



Tuesday, February 6, 2024
Hanson Select Board
Select Board Meeting Room, Town Hall
Open Session

Members Present: Laura FitzGerald-Kemmett, Joseph Weeks, Edwin Heal, Ann Rein
Members Absent: David George
Others Present: Lisa Green, Town Administrator; Lynn McDowell, Executive Assistant, Corinne Carfado, Karen Stofler; Library; Michael Fleming, Elizabeth Sloan, Town Clerk, Antonio DeFrias, Town Planner; Mary Collins, Council on Aging

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. Surplus Equipment

Ms. Green stated the Police Chief would like to surplus a 2017 Ford Interceptor, as he is trading it in towards the purchase for a new cruiser.

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to declare surplus from the Police Department a 2017 Ford Interceptor 1FM5K8AR4HGC25712 and traded in for a new vehicle. ***Voted 4 – 0***

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

2. Council on Aging update

Ms. Collins provided a brief overview of the Senior Center, the programs offered and the staff involved.

She mentioned first the Meals on Wheels program, which is available Monday-Friday. There are four groups of people who deliver regularly to those needing the meals. She noted the benefits receiving Meals on Wheels include daily and easy access to nutritional food, as well as check-ins for those who are not able to leave their homes. Over the course of the year, over 5600 meals were delivered, including over 200 emergency meals. For twice a week congregant meal, which is a hot meal at the Senior Center on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, over 1100 meals were served. She encouraged anyone who may need some assistance, please feel free to contact her.

Roberta Bartholdson, part time Administrative Assistant at the Center, covers the mornings and schedules Medicare appointments. Linda Mulrey, part time Outreach Coordinator, covers the afternoon and is now SHINE certified, which is an annual education process through the State. . She was very helpful during the open enrollment process, providing all options available.

SHINE counselors are certified annually, who will provide unbiased information that will best benefit the resident. Over the past year, with the SHINE counselor assistance, Hanson residents were able to save over \$58,000 for their insurance and prescriptions.

She noted she has all veterans meet with the Veterans Agent. She noted he is a great resource as well as partner. She stated, through her conversations with Mr. Gumbakis, there is a MassHealth buy-in program available. There are requirements that make it a bit tricky as it includes assets as well as income. However, the asset limit may be eliminated in March 2024. She suggested if a resident may qualify, please give a call then.

She stated all residents are vetted for SNAP and CHAMP, to ensure those eligible receive the benefits. She noted the CHAMP application is online, allowing residents to choose the community that would be meet their needs.

She noted the music group is thriving. Men's group and women's group are both going very well. The bereavement group has been well attended with an increase in numbers. She noticed the group continues to support each other outside of the group setting, developing continuing friendships. Chair yoga is also thriving and growing with a great group of people.

Lastly, she discussed Leah's club. This was developed by Leah Guercio, Program Coordinator, due to the loss of a supportive day program during Covid; she wanted to fill that need for people to be safe. Leah leads the programming on Tuesdays and Wednesdays with Lianna Gagnon, Program Assistant. There has been strong positive feedback from families as this provides a way for family members to stay in the home.

Ms. Collins also discussed the opportunity for a grant. She recently received email from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs stating there may be grant money available through that office using ARPA funds to establish supportive day programs. It would be for up to \$300,000. She noted the closest active one is in Duxbury but it can be challenging for nonresidents to join the program. A criterion required would be to expand the current space, with a possible prefab solution. She already met and discussed options with the Town Planner, the Building Inspector and the Facility Manager. She will keep the Select Board informed.

She thanked the staff at the Camp Kiwanee for the activity support to the Senior Center during the flood. She also thanked the Community Christmas group, who consistently reach out to help the seniors. She also noted the Friends group and Food Pantry group, who send nonperishable over every Wednesday. She thanked Shaws as well for weekly donations on Tuesdays and Thursdays. She also thanked all at Town Hall and the Select Board for the support provided to her and her team.

