

**Hull Select Board
Final Minutes
February 15, 2023**

The meeting of the Hull Select Board was held at 7:30 p.m. on February 15, 2023 at Hull Town Hall, 253 Atlantic Avenue, Hull, Massachusetts.

Present: Jennifer Constable, Chair; Donna Pursel, Vice-Chair; Irwin Nesoff, Clerk; Greg Grey, Member; Domenico Sestito, Member. Also present were Town Counsel James Lampke and Town Manager Philip Lemnios.

Before calling the meeting to order Constable led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Joint Meeting with the Advisory Board re: FY24 Budget Presentation

David Clinton, Chair of the Advisory Board, was present along with Finance Director, Mike Buckley. Clinton opened the meeting of the Advisory Board. Lemnios said he would be doing a brief overview of the FY24 Budget, which covers the period from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024 and would be presented at Town Meeting on May 1st.

Lemnios started with a brief explanation of the revenue side of the budget. He said that they have increased the tax levy from \$34.9 million to \$36.2 million, which is the increase allowed under Proposition 2.5. He said that although the Governor has not yet released her budget, they are estimating a 2% increase in state aid, and project that state aid will move from \$6.6 million to \$6.7 million. He noted that one of the main drivers of state aid is school enrollment, which over the past few years has dampened what Hull can expect, but they feel that 2% is a safe estimate. He said they are estimating an increase of 3.11% in local receipts, which he feels is a very conservative estimate, bringing them from \$6.3 million to \$6.46 million. He said that property taxes account for 73% of total operating revenue, local receipts for 13%, and state aid about 14%.

Lemnios then reviewed the expenditure side of the budget. He said that the FY24 operating budget is \$30.1 million and 57.5% of that (\$17.3 million) is for the School Department and that 42.5% (\$12.8 million) is for the general operation of other Town departments. He said that departmental budgets increased by approximately 3.88% over FY23, which is well under inflation. He said that most of the increase in departmental budgets is driven by labor costs and noted that the budget for the Select Board has increased by 36% as a result of the request to add an Assistant Town Manager position. He said they are trying to increase staff in certain departments that need additional support and to provide education and training for employees so they can handle increased workloads and can step into positions when needed.

Lemnios gave a brief description of the various town expenses, including insurance, pension contributions, debt servicing, and day to day services. He pointed out that the Fire and Police Departments are fully funded and fully staffed and that the Council on Aging has seen a significant increase in their budget due to the rapidly increasing number of seniors in the Town. He also noted that they will be able to add \$1.5 million to the Stabilization Fund, bringing the balance to \$2.151 million, which will allow the new Town Manager some opportunity and flexibility in planning for future capital expenses. He said that a portion of this money comes from ARPA, and they did not want to put this money into the general operating budget.

In summary Lemnios said that receipts and expenditures balance out. The total revenue increase for FY24 is 3.11% and the total expenditure increase is 3.11%. He said they are trying to keep as much control of the budget as they can while maintaining Town services and noted that since Covid many of these services are now available online and that residents are able to access many of them without taking time off from work.

Constable opened the meeting up to the Advisory Board and the Select Board for questions or comments. Sestito thanked Lemnios and Buckley for a great job in steering them through tough financial times. Clinton said the Advisory Board deeply appreciates what Lemnios has been able to do to "right the financial ship" for Hull over the past 14-15 years and said that it has been a joy to work with both him and Buckley. Lemnios thanked Clinton and

said he has been fortunate to work with this Board and said that any success with the budget has been the result of a collaborative effort.

The Advisory Board adjourned their meeting at 8:15 p.m.

APPROVALS

Mike Buckley, Chair, Hull Contributory Retirement Board re: Approval of Chapter 269 Acts of 2022 Cost of Living Adjustment 5% increase pursuant to G.L. c. 32, Sec. 103.

Buckley said that in January the Retirement Board had voted an adjustment of 5% for retirees that is capped at the first \$17,000 of retirement allowance and in order to effectuate that they need the Select Board to increase the cost-of-living adjustment for FY23 to 5%.

Motion	Sestito	To approve a 5% increase in the cost-of-living adjustment for retirees for FY23 pursuant to GL c. 32, Section 103
Second Vote	Nesoff Unanimous	

APPOINTMENTS

Nicole Hocking re: Letter of Interest to serve on the Local Cultural Council and Letter of Interest to serve on the Affordable Housing Committee

Hocking said that she moved to Hull in December with her husband and would like to become involved in the community. She said that she currently works at Brockton Area Multi-Services, a non-profit agency focusing on people with developmental disabilities and brain injuries. She said that of the two committees for which she has applied she would prefer the Cultural Council.

