



Town of Hopkinton

Office of Select Board

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SELECT BOARD PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2019

CALL TO ORDER

Select Board Chair Jim O'Brien called this regular meeting of the Select Board to order at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, December 9, 2019, in the Dunlap Room at the Town Hall. Mr. O'Brien introduced the members of the Board. Those assembled joined together to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members Present: Jim O'Brien, Ken Traum, Sabrina Dunlap, Steven Whitley, and Anna Wells

Staff Present: Dan Blanchette (Director of Public Works), Neal Cass (Town Administrator)

POINTS OF PRIDE

Mr. Cass shared his appreciation for the highway crew who have been out plowing, and especially Director of Public Works Dan Blanchette who ends up awake through many nights monitoring the roads to determine when the crews need to be called out. He also read a letter recently received from a resident thanking Police Officer Jeffrey Danforth and Sergeant TJ Hennessy for their "caring and sincerity" toward this resident during a difficult medical call for a loved one. Mr. Traum raised up the Starry Starry Weekend event held this past weekend. Ms. Wells also noted thanks for the plowing of the roads.

ADMINISTRATIVE

The Board reviewed documents for signature and approved (3-0, O'Brien, Traum, Wells) the Consent Agenda, taking the following action on a motion by Mr. Traum and seconded by Ms. Wells.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Comment</u>
BUILDING PERMITS			
HSD-194 Maple St. 102-004-000	12/9/2019	Approve	Replace Maple Street School sign
Park Ave. Plaza-54 Park Ave. 101-067-000	12/9/2019	Approve	Replace Red Star Sign with Dunkin' Sign
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE			
Ch 63191-63255	12/9/2019	Approve	\$2,020,159.29 County=\$1,922,671.00
PAYROLL			
PPE 12/7/2019	12/9/2019	Approve	\$11,871.75 Checks, \$76,051.75 Dir. Dep. TOTAL - \$87,923.50
TRANSFERS			
Transfers from Donation Acct to Gen.Fund	12/9/2019	Approve	\$1,203.22 - Kimball Cabins \$ 110.00 - Fire Dept Auxiliary TOTAL = \$1,313.22

Transfer from Special Rev. fund to General Fund	12/9/2019	Approve	\$ 200.00 - Slusser Center Rental Fund
REQUEST FUNDS FROM TTF			
Request Funds from Expend Trust Funds	12/9/2019	Approve	\$4,550.00 -Town Facilities Maint. Fund
Other			
Authorization to Expend	12/9/2019	Approve	\$500.00 - Slusser Donation Fund
2019 Sewer 2nd Billing Warrant	12/5/2019	Approve	\$57,693.45
Application for Use of Town Hall	12/5/2019	Approve	Weld 2020 - 12/20/2019
Amendment to General Obligation Bond	12/9/2019	Approve	Refinance of Fire Station Bond

The Board reviewed the Select Board Meeting Minutes of Monday, December 2, 2019. Mr. Traum made a motion, seconded by Ms. Wells to approve the Public Meeting Minutes of December 2, 2019.

VOTE: O'Brien, Traum, and Wells voting in favor of the motion; no votes against, MOTION APPROVED 3-0.

Mr. Traum noted that he and Mr. Cass presented the town budget to the Budget Committee this past week. There were good questions from the committee. The question of a road bond is still outstanding, and the Budget Committee would like this information as soon as possible.

DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL ROAD BOND

Mr. Blanchette joined this discussion sharing that because we are currently paying for the previous road bond, he would rather see a Warrant Article yearly for the road work appropriation rather than do another road bond.

The Board reviewed the list of road projects which includes bridges and culverts, road reconstruction, paving, and shimming. The list totals over \$7.0 million. It was noted that a culvert on Kearsarge Avenue now has steel plates over it, and that the Briar Hill Road culvert scheduled to be done this past year was moved to Stickney Hill Road so that road could be opened. There was a consensus that more must be done on the roads.

The Board discussed the merits of a bond verses a large appropriation including the following items:

- There is a concern of raising the tax rate in 2020.
- A bond could accomplish more work in a shorter time, working toward “catching up” on road projects.
- What do the voters want and what will pass at Town Meeting.
- There is concern about taking on a bond when there are other items pending.

Mr. Blanchette said that the top priorities are the culverts and bridges and then starting to work on road reconstruction items. If the shimming/paving line is not used for other things in the budget (like culvert replacement), those items can be paid for out of the operating budget.

The Board moved to its 6:00 p.m. appointment and decided to return to this item later in the meeting.

APPOINTMENT: LAURA MORGAN RE HATFIELD/COLLEGE HILL ROAD TRAFFIC

Ms. Morgan said she asked to be on the agenda to discuss the traffic on Hatfield Road and College Hill Road. GPS systems send people going to Pats Peak down these side roads. Traffic also goes down Turnberry Lane, a dead-end road, by mistake. There are also buses that take these roads. The basic issues are speeding and volume of traffic. It was noted that both the Hopkinton and Henniker Police Departments do patrol the area, but they have a large area to cover and can't be there all the time.

It was noted that a speed limit sign was missing, and Mr. Blanchette said it would be replaced immediately.

There were several suggestions to help correct the situation:

- Add signage – “Local Traffic Only”
- Increase police presence
- Do a winter traffic count
- Place a directional sign on Route 202/9
- Contact the GPS companies

The Select Board will work to do whatever can be done. The next steps are:

- Set up a meeting with Henniker and possible NH DOT
- Look at seasonal remedies as this is strictly a winter issue.
- Check on what authority there is for the Select Board to act/
- Reach out to the GPS companies

RECYCLING COMMITTEE MISSION STATEMENT

Bonnie Christie from the Recycling Committee presented the proposed mission statement and name change for the current Recycling Committee. She explained that they wish to use the NRRA “Think Outside the Bin” slogan and focus on “Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rot”. The Board said this is a good direction for the committee.

