if anyone was prepared to discuss them. Most had not reviewed them yet and weren't ready, but wanted Mr. Lombardo to go over some of the issues.

Ms. Jenkins wanted to add in that anyone who snowplows for the Town has to abide by the drug and alcohol rule that they can't be drinking while they are on call.

Mr. Lombardo reviewed a section that said normally HR would advise against supervisors receiving medical information about their employees, but if staff members are on some medication that could prevent them from doing their job, they need to notify their supervisor—not about the specific medication they are on, but just that they are on a drug that might impair their ability. He clarified that they don't document medications in a person's personnel file.

Ms. Jenkins had questioned 8.1.10, asking "What program?" because the Town doesn't have a specific drug use prevention program other than what is required. Mr. Lombardo asked whether they should strike that section or create a program. The members agreed to strike it.

Concerning 8.2.4, the State suggests that the Town include two names of people as contacts for reporting violations. Ms. Jenkins suggested saying: Contact the Town Manager or the current Chair of the BOS.

Mr. Lombardo said that currently, when the Town building is evacuated, no one is responsible for reporting if everyone is accounted for. They need to look into that.

Mr. Wilson referred to a question in the draft by Ms. Jenkins about how to hold elected officials accountable for behavior. Mr. Lombardo explained that currently there is a board code of conduct and violations are reported to the Town Manager. BOS members discussed that the rules should apply to elected officials as well as Town employees.

Mr. Lombardo said he will revise the draft and there will be another reading of Section 8 at the next meeting.

Discussion Regarding Solar Project

Mr. Lombardo said he's been working with Energy Manager Vicky Masone and they are reviewing the contract from Ameresco (renewable energy company) for solar power at the landfill. The contract brings approximately \$20K to the Town. With the changes in a solar market, there are different relationships or models that the Town might want to consider. Under the SMART program, the figure could be up to about \$60K. The Town could also invest in solar and do it themselves. He detailed how that could be done, but said it is very speculative.

Mr. Maddern noted that the pay-outs (compensation from government programs) for solar are going down, so the Town shouldn't invest its capital in it. Plus it would take too much of Mr. Lombardo's time and Department of Public Works Director Tim Olson's time. If that is the best deal they can get, they should go for it since there is no other use for that property. Affordable housing there isn't that viable due to access issues, for one. Mr. Wilson noted Harborlight Community Partners wasn't comfortable building there.

New Business

At the next meeting, Ms. Jenkins would like to discuss when they will be lighting Patton Park for the holidays. Liquor licenses will be coming up, too. She would also like to have a discussion about putting April Town Meeting on the calendar.

Mr. Maddern would like to discuss the three-year forecast and prioritizing the financial policies.

Mr. Wilson would like to look at the capital plan and the Schools' capital plan. He also wants to discuss the tax classification program coming up, which Mr. Lombardo says generally takes place in November.

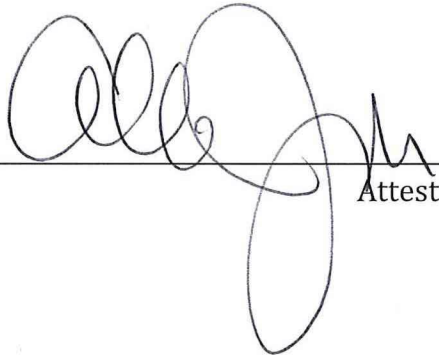
As requested by Mr. Johnson previously in the meeting, whether the BOS takes a position on Longmeadow and the Schools will also be on the next meeting's agenda.

Adjournment

Ms. Jenkins made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:08 p.m. Mr. Hubbard seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Prepared by:

Mary Alice Cookson



Attest

1/8/18

Date