



Tuesday, December 12, 2023
Hanson Select Board
Select Board Meeting Room, Town Hall
Open Session

Members Present: Laura FitzGerald-Kemmett, Edwin Heal, David George, Ann Rein
Members Absent: Joseph Weeks,
Others Present: Lisa Green, Town Administrator; Lynn McDowell, Executive Assistant; Kevin Perkins, Arlene Dias, Board of Health, Gilbert Amado, Health Inspector; Theresa Cocio; Peter Butler; Frank Milisi, Kevin Sullivan, Stephen Amica; John Madden, Madden Financial Services; Eric Kinsherf, Town Accountant; State Senator Michael Brady; Plymouth County Commissioner Jared Valanzola; Plymouth County Commissioner Gregory Hanley; Plymouth County Treasurer Thomas O'Brien

I **CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. FitzGerald-Kemmett called the meeting to order.

II **PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING MEETINGS**

Ms. Rein read the public announcements and upcoming meetings.

III **NEW BUSINESS**

1. Appointment to Board of Health sitting in joint session with the Select Board

Mr. Perkins called the Board of Health to Order. Mr. Butler was presented as a candidate to fill the open seat on the Board of Health. Mr. Perkins and Ms. Dias reviewed his application and agreed he appeared to be a good fit. Mr. Perkins reached out to Mr. Butler for a conversation and would like to move forward. Mr. Amado also spoke with Mr. Butler and agreed with Mr. Perkins.

Mr. Butler shared that he is recently moved to Hanson and is interested in local politics. He previously served on the Weymouth Board of Health. He enjoyed the experience and would like to bring that knowledge to Hanson. His education background included undergrad in Environmental science and a master in Public administration.

The Select Board stated it greatly appreciates the past experience and noted it would be a great support for the current board to understand how other towns do business. Mr. Perkins noted, as this is an elected role, this would be a temporary position until elections in May 2024. He felt this is the best way for both sides to agree if truly good fit.

The Select Board queried any possible conflicts. He stated none, and he completed the ethics training in preparation for this meeting.

Board of health voted to appoint Mr. Butler to the vacant position on the Board of Health, expiring May 2024. Motion passed.

MOTION by Mr. Heal, seconded by Ms. Rein, to appoint Mr. Butler to the vacant position on the Board of Health, expiring May 2024. ***Voted 4 – 0***
Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Heal-Aye

Board of Health adjourned its meeting.

2. John Madden presentation:

Mr. Madden presented his interim financial review and analysis of the Town. He thanked all department heads, Mr. Kinsherf and Ms. Green for the support he received pulling this report together. Based on tonight's discussion and input, he will provide recommendations for a final report in January 2024. He noted the all information has been vetted with the Town Accountant.

The process he used included the following –

- Reviewed and identified financial trends over the past five years,
- Analyzed various documents and official statements submitted to the Department of Revenue,
- Met with the Town Administrator and various department heads,
- Projected forward five years of budgets, based on trends and my own recommendations,
- Considered the possibility of an override in the future.

He stated the Town has four sources of revenue, including a series of renewable financing sources, opposed to one time. Primary source of revenue is from taxation and local receipts. There is a small percentage of free cash. He noted that the tax rate is a component that leads to the tax bill. Overall, the Town-wide levy is limited due to Proposition 2½.

He discussed local aid to the Town, noting there was a 4.40% increase over FY23. It was a one-year bump; it does not completely reflect the five-year period reviewed. Unrestricted general government aid – 3.20% increase over FY23 – runs similar. He suggested shows a spike in growth, but overall, it's minimum.

He shared the Water fund receipts are not included in this presentation as it is an enterprise self-balancing fund. Local receipts were up 24% in FY23 over FY22. He shared the introduction of meals excise tax as well as strong investment income created this increase. He highlighted other financing sources – ambulance receipts and septic program – as great returns of investment.

