**\*ATTENTION: THIS MEETING WAS CONDUCTED TELEPHONICALLY.**

 **AN AUDIO RECORDING OF THE MEETING CAN BE ACCESSED IN REAL TIME BY LOGGING ONTO WHITMAN-HANSON CABLE ACCESS TV:**

**(http://whca.tv/watch/live-hanson)**

***Hanson Board of Selectmen***

Tuesday, April 28, 2020

 6:00 p.m.

***Virtual Meeting***

**I CALL TO ORDER**

At 6:00 p.m., Chairman FitzGerald-Kemmett called the meeting to order and led the

Pledge of Allegiance. She asked for a moment of silence to honor the Hanson resident who died in last night’s fire, firefighters and first responders who worked the blaze and those affected by COVID-19.

**II**  **PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPCOMING MEETINGS**

 Mr. Blauss said there are no public announcements, but read the upcoming meeting dates.

**III NEW BUSINESS**

 ***State Representative Josh Cutler – Legislative Update on Coronavirus***

 Rep. Cutler provided the following updates:

 ▪ The governor extended the stay-at-home advisory and nonessential business closure through May 18

 ▪ The governor announced the formation of a seventeen-member re-opening advisory board, headed by the lieutenant governor, to devise a plan for re-openings

 ▪ A Virtual Notarization law was passed

 ▪ The legislature passed a law that will protect tenants and homeowners from evictions and foreclosures for 45 days post state-of-emergency

 ▪ Legislation has been passed that allows flexibility regarding town election and town meeting dates

 ▪ This week the legislature will hold its first formal session virtually, providing a framework for them getting back to normal

 In response to Board questions, Rep. Cutler said that state aid amounts to towns and cities going forward are uncertain at this time.

***Quarterly Fiscal Update – Todd Hassett, Town Accountant***

Mr. Hassett referenced and reviewed his four-page report for third quarter ending March 31, 2020.

Mr. Hassett stated that the General Fund is tracking well so far. He explained that revenues for the most part are strong, citing tax collection receipts, building permits and investment earnings in particular. He noted that building activity has slowed, which will be of concern for new growth going forward.

In terms of General Fund expenditures, Mr. Hassett stated that most are as expected with no particular areas of concern. He remarked that the public works percentage to date is significantly lower as compared to other years, attributed to the mild winter with no snow deficit.

Mr. Hassett explained that the water fund collections are expected to meet expenditures but likely not generate much of a surplus. He stated that the Water Commission is performing a rate study with a rate increase likely.

Concerning Recreation, Mr. Hassett said that as Camp Kiwanee is mostly closed at this time, he expects both revenues and expenses to run under budget and does not anticipate the need for any subsidies this fiscal year. Looking forward into next fiscal year, Mr. Hassett stated that how the next few months play out will determine revenue estimates, operating expense adjustments and the need for any subsidies.

Mr. Hassett stated that for the Solid Waste Enterprise, there are concerns about getting through the current year and a transfer of funds may be necessary. He described that while revenues are good, they do not cover the cost of the program.

 Answering to question from Mr. Dyer about past cash infusions to Recreation and Solid Waste, Mr. Hassett justified subsidies to Solid Waste as a result of recent cost increases, but acknowledged that both programs will continue to require some level of support. Mr. Hassett expressed that it might be advisable to revisit the Finance Committee’s earlier recommendation that one or both programs rescind the enterprise concept and be folded into the Town’s operating budget.

In response to Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Hassett explained that Investment Income under Revenue Expenditures represents cash management activity that the Treasurer initiates from investing available cash, which consists primarily of interest earnings. Mr. Hassett also explained for Mr. Mitchell that the Water Superintendent has relayed that they are working toward a quarterly billing cycle.

Mr. Hickey asked what effect the Cove not opening this summer would have on the budget. Mr. Hassett explained that at Town Meeting they would reduce the wage and expense line items that support the summer Cove program thereby reducing the budget and the estimated revenue from the Cove for this one year. He continued that if the budget were to be voted at the higher amount and the Cove ended up closing for most of the summer, the Town might be required by the state to update the budget to a more realistic amount.