The Mission Statement reads:

The purpose of the Hopkinton Waste Reduction Committee (HWRC) is to work on a municipal level to protect human health, to preserve the natural environment, and to conserve natural resources through the proper and integrated management of solid waste. The HWRC will work with the Hopkinton-Webster Refuse Disposal Committee and the Select Boards of both towns to:

- a) promote action to divert waste from landfills and incineration; and
- b) implement the top three priorities of the State of NH waste management hierarchy: source reduction, recycling and reuse, and composting by:
 - educating our community about minimizing waste sources;
 - engaging in research about waste management issues and solutions; and
 - supporting programs to achieve the hierarchy goals.

Mr. Traum moved to adopt the mission statement including changing the name of the committee. The motion was seconded by Ms. Wells.

VOTE: O'Brien, Traum, Dunlap, Whitley, and Wells voting in favor of the motion; no votes against, MOTION APPROVED 5-0.

APPOINTMENT: TOM CONGORAN ET AL RE: PROPERTY REVAULATION

Tom and Mary Congoran said they were speaking for seniors that do not like to ask for help. There is concern about the increase in valuation for certain properties in town. Some of the properties did not have internal inspections. They advocated for the Town to assist these people.

Fred Ward said he is 98 years old and his taxes went up 3 ½ times what they were.

Rosalie Smith said she cried when she opened her bill. Her land value is up 3 times what it was. She noted that she volunteers a great deal of time to many projects in town.

Bill Vonn said that the taxes on his mobile home went up 2 ½ times what they were.

Mr. Congoran said that others are in the same place concerning their taxes. The Town should be valuing seniors and those on fixed incomes. He continued that he is encouraged to see that a review of the Elderly Exemption is scheduled on the agenda later at this meeting.

Mr. O'Brien said that the Elderly Exemption is one way to help to have diversity in town and one way to help those that need it.

The Board extended a sincere thank you to Rosalie Smith for all the volunteering she does in town.

ROAD BOND DISCUSSION – CONTINUED

The Board continued to discuss the possibility of proposing a road bond to cover costs of some of the needed road projects. Ms. Wells said there is no right answer to this situation and no quick, right, easy answer. Mr. Traum said interest rates won't be this low again. The CIP Committee is meeting tomorrow to discuss their recommendation on how best to fund this work.

After further discussion, the Board by consensus decided to propose a \$3.0 million road bond. This is not yet set in stone, but Mr. Traum will present it to the Budget Committee.

REVIEW OF LETTER FROM HOPKINTON RESCUE SQUAD INC. (HRSI)

The Board reviewed a letter from the attorney for HRSI. Given that the letter came from the attorney, the response should be sent to the attorney. A draft response was reviewed. The Board asked for the following changes to the draft:

- Ask for the names of "several excellent candidates" to be the neutral party. Add in cost sharing for this person.
- Ask for a list of the major equipment owned by HRSI and the age of the equipment.

The Board does want to hold a joint meeting. The letter will be updated, and Chief Yale will be asked to review it. Mr. O'Brien will sign the letter on behalf of the Board so it can be sent quickly.

Mr. Traum moved to approve the letter to Hopkinton Rescue Squad Inc. based on the 6 items requested and authorize Mr. O'Brien to sign the letter on behalf of the Board. The motion was seconded by Ms. Wells.

VOTE: O'Brien, Traum, Dunlap, Whitley, and Wells voting in favor of the motion; no votes against, MOTION APPROVED 5-0.

HRSI members present invited the Board to tour the rescue building and see the equipment. The Board agreed. There were comments from those in the audience about the value of HRSI to the town.

REVIEW OF INITIAL DRAFT OF THE TOWN MEETING WARRANT

The Board reviewed the initial draft of the Town Meeting Warrant for March 2020. It was decided to do more research to determine the amounts of the Elderly Exemption. There will be further discussion on the Town Hall warrant article.

COMPLETE STREETS COMMITTEE CHARGE

Ms. Wells presented the proposed Complete Streets Charge for review by the Board. Mr. Traum asked about including a cost review within the charge. Mr. Whitley said the Complete Streets Committee makes recommendations and the cost review is left up to the Select Board and the Budget Committee. The Committee will create a policy and guidelines and the policy will come to the Select Board for approval. Ms. Wells took the information from the discussion and will updated the charge and bring it back to the next meeting. Members will be appointed at that time.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES

Mr. Cass reported that a good deal of his time the last couple of weeks has been spent meeting residents concerning their property taxes. He also reported that he has spoken with both owners of the "dilapidated buildings" in town and that both buildings will be removed.

PUBLIC FORUM

Jake Schoch again invited the Board to tour the Rescue Squad building and have questions answered. There was discussion of this possibly happening at a couple of different times to assure that all Board members can attend. After further discussion it was decided to do the tour before one of the Board's January meetings.

OTHER

There are still issues with the Blackwater Nordic Ski Club using the Hopkinton Fair Grounds. Appreciation was expressed to Gould Hill Farm for letting the Club use their property.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Dunlap moved to adjourn the meeting and the motion was second by Mr. Whitley. All voted in favor, MOTION APPROVED 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Neal A. Cass, Town Administrator