He noted that some free cash was used to balance the budget, as there was a gap with expenses vs. revenues. He highlighted the Division of Local Services Best Practices Recommendation, quoting "As a nonrecurring revenue source, free cash should be restricted to paying one-time expenditures, funding capital projects, or replenishing other reserves". As well as bond rating agencies review; prefer to invest in communities that are balancing its revenue and expenses without relying on free cash. Such agencies preferred to see free cash used for capital expenses.

He then addressed the Town's operating budget, again net of Water. He noted the three-year average increase in the local department of education has been 4.39%. Other budgetary highlights included the Regional Old Colony Call Center (ROCCC) and Plymouth County

Retirement. He also mentioned snow and ice increase was net zero, however it is artificially low.

Lastly, he presented a projection of revenue and expenditures for the next five years. Each year projects an increased in shortfalls as expenses are running higher than revenues. He met with Ms. Green to discuss how the gaps could be diminished. She shared with him that budget conversations included level service and 2% increases. Next steps include reviewing how and if financing sources as they should, and if any room for growth. At this point, while it may be mitigated, he is not ruling out an override.

The Board mentioned that the Town of Whitman has repeatedly stated to the Regional School District that it cannot exceed a fixed number. The Town of Hanson did not have the same option as did not have it defined. Mr. Madden stated this is one of his recommendations. He said it was the conversation he had with Whitman; it was reviewed as unsustainable and needed to identify what can be done to have it be sustainable.

The Board requested additional years for comparison to the current years he is projecting. Mr. Madden stated he has the information and will forward on. He also stated the school numbers overall do not change that much. It is best for the Town to move forward with its planning but best to have conversations as early as possible.

It was expressed to Mr. Madden that Capital improvement expenses were not included in his projections. He acknowledged it is not included as he was reviewing only the operating budget. He mentioned he will recommend debt rolloff. The Town's current number is 12%. He suggested taking that number, instead of rolling into the operating budget, and move to the reserve fund for future capital needs. Will not be a large number, but each year rolling over, could lead to making a one-time needed purchase or address debt issues without needing an override.

For his next steps he will schedule time with Ms. Green and Mr. Kinsherrf to calibrate the draft budgets with actual projections and recommendations to make it a balanced budget.

To hear this presentation in complete detail, please view the meeting here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tqLeC2eCEEM&t=1881s> at 24:30. The presentation is posted on the Select Board's webpage on the Town website.

3. Receipt of ARPA funds for Maquan Demolition

Ms. Green welcomed several representatives from the Plymouth County ARPA Program, who presented to the Town an ARPA grant award. This grant award is related to a request Ms. Green submitted for the demolition and asbestos abatement to the former Maquan Elementary School with the plan to create a recreational facility in its place.

Commissioner Valanzola distributed a brief Plymouth County CARES Act performance update. He highlighted the Town of Hanson receiving 50% more money than similar sized communities

outside of Plymouth County. Countywide, it delivered nearly twice the funding as comparable sized communities.

Commissioner Hanley noted, after reviewing the application for the Maquan School property, it was one of the best uses of the onetime funding ARPA as revenue replacement. He continued to praise the Board for maintaining the quality of life in Hanson to keep it the strong community to raise a family. He also acknowledged the support of the legislators and thanked Senator Brady for moving the administrative funding forward with Plymouth County. The Board acknowledged it was the perfect fit to coordinate with Plymouth County.

Senator Brady acknowledged the importance of working with Plymouth County, acknowledging its excellence in fiscal responsibility. Any help he can be moving forward, please feel free to reach out.

Treasurer O'Brien was excited to work with the Hanson team and thanked them for the team effort. He is very proud of the current legislative delegates, stating they are collaborative team and one of the best he has worked with. He particularly thanked Senator Brady for his consistent support. He noted Representative Cutler has been strongly advocating on behalf of the Town and is disappointed not be in attendance.

Treasurer O'Brien stated that Town of Hanson is receiving a check totaling \$418,801.16, for the demolition of the Maquan School as well as for the development of recreational facilities, accomplishing two goals. The Town will be relieved of the administrative process related to the grant as Plymouth County will manage that process.