***Review warrant articles***

Board members were in receipt of print forms of the Town Meeting articles as of this date, with Mr. Stanbrook noting twelve Special Town Meeting articles and thirty-one Annual Town Meeting articles. He stated that some of the non-monetary Town Meeting articles are still in development.

Mr. Stanbrook drew attention to Annual Town Meeting Article 6, Whitman-Hanson Regional School District Assessment, for which he said there is presently a placeholder for a Proposition 2 ½ override.

Mr. Stanbrook explained that given the scheduled June 15 Town Meeting date, May 26 would be the meeting date on which the Board would sign the warrants to be posted. He requested that the Board offer any changes or omissions that they observe with this version.

***Review Special Town Meeting Warrant***

Mr. Stanbrook stated that the Special Town Meeting articles are not finalized as yet. He continued to say that he planned to post the Warrant with non-specific amounts as opposed to figures that may later change and asked the Board for guidance. Chairman FitzGerald-Kemmett stated that normally figures are posted on the Warrant so that the public can review and be informed ahead of Town Meeting and suggested he speak with Town Clerk Beth Sloan for the preferred protocol.

***Discussion of an Override question***

Mr. Stanbrook clarified that the Town Meeting article regarding a Proposition 2 ½ override is a placeholder at this point, with no school budget in place and Hanson’s actual assessment number unknown at this time. He stated that he wants to have it as a placeholder in the event that an override becomes a reality.

***Small Business Relief Partnership Grant – Attorney General’s Office***

Mr. Stanbrook explained that Rep. Cutler informed him that the Attorney General’s Office has grant money available for small business relief. Mr. Stanbrook said that each town is allowed to request up to $50,000 to assist its small businesses. He stated that a program has been created, they have applied for the grant, which is awaiting state review.

Mr. Stanbrook explained that those qualifying for a grant locally will include sole proprietorships, partnerships and Massachusetts corporations employing less than twenty-five. He continued that the program will allow local businesses to apply for a $2,500 grant in order to pay local taxes and bills owed to the Town, utility bills, rent or mortgage payments. Mr. Stanbrook said that a committee formed will review applications, noting that no cash payments will go directly to approved applicants, but will rather be made for them by the Town.

***Requests/Appointments/Resignations***

There were no requests, appointments or resignations for the Board to address.

**IV OLD BUSINESS**

 ***Discuss adding preface to 2019 Town Report***

Mr. Stanbrook referenced for the Board a draft of the 2019 Town Report that had been submitted to them for review. The Board expressed satisfaction of the report in its current state.

 ***Extend Town Administrator’s authorization to sign warrants***

Chairman FitzGerald-Kemmett stated that in light of the governor’s shutdown extension until May 18, it may be appropriate to extend the Town Administrator’s signatory authority.

 ***MOTION*** by Mr. Mitchell, seconded by Mr. Hickey, to extend the Town Administrator’s authorization to sign warrants until May 19. ***Roll call vote Dyer aye, Mitchell aye, Hickey aye, Blauss aye and FitzGerald-Kemmett aye. Voted 5 – 0***

 ***Regional School Assessment matter***

 Chairman FitzGerald-Kemmett reviewed events to date concerning the meetings of the Regional Agreement Committee, of which she and Mr. Dyer participate. She said that at its last meeting, members had been asked to share those items that they favored for inclusion in the agreement, with their requests as follows:

 ▪ Rolling five-year average for student count

 ▪ Review of the agreement every five years

 ▪ Membership to be tied to the percent of the budget that is paid

 ▪ Ability to have an intermediary mediation in the event one town wanted to leave the district and the other town not permitting them to

 ▪ 50/50 split of the difference between statutory and per pupil method to be implemented

 Chairman FitzGerald-Kemmett stated that the committee meets again on Thursday [April 30] during which these requests will be discussed.

 Chairman FitzGerald-Kemmett asked the Board to refresh its view on the formation of a de-regionalization feasibility study committee. The Board was in consensus that now is not the right time to form a committee due to its long, complex nature, with some suggestion to hold back plans until after the school committee’s upcoming discussion on rescinding the statutory methodology for fiscal year 2021.

