

HAMILTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

MINUTES OF MEETING

Town Hall Memorial Room, 577 Bay Road

November 4, 2019

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

Selectmen Absent: William Olson

Town Manager: Joe Domelowicz

Jeff Hubbard called the Board of Selectmen (BOS) meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Shawn Farrell arrived.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS & BOARD OPENINGS**

- The Council on Aging (COA), the Recreation Committee, and the Hamilton Historic District Commission (HHDC) each have one opening. Mr. Domelowicz noted that the HHDC position will likely be for an alternate member who has expressed interest and has related experience.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**Selectmen/Town Manager Reports**

Rosemary Kennedy said she attended the Town Hall Building Committee meeting and expressed thanks and enthusiasm for the project and especially for Mike Twomey's leadership. She has a meeting with seniors set for Nov. 15. Regarding the Christmas tree bonfire, the date originally discussed was Jan. 11, but the Fire Chief said it needs to be held within so many days of Christmas so they are now thinking about holding it Jan. 4. The Conservation Commission will meet tomorrow. In response to a question from Mr. Hubbard, she said her Selectman hours [held on Mondays from 10-11 a.m.] are going well.

Mr. Farrell said the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) will meet Nov. 14 and review open grants, which he listed. The CPC will follow up on whether Weaver Pond has been hydro-raked or if that will be done this spring. He mentioned knotweed (an invasive species) that is removed goes to feeding giraffes at zoos.

Darcy Dale said she will attend the dedication of the new patio at the COA on Nov. 6 at 2 p.m. A Planning Board meeting regarding 59 Willow St. will be held Nov. 5 at 7 p.m. A breakfast for veterans and first responders is set for Veterans Day at the A.P. Gardner Post on School Street.

Mr. Hubbard said he was encouraged with the new School Administration. A joint meeting was held with the Schools and representatives from the Hamilton and Wenham BOS and finance committees. Mr. Domelowicz noted Wenham chose to involve Hamilton earlier this year and discussed some of its huge financial challenges, including the Schools' and town's deficits. Wenham is putting together a capital plan. Mr. Farrell said it was his hope they would plug that into Hamilton's capital plan. Mr. Hubbard said the Town Hall Building Committee had its second meeting since Town Meeting. The HHDC attended and provided additional comments. The architect will see if they can implement the HHDC's recommendations for Option B into the existing plan. The idea is not to take away historic things that can't be replaced, such as the stage upstairs. They are also looking at how to mitigate moisture in the basement. Mr. Farrell had a question about making Town Hall a green building. Mr. Domelowicz said Energy Manager Vicky Masone has been involved in that discussion.

Mr. Hubbard also reported that the Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Task Force has been working hard and the Seminary has a new president. Ms. Kennedy attended the inauguration along with Russ Tanzer of the Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust (HAHT). David Smith, chair of the GCTS Task Force, spoke at the event. The Committee met today and formed four subgroups to work on: 1) the possibility for temporary office facilities on the campus while Town Hall is being renovated; 2) the feasibility of converting some existing underutilized campus housing for 40B housing; 3) a cultural volunteerism exchange to see what the college may provide to engage the Town's community with theirs; 4) Town infrastructure-type things, such as expanding the water storage tank on the top of the hill on campus or adding a cell tower.

Town Manager Joe Domelowicz's report will be posted online. He said he has shared the budget guidance document and budget calendar with the Finance and Advisory Committee (FinCom). The Town has a few open positions: part-time Conservation Agent, part-time Senior Services Program Coordinator, and a position that restructures the part-time Community Projects Coordinator into a full-time position that adds grants management. He congratulated Fire Lt. Robert Wallace on completing the Massachusetts Fire Academy training to become a Fire Prevention officer and certified instructor. He still needs residents to sign up for Flash Vote Community surveys.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

- **Request for sign on COA signboard: Friends of Cutler Consignment Sale—Cutler Elementary School, Nov. 5-17.**
- **Request for sign at Patton Park: Trail grooming program—North Shore Nordic Association, Dec. 1, 2019—March 15, 2020.**

### **Decision:**

Mr. Farrell made a motion that the BOS approve both requests in the Consent Agenda. Ms. Kennedy seconded the motion. The BOS voted unanimously among those present (4-0) to approve the Consent Agenda.