The Select Board thanked the County for its assistance making this an easy process for the Town to manager. It also acknowledged the work of Ms. Green, aggressively pursuing the funding on behalf of the Town.

4. Treasurer/Collector contract to sign

Ms. Green stated the contract has not been finalized by Town Counsel. Tabled.

5. Camp Kiwanee:

a. Appoint Christopher Hoffmann as Camp Kiwanee facilities manager

Mr. Milisi shared that Mr. Means will be retiring in early 2024. He offered to train his replacement prior to his departure. Mr. Hoffman was the best candidate that applied; Mr. Milisi stated the interview committee was very impressed with his skillset.

The Select Board thanked Mr. Means for all he the work he did during his time at the Camp, and he will be greatly missed as well. The Board would like the Camp to ensure Mr. Hoffmann understands the ethics involved as he is also a member of Community Preservation Committee. Mr. Milisi shared that was discussed during his interview. Mr. Hoffman is aware but as he is an associate member, he does not have voting privileges and will recuse if necessary. Mr. Milisi noted it may be a good blend; Mr. Heal agreed.

MOTION by Ms. Rein, seconded by Mr. Heal, to appoint Christopher Hoffmann as the Camp Kiwanee Facilities Manager for 19.5 hours per week, effective December 13, 2023, contingent upon completion of his paperwork. **Voted 4 – 0**
Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Heal-Aye

b. Review Camp Kiwanee fee schedule for 2024

Mr. Milisi presented the updated fee rates for events at the Camp. He noted while the fees increased, for Hanson residents the discount is also a bit higher, making it not much more than before.

MOTION by Ms. Rein, seconded by Mr. Heal, to approve the fee rate schedule as presented. **Voted 4 – 0**
Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Heal-Aye

c. Review Revised Policies and Procedures

Mr. Milisi stated the policies and procedures were updated to reflect Camp Kiwanee instead of the Recreation Commission. There are Recreation Commission titles still reflected as they are linked to Town articles.

A key change related to revisions in the dog policy. It has always been the policy. with signage throughout the Camp, not to have dogs on the property from June 1 through Labor Day weekend. The policy also excluded service dogs, and it will be strictly enforced this year.

As Ziva is a Town of Hanson Police officer, there will be no issue with her being on the Camp at any time.

MOTION by Ms. Rein, seconded by Mr. Heal, to accept the revised policies and procedures as presented by Camp Kiwanee Commission, contingent upon Town Counsel review and approval. **Voted 4 – 0**
Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Heal-Aye

d. Accept gift of 1947 photo album of Camp Kiwanee from Laurie Ansgore Ball of Newton.

MOTION by Ms. Rein, seconded by Mr. Heal, to accept the gift of 1947 photo album of Camp Kiwanee from Laurie Ansgore Ball of Newton. **Voted 4 – 0**
Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Heal-Aye

e. Accept gift of \$200 from the Friends of the Hanson Multi-Service Senior Center.

Ms. Collins insisted the Camp Kiwanee Commission accept the gift from the Friends of the Hanson Multi-Service Senior Center, as a thank you for its generosity during the Council on Aging flood repairs. Mr. Milisi noted the Commission will use the funds to reflect the generosity of the gift.

MOTION by Ms. Rein, seconded by Mr. Heal, to accept gift of \$200 from the Friends of the Hanson Multi-Service Senior Center for the Camp Kiwanee Commission. **Voted 4 – 0**

Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Heal-Aye

- f. Approve discounted rate for the Polar Plunge, scheduled for February 4, 2024.

Mr. Milisi noted this is an annual fundraiser that has a great turnout. As the Select Board participates each year, it encouraged all, including newer board members, to participate.

MOTION by Mr. Heal, seconded by Ms. Rein, to approve the discounted rate for the Polar Plunge, February 4, 2024, 9am-3pm, of \$25.00 per hour, totaling \$150.