**V TOWN ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT**

Mr. Stanbrook updated the Board on recent activities, as follows:

1. Mr. Stanbrook itemized warrants that he has signed on behalf of the BOS as follows:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 4/16 | Warrant 42 | $210,592.35 | Vendor Warrant (consisting largely of $131,307.50 for water debt) |
| 4/16 | Warrant 42-PR | $129,431.46 | Payroll Warrant |
| 4/16 | Warrant 42-WH | $23,661.01 | Payroll Withholding Warrant |

1. Mr. Stanbrook cited his obligation per the Town Administrator’s Special Act to report to the Board monthly on outstanding legal matters. He expressed that he has complied with the Act and prepared the report, but due to the sensitive nature of some of the information, he will submit it privately to Board members, and at this time, via mail.
2. Mr. Stanbrook said that the Town has contracted with the firm KMA to assist with a town-wide assessment of its American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance. He said that KMA’s services are being paid by a state grant to conduct a public survey concerning ADA access in the Town. He said that public feedback is needed and they can go to the Town’s website ([www.hanson-ma.gov](http://www.hanson-ma.gov)) under the heading “ADA Self-Evaluation & Transition Plan Public Survey Due May 8th” to find the survey.
3. Mr. Stanbrook stated that the Board of Health has declared that everyone in Town, age two or older, should be wearing a face covering when entering an essential business. He added that employees should wear a mask when coming in to contact with the public or within six feet of a co-worker.
4. Mr. Stanbrook reported on Town employees working from home stating that department heads are in regular contact with their staff to concerning departmental responsibilities. He stated that police, fire, highway, water, transfer station and a skeleton crew of Town Hall workers continue to work on-site every day to ensure that the Town is functioning.
5. Mr. Stanbrook updated re-opening plans to say that he has been working with the Police Chief, Building Inspector and the Town Hall custodian to determine what needs to be done to open Town Hall safely while still serving the public. Mr. Stanbrook said that the planning process will continue with each of the other town buildings.
6. Mr. Stanbrook stated that he has been working with Mr. Hassett concerning the FY2021 budget and that as it stands now, the General Fund deficit is about $1.6M. He said that the majority of that amount is the regional school district assessment and consists of the full amount that Hanson had been told would be its assessment.

Mr. Stanbrook stated that there has been some discussion concerning setting up special education stabilization funds, which can be used as a funding option. He explained that special education stabilization funds are created by vote at Town Meeting, with a majority vote to add money to the fund and 2/3 vote to withdraw from the fund. Mr. Stanbrook stated that the fund can be used for unanticipated Hanson special education costs. He added that interest accrued from the fund would stays with the fund.

1. Upon recent conversation with the Veterans Agent Tim White, Mr. Stanbrook asked that the Memorial Day event be placed on the next agenda for discussion with Mr. White.
2. Mr. Stanbrook explained that as the governor has just extended the stay-at-home order until May 18, he asked the Board if the Town should also extend its restriction order, currently set to expire on May 4.

 ***MOTION*** by Mr. Mitchell, seconded by Mr. Hickey, to continue the current Town of Hanson COVID-19 emergency measures until May 18. ***Roll call vote Dyer aye, Mitchell aye, Hickey aye, and Blauss aye and FitzGerald-Kemmett aye. Voted 5 – 0***

1. Mr. Stanbrook expressed his appreciation of the hard work by all Town government employees.

**VI APPROVE MINUTES**

 ***MOTION*** by Mr. Dyer, seconded by Mr. Hickey, to approve the minutes from the April 7 and April 14 meetings. ***Roll call vote Dyer aye, Mitchell aye, Hickey aye, Blauss aye and FitzGerald-Kemmett aye. Voted 5 – 0***

**VII ADJOURNMENT**

***MOTION*** at 7:20 p.m. by Mr. Dyer, seconded by Mr. Hickey, to adjourn the meeting. ***Roll call vote Dyer aye, Mitchell aye, Hickey aye, Blauss aye and FitzGerald-Kemmett aye. Voted 5 - 0***

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley Schindler

Minutes Clerk