## **AGENDA**

### **Presentation on Joining CATA by CATA Executive Director Felicia Webb—Discussion and Vote**

Mr. Domelowicz introduced Ms. Webb and State Representative Brad Hill, who was also present. Ms. Webb explained that CATA [the Cape Ann Transportation Authority] was established under Massachusetts General Law and is composed of Gloucester, Rockport, Ipswich, and Essex. The last to join was Essex in the 1980s. CATA is funded through a combination of State and local funding as well as their own source. It provides Mass Health and Early Intervention transportation. They have a successful program in Ipswich. Communities that are members of the MBTA have an assessment [Hamilton's is \$180K for Fiscal Year 2020] that they may use to pay for local bus service. If Hamilton were to join CATA, the service they provide to Hamilton would be determined by what the Town needs and how CATA can fit the need, for example for seniors and people with disabilities.

Rep. Hill discussed the history of CATA's program in Ipswich. Prior to it, everything was done by volunteers. He referred to a document he passed out that showed ride requests (609 in fiscal year 2019) for medical appointments and how they were provided. He said when he heard Hamilton had a need, he wanted to make the Town aware they can use their Cherry Sheet funds to provide this service. It is up to them to decide whether to join. He thought it took a Town Meeting vote, but Mr. Domelowicz said he researched it and it only needed a vote from the BOS. Ms. Dale asked if there was any downside to joining. Rep. Hill said he hadn't seen any.

Ms. Webb explained how the program works and gave destinations of rides, which include a shopping trip to Market Basket in Rowley. These are separate from the medical bus rides. Mr. Domelowicz said one of the great things is that CATA provides bus service to Peabody and Danvers, which are the towns that Hamilton lost service to. Ms. Kennedy asked if they had a bus that would go to Salem. Ms. Webb said they could add it, and the routes will be determined by what Hamilton needs.

Ms. Dale asked if it were a year contract. Ms. Webb said once you join, you are a member in perpetuity. The schedules aren't fixed for any set time, so they can adapt as needs arise. All

vehicles are lift-equipped and the service is door-to-door. People need to schedule their medical trips two days ahead. Ms. Kennedy asked about the return trip because she is a nurse and has seen people having to wait a long time. Ms. Webb said there are two ways to book a return trip, to book in advance or call when you are through. If you call, you might need to wait a bit longer. Ms. Kennedy asked what the population was in Ipswich; Rep Hill said just under 14,000.

Mr. Farrell asked if there were a growth plan in place. Ms. Webb said they get their buses through State grants and are fine right now with three busses on the road regularly. When a new community comes onboard, they can prepare for that.

Duke Seaver, 402 Essex St., said he's been driving his daughter to and from work and hopes the BOS approves this measure.

Rep. Hill said Lyft and Uber are now partnering with towns to offer discounts for seniors. Rep. Hill recommended that Hamilton utilize the Ipswich Senior Center as a resource for information.

Mr. Domelowicz said they need a vote from the BOS to join CATA either tonight or before the next board meeting on Dec. 4. He recommended that he work out the details with COA Director Mary Beth Lawton. Mr. Farrell asked when service would start. Mr. Domelowicz said he hoped in January. The cost to seniors for the bus service is \$5 round trip. CATA also sells a pass that offers five rides with the sixth ride for free.

Ms. Kennedy asked how much the program will cost Hamilton. Ms. Webb said the service in Ipswich costs about \$50K. The remainder of the money continues to go to the MBTA. She said there won't be any negative effect to the MBTA rail service or train station in Hamilton for doing this. Ms. Kennedy asked why CATA hadn't expanded into additional communities for 30 years. Ms. Webb responded she didn't think expanding was a high priority as they were just servicing the people they already had. She said now there is a change in philosophy and in personnel. Rep. Hill noted he didn't know you could take the assessment and use it to join the CATA until 10 years ago.