Motion	Sestito	To appoint Nicole Hocking to the Local Cultural Council for a term to expire on June 30, 2026
Second Vote	Grey Unanimous	

Pursel explained that she must be a registered voter in the Town and Constable said that she must complete Conflict of Interest training and be sworn in by the Town Clerk.

Kelly Reilly re: Letter of Interest to serve on the Affordable Housing Committee

Reilly said she has lived in Hull her entire life and loves the sense of community in the Town. She said she is currently working as a Social Worker at the Senior Center and through her work has seen the challenges that some people face in finding affordable housing. She feels she has a good understanding of the scope of the problem and would like to be proactive and find a way to work toward a solution.

Motion	Sestito	To appoint Kelly Reilly to the Affordable Housing Committee for a term to expire on June 30, 2023
Second Vote	Nesoff Unanimous	

Sandra Baler-Segal re: Letter of Interest to serve on the No Place for Hate Committee

Baler-Segal said she moved to Hull from Braintree about eight years ago and would like to become involved in the Town. She said she worked for the Boston Public Schools for over thirty years, was the Director of a shelter for battered women, and was part of the Democratic Party's anti-racism efforts. She said she also has extensive

experience in writing grants. She said she is always looking for ways to help the underdog and feels this Committee would be a good place to start.

Constable noted that they have four candidates for this Committee and only two open seats. There was a brief discussion about the possibility of increasing the number of members but there was some concern that it might become difficult to maintain a quorum if the Committee is too large. Lemnios suggested the possibility of appointing two alternate members who would be able to vote in the absence of a regular member. The Board felt that this solution made sense.

Motion	Sestito	To expand the No Place for Hate Committee to include two Alternate positions with terms to expire on June 30, 2026
Second Vote	Grey Unanimous	

Constable said that there was a fourth candidate who was not able to attend this meeting so they would hold off on the appointments until she was able to appear before the Board.

DISCUSSION

Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles and Select Board referral of Zoning Petitions to the Planning Board

Lemnios said that the Board will discuss the Town Meeting Warrant Articles and make recommendations at a later meeting once the language of the articles is finalized. However, he said that before this can be done there are a number of potential zoning articles that need to be referred to the Planning Board so they can start the Hearing process. He said there is also a Citizens Petition regarding legalization of recreational marijuana in the Town. He then gave a brief overview of the zoning articles that need to be sent to the Planning Board.

Motion	Grey	To refer the zoning articles identified by the Town Manager to the Planning Board for processing
Second Vote	Sestito Unanimous	

Lemnios said the Advisory Board is beginning its process of reviewing these articles and will be scheduling meetings with the proponents of the Citizens Petitions as well as proponents from various departments. Clinton said that the Advisory Board will be posting a list of their meetings and will list exactly what articles they will be discussing at each meeting.

Select Board Goals and Objectives of 2023

Constable said that over the past few months the Board has been editing and prioritizing their goals and objectives and noted that a lot of the work on these is already in progress. Lemnios pointed out that when the Board started this process, they did not include the search for a new Town Manager. He encouraged the Board to make the search a priority over the next few months and to give the new Manager time to study them and work to accomplish those that seem to be the best fit.

Lemnios said that the staff is continuing to work on implementing the Unified Work Plan and year-round business incentives. He said they are also working with DCR on a number of topics. Constable said the Town submitted a Partnership Agreement to DCR on Monday that they hope will help move forward a variety of collaborative efforts and that the Agreement is now being reviewed by DCR's legal staff.

Lemnios said the Town is working to incorporate Complete Streets in all of their transportation planning so all projects will have bike and pedestrian lanes, etc. that are consistent with the Complete Streets system. With regard to ferry services, he said they just had a marine survey engineer look at the commuter boat, which is over twenty years old and needs to be replaced. They are concerned that due to a decline in ridership on the ferry and the MBTA's precarious financial situation, they will not be inclined to make the investment in a new boat unless Hull

puts in a float, which would cost the Town about \$4 million. He knows that the MBTA is anxious to consolidate services for Hull and Hingham. He said they will investigate grant opportunities for this but their chances are slim since Hull is no longer considered a high ridership location. He said that decisions will have to be made in the next year or so on regarding a float. Constable said that the MBTA Advisory Board Ferry Committee met last week and it sounds as if they are discussing the creation of a Transit Management Association to oversee some of the ferry runs. She did not get the sense that the Hull run is threatened but she wants to make sure that Hull is not overlooked. Lemnios said this will require consistent advocacy on the part of the Town.