Voted 4 – 0

Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Heal-Aye

- g. Approve discounted rate for the Bee Keeper Holiday Party, scheduled for December 15, 2023.

As a member of the Bee Keepers, Ms. Rein recused herself.

MOTION by Mr. Heal, seconded by Mr. George, to approve the discounted rate for the Bee Keeper Holiday Party, December 15, 2023, 5pm-9pm, of \$25 per hour, totaling \$100. **Voted 3 – 0 - 1**

Roll call –George-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Heal-Aye

- h. Approve discounted rate for the Hanson Football Banquet, scheduled for January 5, 2024.

MOTION by Mr. Heal, seconded by Ms. Rein, to approve the discounted rate for the Hanson Football Banquet, January 5, 2024 from 5pm-9pm, of \$25 per hour, totaling \$100. **Voted 4 – 0**

Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Heal-Aye

Mr. Milisi noted the Camp Kiwanee lodge agreement also needs to be reviewed and approved by the Select Board. Town Counsel is reviewing and it will be added to the January 9, 2024 meeting agenda.

The Select Board thanked Mr. Milisi for his work.

6. Recreation Committee discussion:

As Mr. Weeks was not able to attend, the discussion was tabled for January 2024.

7. Discuss Hanson's Goals for the Regional School Agreement Committee:

Ms. Green shared Stephen Amica will be the Finance Committee representative for this committee.

The Committee is reviewing the current regional school agreement. It is the modified version but as it was not signed, it is still a work in process to create a new version. The superintendent forwarded a draft agreement to Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools (MARS) and Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) for review. It was also reviewed by the Committee during its November meeting. As there were areas in which language was not clear, the superintendent is reaching out to MARS and DESE for clarification.

As the next meeting is scheduled for January 8, 2024, she requested the Board provide detail on what it would like to include in the agreement. She has already included a request for assistance with student transportation to the agricultural schools. Currently there is coordinated transportation for both Hanson and Whitman. Previously it was a coordinated effort with both towns and the school district but as it is taking a great deal of time for both towns' respective Town Administrators, she would like it incorporated into this document as the school has someone already employed to focus on transportation.

There has been a discussion already in changing the way transportation costs would be allocated, which would not be favorable to Hanson. Other issues include addressing some of the antiquated language and dollar threshold for the Town to cover for emergency repairs. All proposed changes need to be reviewed by both towns' select boards and the school committee prior to implementation.

The Board discussed the possibility of a third party to review the allocation of costs and how other regional townships share costs.

8. Right to Farm:

Ms. Green shared that a resident questioned how Hanson could become a right to farm community. She stated it is not difficult process as it requires a Town meeting vote. She is drafting an article for town counsel to review and will include for the 2024 May Annual Town Meeting.

It was previously presented at Town meeting about 10 years ago. Due to issues in with a neighborhood, it did not pass. Because of the cranberry industry, the Town of Hanson is still zoned as an agricultural community, except for where specific zoning areas were created.

Generally, Right to Farm requires property owners to have two acres plus the land the home sits, to run the property as a farm business and comply with local Board of Health regulations.

9. 2024 Annual Licensing:

As several have outstanding taxes, tabled for a separate meeting scheduled later in December.

10. Appoint Paul Cerra to Community Preservation Committee:

Mr. Cerra spoke with Ms. FitzGerald-Kemmett; she encouraged him to apply for the open position. She also acknowledged she highly recommends him for the open position. Mr. Cerra is also related to Mr. Tarvis. Ms. Green spoke with Mr. Cerra and recommended him as well.

Mr. Cerra shared that his is newly retired from sheriff's department and at this time he would like to give back to the Town by volunteering and as he is interested in the preservation of the Town, he found this to be a good fit. He also completed his ethics training; he noted no conflicts.

MOTION by Ms. Rein, seconded by Mr. Heal, to appoint Paul Cerra to the Community Preservation Committee, through June 30, 2024. ***Voted 4 – 0***
Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Heal-Aye

11. Appoint Stephanie Pritchard to the Maquan School Reuse Committee:

Due to commitments, Ms. Pritchard withdrew her nomination.