**Decision:**

Ms. Dale made a motion that the BOS approve Hamilton joining CATA, knowing that the Town Manager or his designees would be acting on the BOS's behalf and having a subcommittee to negotiate the details with CATA. Mr. Farrell seconded the motion.

**Further Discussion:**

Mr. Farrell asked about other options that were available. Rep. Hill said there was a bus service in the Merrimack Valley. Rep. Hill said Ipswich had reached out to the MBTA to see if they would provide the service CATA offers and had been told no. Ms. Kennedy said she wanted more time to think before voting, but she went along with the other BOS members that said they wanted to vote.

**Decision (Continued):**

The BOS voted unanimously among those present (4-0) to join CATA.

**Appoint Laura Walsh to the Planning Board per Mass General Law—Discussion and Vote**

Ms. Walsh introduced herself as an Associate Member on the Planning Board who was nominated to become a full member. Mr. Domelowicz said per law, the BOS has joint authority with the Planning Board to fill the position.

Ms. Kennedy inquired about Ms. Walsh's background concerning conservation. Ms. Walsh supplied her background and said she had worked with Rick Mitchell on the housing plan presentation made at Town Meeting. She's lived in Hamilton 7 years. She said she does try to balance development with keeping the character of the Town. She said they've seen a need for more types of housing in Town. In response to a question from Mr. Farrell, she said she is filling Janel Curry's seat. Mr. Farrell asked if she would be running for her seat soon. She said yes.

**Decision:**

Mr. Farrell made a motion to appoint Ms. Walsh to the Planning Board per Mass General Law. Ms. Dale seconded motion.

**Further Discussion:**

Ms. Dale said a lot of people in Hamilton are concerned about the Planning Board being involved in high-density projects and bringing them to the community and then having them not accepted by the townspeople. Ms. Walsh said in the past year, the Planning Board has done a lot of polling for this reason and working to get feedback early in the process. Ms. Dale asked what her position was on opening up Chebacco land for future development or industrial zoning it so they can have a commercial tax base. She said it was a great idea and knew Director of Planning & Inspections Patrick Reffett was looking into it.

Ms. Kennedy said the Town survey gave a strong opinion about what people want and don't want in Town and asked if the Planning Board refers to that. Secondly, she noted many of the Planning Board's projects have been soundly defeated. She wondered if Ms. Walsh was hearing the clear direction on defeating high density and wanting the downtown to maintain a small village feel.

**Decision (Continued):**

The BOS voted unanimously among those present (4-0) to appoint Ms. Walsh as a Planning Board member.

**Bond Authorization—Discussion and Vote**

Town Meeting recently voted in favor of the water treatment plant, water distribution system, and Chebacco Road project. Treasurer/Collector Peggy McLoughlin said they had received a 2.03% interest rate and had nine bids.

BOS Clerk Ms. Dale read the following motion into the record:

*I, the Clerk of the BOS of the Town of Hamilton, MA (the "Town"), certify that at a meeting of the board held Nov. 4, 2019, of which meeting all members of the board were duly notified and at which a quorum was present, the following votes were unanimously passed, all of which appear upon the official record of the board in my custody.*

*Voted: that the sale of the \$3,970,000 General Obligation Municipal Purpose Loan of 2019 Bonds of the Town dated Nov. 12, 2019 (the "Bonds"), to Piper Jaffray & Co. at the price of \$4,216,948.50 and accrued interest, if any, is hereby approved and confirmed. The Bonds shall be payable on Nov. 1 of the years and in the principal amounts and bear interest at the respective rates, as follows.*

\*She skipped reading the table of rates and continued...