3. Vote to accept Manager change

The American Legion Post #226 has a change in its manager; who will be David George.

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to appoint David George as the Manager for the Hanson American Legion Post #226. **Voted 4 – 0**

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

4. Proposed Planning Board Zoning Bylaw Amendments

Mr. DeFrias shared the documents for the Select Board to review, with the anticipation that they will be submitted for Town meeting.

Under the Zoning Act, one of the entities that can bring forth zoning amendments is the Planning Board. This is what he is doing; bringing forth to the Select Board for consideration. The Select Board takes it as consideration, then turn it over to the Planning Board, who is required to hold a public hearing and provide a report to the Select Board regarding the amendments. The next step will be for the Select Board to review and vote on articles presented in the proposed Town meeting warrant.

The Board is not voting on these amendments this evening. Once they are added as articles to the warrant, the Board will have an opportunity to discuss and vote.

The Board would like some data points what the State is requiring and what is cost for not complying. Mr. DeFrias reiterated that the Town is only required to create the district, not create the housing. While the Town could be part of the creation, most likely it would be created privately. The number of units that has been assigned to Hanson with the commuter rail is 750, with 10% being affordable; that is the limit. The Town would be allowed to review site plans for each site plan to make determinations for traffic, drainage, architectural, parking, etc. Then, there can conditions added to ensure it is a good project. Examples include 40 feet currently required for setback distance, and number of parking spaces allowed. Regarding variances, all will need to comply with planning, zoning and conservation. For wetlands, that area is not included in the district planning. Septic systems have not been addressed to date. Ms. Green shared she recently attended a conference and this was discussed, however there were no real solutions.

Mr. DeFrias also shared he participated in a webinar. One of the points discussed was that a minimal, if the Town does not comply, will loose the three grant opportunities the Town has been receiving lately but all grant opportunities the State offers. The Attorney General's office simply stated it is the law, however it is unclear what will be the repercussions for those communities that do not comply. He noted that the State does recognize it is not one size fits all; different communities have different requirements. But this is how the State wants to proceed for commuter rails communities.

The Board stated the grant money is based on taxes; the State would be refusing money that should be used in Hanson. Mr. DeFrias noted until there is a court case stating it does not need to be done, this is the direction the Town needs to take.

The Board questioned what is the Town did not have a commuter rail. Mr. DeFrias responded then the Town would be reviewed if commuter rail adjacent. As there are stops in adjacent towns, Hanson would still need to be compliant and create a district.

Mr. DeFrias note the Planning Board raised similar concerns to those expressed by the Select Board, but it united to move the process forward.

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to update the current zoning map and create the proposed MBTA District, draft and amend the zoning bylaws for said District, and request a report from the Planning Board. ***Voted 4 – 0***

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

5. Energy Committee update
Tabled.

6. Discuss Private Way bylaw
Tabled.

7. Select Board warrant articles
a. Right to Farm

A warrant article presented at Town Meeting in the past, but did not receive enough support to pass. The Board requested Ms. Green provide updated information for more clarity. She stated the office is researching language for an article by comparing to other towns and will then present to the Board for approval.

Mr. Fleming mentioned some issues discussed previously related to it truly being for larger farming that doesn't happen in Hanson. For revised language he suggested including smaller home farms and the related needed acreage. The Board suggested revamping the Agricultural committee to provide education on animal husbandry. It also noted that Right to Farm bylaws increase real estate values.

b. ARPA Funding

Ms. Green shared the funding balance for both accounts. With Plymouth County ARPA, which is very restrictive in use, \$1.542M remains.

She noted the two projects listed to discuss this evening - Pratt Place Culvert and an Ambulance – are eligible under the Plymouth County guidelines for funding. The total amount to these two projects exceeds what is available. However, from her conversations with the Plymouth County commissioner, there is a possibility of requesting additional funding to supplement the difference. She is also applying for grants for the Culvert still.