12. Appoint Thomas Labo to the Maquan School Reuse Committee:

Ms. FitzGerald-Kemmett and Ms. Green both spoke with him. Both agreed that he is very engaged in the community.

MOTION by Ms. Rein, seconded by Mr. Heal, to appoint Thomas Labo to the Maquan School Reuse Committee, through June 30, 2024. ***Voted 4 – 0***
Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Heal-Aye

13. Updated Select Board calendar review:

Ms. McDowell noted she updated the calendar to reflect quarterly Executive Session meeting minute review as well as correct a meeting date.

MOTION by Ms. Rein, seconded by Mr. Heal, to approve the revised 2024-25 Select Board calendar as presented. ***Voted 4 – 0***
Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Heal-Aye

14. Town Administrator Annual review timeline

Ms. Green noted it is time for the Board to do her annual review. Ms. McDowell worked with the Select Board to create an updated form that will be consistent for reviewing and feedback.

The form will be distributed to the Board in early January 2024. The Board will need to complete and return to Ms. McDowell the first week February 2024. Ms. Green's contract expires this year. The Board would like to complete the appraisal timely before starting negotiations. Town Counsel suggested each Select Board member provide feedback to Ms. Green one-on-one.

Ms. McDowell will forward the review form to the Board with the completion reminder dates. She will also schedule meeting with Ms. Green and a Board member at the Board members' request. She will compile all the information to be presented during a February 2024 meeting.

IV COMMITTEE UPDATES

1. Economic Development Committee

No updates

2. High Street Park Committee

No updates

3. Highway Committee

No updates

4. Maquan Property Reuse Committee

No updates

5. Recreation Committee

No updates

6. Transfer Station Taskforce

No updates.

7. Regional School District committee

No updates

8. Other Committee updates

No updates

V

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

- Ms. Green updated the Board that the Shine Certified Counselors with 138 residents to assist with Medicare open enrollment. This provided collective savings of over \$58,000. She thanked Linda Mulrey, Mary Collins, Faye Vitale for their dedicated support to the residents.
- She also recognized Hanson police officer Arseneau. While patrolling last week he happened upon a vehicle parked in the lot of a closed business. Checking on the vehicle, he discovered an elderly woman with a dead battery, no gas and no operating cell phone. Upon further investigation he learned she was also homeless. Officer Arseneau drove the woman to a local hotel, paid for her stay and contacted McQuarrie's Auto to repairs the car and fill the tank with gas.
- She intends to add this item to a further agenda, but wanted to briefly discuss Animal Control. There have been issues with people moving out, for various reasons, and leaving their pets behind. It becomes the responsibility of the Town to address the pet that has been left behind. She would like a deeper discussion regarding this and the Animal Control officer in the new year.
- Christmas Eve this year is on a Sunday. According to the Town's bylaw and union contracts, it is a half day holiday. Friday, December 22, 2023 Town Hall will be open regular hours – 8am-12pm. Both the Town website and social media pages will be updated reflecting which departments will be open and closed. She suggested anyone planning to come to Town Hall on Friday, December 22, 2023 call first to be sure the department they are coming to visit is open.
- Ms. Green shared the new Department head shared self-evaluations for feedback. Once compiled, she will forward to Town Counsel and union representatives for feedback.
- The Select Board questioned status of the website update. Ms. Green stated there is a January 16, 2024 meeting scheduled to discuss site mapping. Blythe Robinson from Capital Strategic Solutions will also attend to address questions/feedback from department heads. Ms. Green stated the IT assistant will be focusing her time moving the update forward. The Select Board requested a timeline of next steps with completion dates from Mr. Moberg.

VI

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Ms. Rein, seconded by Mr. Heal, to adjourn to Executive Session. **4**
– 0

Roll call –George-Aye; Rein-Aye; FitzGerald-Kemmett-Aye; Heal-Aye

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn McDowell