*Further Voted: that the Bonds maturing on Nov. 1, 2035, Nov. 1, 2037, and Nov. 1, 2039 (each a "Term Bond") shall be subject to mandatory redemption or mature as follows: For the Term Bond due Nov. 1, 2035 in year 2034, the amount in the year 2035 will be \$205,000. In the year 2035, the amount will be \$145,000. For the Term Bond due Nov. 1, 2037 in the year 2036, the amount in the year 2036 will be \$145,000, and in the year 2037, the amount will be \$145,000. For the Term Bond due Nov. 1, 2039, in the year 2038, the amount will be \$145,000 and in the year 2039\* (final maturity) the amount will be \$145,000. ...*

Ms. Dale went on to read five other "further voted's" and a detailed certification that the vote was taken at an open meeting and that no deliberations were held in secret. (\*See document for the complete text.) It was agreed the BOS would sign the bond documents at the end of the meeting.

**Decision:**

Mr. Farrell made a motion that the BOS approve the sale of the \$3,970,000 General Obligation Municipal Purpose Loan of 2019 Bonds of the Town of Hamilton dated Nov. 12, 2019 to Piper Jaffray & Co. at the price of \$4,216,948.50 and accrued interest, if any. Ms. Dale seconded the motion. The BOS voted unanimously among those present (4-0) to approve the motion.

**Declare Old Voting Machines as Surplus Property—Discussion and Vote**

Ms. Domelowicz explained a vote was needed to discontinue the old voting machines and give them back and then begin using the new voting machines. The vote must be sent to the Elections office no later than Nov. 5, which is tomorrow.

**Decision:**

Mr. Farrell made a motion to declare the old voting machines as surplus property. Ms. Dale seconded the motion. The BOS voted unanimously among those present (4-0) to approve the motion.

**Vote to Adopt the Hazard Mitigation Plan**

Mr. Domelowicz explained the MAPC [Metropolitan Area Planning Council] had given the Town until Dec. 31, 2019 to get the plan back because it had previously lapsed. MEMA and FEMA have signed off on it. It is a living document that can evolve. While the BOS adopts the plan, they aren't held to it. It allows for reimbursed funding from FEMA to become available.

**Decision:**

Mr. Farrell made a motion that they adopt the Hazard Mitigation Plan as presented. Ms. Dale seconded the motion.

Mr. Farrell rescinded his previous motion in favor of reading the exact language of the motion that was in the packet. He read the following into the record:

*WHEREAS, the Town of Hamilton established a Committee to prepare the Town of Hamilton Hazard Mitigation Plan 2019 Update; and WHEREAS, the Town of Hamilton Hazard Mitigation Plan 2019 Update contains several potential future projects to mitigate potential impacts from natural hazard in the Town of Hamilton; and WHEREAS, duly-noticed public meetings were held by the Emergency Management Team and Planning Board on April 23, 2019 and July 23, 2019; WHEREAS, the Town of Hamilton authorizes responsible departments and/or agencies to execute their responsibilities demonstrated in the plan, and NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Hamilton Board of Selectmen adopts the Town of Hamilton Hazard Mitigation Plan 2019 Update, in accordance with M.G.L. 40 §4 or the charter and bylaws of the Town of Hamilton.*

Ms. Dale seconded the motion.

**Further Discussion:**

Ms. Dale said she was concerned what would happen in the case of a region-wide disaster and whether Hamilton would be guaranteed ambulance service. Mr. Domelowicz said it would be handled through the Town's contract and agreements to backfill. They discussed that the plan used to be referred to as a pre-disaster plan. The Fire Dept. was part of the team that helped develop the plan and is working on building up emergency medical response. Ms. Dale asked what would happen if the water supply were to become contaminated, such as in the case of flooding. Mr. Domelowicz said they would ask people to buy or boil water; there isn't a specific plan that addresses that. This plan is about identifying and predicting what the Town can do to mitigate for natural disasters and will be used to inform the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness project.