Pratt and Ambulance are eligible projects for the money. Both exceed what currently have but could either ask Plymouth county for more or try for grants. The Board is relying on the Ms. Green's expertise and due diligence. Ms. Green stated this will still need to go to Town meeting and she is drafting articles.

Ms. Green will request an additional funds from Plymouth County to supplement the difference needed, with reasoning. If there are remaining ARPA monies, the Town could be awarded. Otherwise, the remainder will need to be requested at either October Special Town meeting or May 2025 Annual Town meeting. The Board suggested placing the article with two funding sources to cover the costs.

For Pond Management and the Library Grant, she presented using unallocated funding awarded to the Library in October 2022.

i. Pratt Place Culvert

Ms. Green noted there was a quote for repairs, and possible replace, totaling \$1.24M. She suggested using the funds for this property as it is in dire condition and could collapse. It would be the best way to address.

It is a public road and a safety issue, but the Board questioned if this is truly the best for one time money. Should this be addressed at Town meeting instead. Ms. Green reminded the Board that the funds are restrictive; only certain categories can be used, which include water and infrastructure, and health.

The Town Planner is reaching out for proposals by March 1, 2024.

ii. Ambulance

As in other towns, Ms. Green suggested using the remaining funds to purchase a new ambulance. The proposed cost would be \$450,000.

The Fire Chief will receive a purchase order that Ms. Green will submit to Plymouth County. This too will be an article included in the May Annual Town meeting. Upon approval she will submit for reimbursements.

iii. Pond Management

Both Conservation and the Board of Health have requested support related to pond management. Taking from the funding from the Library HVAC, she suggested \$50,000 could be used for a pond management study of the ponds to determine what is needed and how to make them healthy. Conservation received one proposal for \$94,000; the balance would need to come from free cash.

iv. Library

During the October 2022 Special Town meeting, the Library included an article requesting \$200,000 for a new HVAC system. With Mr. Baker providing ongoing maintenance for the system, it has worked longer than expected. With this unspent money, the Library would now like to apply it towards the new library grant request. A requirement of the grant is to have the Town to appropriate \$150,000 in preparation of the Library receiving the grant. Ms. Stofler stated it is contingent upon receiving the grant and she will not be informed October 2025. At this time, only the vote is needed. She also acknowledged the entire amount may not be needed but it is the amount required through the grant process.

The Board noted it may be better to request the Town to be supportive through free cash. It stated it would provide a better understanding of how the Town would support a new library by using Town money instead of ARPA funds. Ms. Stofler argued that she is requesting to use funding that had already been allocated to the Library, but for a different purpose. Ms. Carfado stated it was funding for the Library and it is due this money. The Board recognized their comments, but stated the funds were allocated for a specific purpose; that is what the voters approved at Town meeting. Now the Library is reallocating ARPA money for a different purpose. Is this study a priority at the top of the Town's list?

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to allocate \$1.92M for Pratt Place Culvert and \$450,000 for a new ambulance, using Plymouth County ARPA funds. **Voted 4 – 0**

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

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to \$150,000 for the library grant and \$50,000 for the Pond Management study, using ARPA funds from the Treasury. **Voted 4 – 0**

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

8. Execute State Primary Warrant and Set polling for State Primary from 7am to 8pm

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to set the polling for the State Primary from 7am to 8pm on Tuesday, March 5, 2024. **Voted 4 – 0**

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

9. Municipal Flag Policy discussion

Several towns, including the Town of Hanson, are receiving requests to add politic flags to town flag poles. After a conversation with both the Town Clerk and Town counsel, the Board requested Ms. Green draft a policy reflecting what the Town has been doing – flying only the United State flag, the Massachusetts State flag, the Town of Hanson flag and military related flags. The Town will recognize flying flags at half mast, as declared by the president and/or governor, as well when the Town Administrator wishes to acknowledge a long-standing employee. This policy will cover all flag poles on Town owned property.

Ms. Green will meet with Town Counsel to finalize the policy to adopt for next meeting.