Mr. Farrell asked the cycle for the document. Mr. Domelowicz said it's usually a five-year plan. This one was due in 2017.

**Decision (Continued):**

The BOS voted unanimously among those present (4-0) to adopt the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

**Review of Human Resources IMA—Discussion**

The IMA [Inter-Municipal Agreement] is currently being reviewed by KP Law, P.C., and that all three communities involved are represented by KP Law. For Hamilton to enter into such agreements, it has to be adopted by the BOS. Hamilton would act as the lead party, advertise the HR position, have a committee review the applicant, and then the candidate would be interviewed by all three town administrators. A probation period is included to make sure it works for all three communities. At Ms. Dale’s suggestion, the BOS will read the agreement and send comments to Mr. Domelowicz in preparation for a vote at the next meeting. The FinCom is also reviewing it. Mr. Domelowicz said they’d like to have the position start Jan. 1.

**BOS Direction on Budget Planning. Review of Draft Budget Guidance and Budget Calendar—Discussion and Vote**

Mr. Domelowicz said he had gotten some feedback from FinCom Chair David Wanger. Ms. Dale asked if he’d received feedback from Finance Director Marissa Batista. Mr. Domelowicz said she helped him develop it.

**Decision:**

Ms. Dale made a motion that the BOS adopt a draft of the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Preparation Guidelines knowing they are in flux and may be changed. Ms. Kennedy seconded the motion.

**Further Discussion:**

Mr. Farrell said the draft looked more robust than in the past. He said they typically had a Saturday session with the FinCom. Mr. Domelowicz said that was moved to a Monday evening since he’d like the department heads to be present and they may be dealing with snow removal that time of the year (Jan.-Feb.).

Mr. Hubbard read the third paragraph that stated Mr. Domelowicz is asking all department and committees with budgets to begin preparing as though they are working on a “*level services budget*,” which was defined as:

*“one that considers all proposed increases or decreases in funding as a result of inflation, equipment maintenance, ongoing equipment upgrades (either new or enhancements) and ongoing training, such that the existing organization can continue to function efficiently. Any departmental requests for additional spending beyond level-services will be reviewed in detail and balanced against the overall needs of the entire Town operation. This is not to suggest that additional spending will not be approved but should suggest that new spending will have to be proven as a need.”*

**Decision (Continued):**

The BOS voted unanimously among those present (4-0) to support the FY2021 Budget Preparation Guidelines as proposed by Mr. Domelowicz.

**Town Bonfire Proposal—Saturday, Jan. 11, 2020**



Ms. Kennedy discussed ideas for the event, such as making it a fundraiser for The Hamilton Foundation. The suggested date has been moved from Jan. 11 to Jan. 4 at Patton Park. People who opt to recycle their Christmas trees instead will have the option to do the usual drop-off at Pingree Park. She said the bonfire was just a fun family event and a celebration of winter with some donated refreshments and donated proceeds going to support The Hamilton Foundation.

Mr. Farrell noted the event had been discontinued in the past due to the cost of paying for police detail and that it wasn't a "green" thing to do. Ms. Kennedy said the goal would be to have volunteer firemen volunteer their time.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Consideration of Topics for Discussion at Future BOS Meetings**

- Completion of the Town Manager evaluation discussion.
- Board of Assessors' report on the tax rate.
- Trash collection discussion.
- Financial Policies review.
- Master Plan—looking at the big picture.

It was agreed Mr. Farrell would meet with Mr. Hubbard and Mr. Domelowicz at 9 a.m. to plan the next meeting agenda.

**Adjournment**

Ms. Dale made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:08 p.m. Ms. Kennedy seconded the motion. The BOS voted unanimously among those present (4-0) to adjourn the meeting.

Prepared by:

 \_\_\_\_\_ 12-2-2019

Mary Alice Cookson  
Minutes Secretary

Date

Attest:

 \_\_\_\_\_ 12-2-2019

Darcy Dale  
Board of Selectmen Clerk

Date