IV APPROVE OPEN SESSION MINUTES

1. January 23, 2024

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to approve the meeting minutes as presented on the agenda. ***Voted 4 – 0***

VII COMMITTEE UPDATES

1. Economic Development Committee

Ms. FitzGerald-Kemmett and Mr. Cohen filmed a PSA for new businesses in the community with WHCA TV. The committee intends to meet regularly going forward.

2. High Street Park Committee

Due to lack of a quorum, the meeting was canceled. Mr. Weeks did note some illegal dumping occurred on the site as well as damaging the new signage.

3. Highway Committee

Ms. Rein noted a meeting is scheduled Thursday, February 8, at 10:30am.

4. Maquan Property Reuse Committee

Ms. FitzGerald-Kemmett noted a meeting is scheduled Thursday, February 8, at 6pm.

5. Recreation Commission

The Board noted, as the intention of the Recreation Commission is to create something long standing, an article is needed at Town meeting

6. Transfer Station Taskforce

Mr. Dugan stepped down from his committee roles. Mr. Weeks will speak with Ms. Dias about placing the committee on hold.

7. Whitman Hanson Regional School Agreement Committee

The next meeting is scheduled for February 12, 2024. The Superintendent invited all to budget discussion. The schools are requesting over 9%; Ms. Green stated the Town is offering 5%.

8. Other Committee updates

No other updates to report.

VIII TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

- Ms. Green suggested a change in scheduling as Mr. Madden, tentatively scheduled for the February 20 meeting, is now unavailable. She suggested changing the meeting to February 27 instead. The Board noted there will need to be a meeting as executive session, as there are urgent items needing to be addressed. For open session, Ms. Green suggested all agenda items to be moved to February 27; she agreed regarding executive session. The next meeting will then be March 12, as originally updated on the Select Board calendar.

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to update the Select Calendar, noting the next open session meetings will be February 27, 2024 and March 12, 2024. ***Voted 4 – 0***

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

- Ms. Green reminded the Select Board, during the October 2021 Special Town Meeting, an article related to applicants for permits and licenses, who had financial obligations to the Town, that was approved. She has now received draft legislation back from the Home Rule Legislation committee. Town Counsel reviewed and approved, with minor changes, and returned to Josh Cutler's office for final review by the committee.
- There was a kick off meeting and site walk for the Lite Control Brownfields assessment, a grant funded through the Mass One Stop for Growth program, Verdantas will be assisting the Town to determine ground pollution around the property.
- There was also a kick off meeting with Collins Center with Capital Improvement Committee Chair Frank Milisi. The proposal from the Collins Center included the development of a Capital Improvement Plan. It will take about six months for the Center to collect all the asset information that falls under the Capital Improvement Plan.
- Ms. Green provided an update on the Hanson Aggregate Program, noting the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) granted conditional approval on January 3, 2024. With the assistance from Good Energy, the Town submitted updates to its plan and refiled the changes with the DPU and it granted approval on January 29, 2024. Good Energy will start the procurement process for an electricity supplier, then conducting education and outreach programs to update residents and businesses of the program, with a potential program launch in June 2024. The community can always visit www.HansonCommunityPower.com for more information.
- Union Bargaining will begin by the end of February as contracts with the Administrative Professionals Union, Highway Union, Police and Fire Union expire June 30, 2024. The plan is to have new agreements are in place for July 1, 2024.
- Stepping back to the animal control budget and proposed reopening of the shelter, Ms. Green addressed concerns about animal control that were voiced, specifically those regarding the Animal Control Officer working in more than one town. She noted it is common practice for people to work one or two part-time jobs in addition to their full-time job to make ends meet. Also, not all of the calls the Animal Control Officer

responds to are publicly announced as most residents are not interested in all the details of the role. Mr. Kenney is doing the job the Town hired him to do and deserves to be treated as an employee of the Town.

IX

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Weeks, seconded by Ms. Rein, to adjourn to Executive Session.

Voted 4 – 0

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

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn McDowell