Lemnios said there is a great deal of activity in the area of Housing Planning. The Affordable Housing Committee has been gathering data on housing through various Boards and Committees and there are a number of potential zoning articles, some of which deal with affordable housing, that will be presented at Town Meeting. He stressed, however, that these articles should be thoroughly vetted before Town Meeting so that any unintended consequences of their passage can be explored. He said that one major article being proposed concerns accessory dwelling units but he feels the Town needs to thoroughly assess the impact such an amendment would have so that people would really understand what it might involve. Constable reminded everyone that the Municipal Engagement Initiative will be helping to start these important discussions in the community.

Lemnios noted that the Park and Recreation Department has been working hard to implement the Open Space and Recreation Plan and to upgrade the Town's playgrounds. He said they are also seeking a Trail Grant for the area along Straits Pond. He said that the Town has funded the design and construction work on Fort Revere and they are hoping this will go out to bid soon.

Lemnios said that with respect to General Planning the Board is clearly working to find a new Town Manager and is also working with the Council on Aging to implement the recommendations of the Town's recent study. He said that over the next few years there will probably be opportunities to repurpose the Memorial School which could present possibilities for the Senior Center and other Town offices. He said that the Board has not yet sought funding for the Master Planning Effort but he feels this is something the new Town Manager should address.

Lemnios said that at this point the Town has initiated a number of capital projects and he feels they should finish what is already underway rather than starting anything new as they do not want to have too many projects going at the same time. He noted that the Atlantic Avenue project will be winding down in the next year or so. He said they have been doing a significant amount of work on the Public Library, the Senior Center, and the Sewer Treatment Plant over the past few years. He also said they have a CPA application for rehabilitation of the first Town Hall/Fire Station and said they have really tried to make sure that most of their capital projects have a grant component. He noted that the Town has done almost \$60 million in grant-funded work over the last several years. He stressed that resiliency issues related to climate change will almost certainly generate a need for a number of capital projects going forward and recommended that Hull continue its policy of funding general engineering for capital projects so that the Town is in a favorable position to pursue grant money.

Lemnios said that the process for Board and Committee appointments is working well. He said that the Board is working on improved communication with staff, Town departments, residents, and the business community, and this is something they should continue to make a priority.

UPDATES

Grey asked Lemnios for updates on the School Department's thinking about the use of the Memorial School as well as a potential change that is being discussed relative to the Light Plant Manager. Lemnios said that he and Constable had met with the School Committee about two months ago and they had indicated that they would need to have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in place that would define the relationship between the School Department and the General Government and would clarify what would happen if the School Department needed to call the building back into service as a school. They had also indicated that they would like to continue to have the Collaborative housed on the third floor of the building, which Lemnios thinks should be doable. He said he had spoken with the School Superintendent today and they are in the process of drafting a MOU and once he has received it he will circulate it to the Board for review.

Lemnios said the Town would need to consider what options for Town offices they might have if the building were reclaimed by the School Department. He said that lease arrangements with other entities might be a possibility. He said that the Town could look at renovating the current Town Hall location but this would be much more costly than adapting the available space at the Memorial School. He said that under Massachusetts Law, School Departments control their buildings and cannot be forced to do anything with their space.

With respect to the Light Plant Manager, Lemnios said that in 1991, after a period of instability in the Light Department, the residents of Hull had stripped the Light Board of all of its authority other than rate setting and had put the Town Manager in charge of running the Department. He said that over the past twenty years the financial situation of the Light Department has been very stable and the Town's rates are lower than most surrounding areas and the service has been very reliable. He said there is a Citizens Petition being circulated that proposes to take the authority away from the Town Manager but he is not sure what this would accomplish. He said the Light Department functions in the same way as other Town departments and he feels that the current structure provides for a much easier coordination of services.

There was a brief discussion of the previous night's HRA meeting. Nesoff said that no vote was taken and there is another meeting tomorrow night but that there were a significant number of people there who want to keep this as open space and do not want any housing on the property.

Constable announced that as of February 19, 2023 she will be resigning her seat on the Board. She thanked her constituents for seven years of support and the Board for their camaraderie and all of the things they were able to accomplish. She said she looks forward to the prospect of new potential leadership roles in the community and thinks her resignation will make that possible.

Clinton thanked Constable on behalf of the Advisory Board for the collegial and professional way she has worked with them. The members of the Select Board thanked her for everything that she has done in her time on the Board.

There was no need for Executive Session. The Board voted unanimously to adjourn.

Recorded by Kathleen Fanning

Approved by:

Documents

The following documents were included in the members' packets or were presented during the meeting and are available in the Select Board's office upon request:

- Agenda and Added Agenda for February 15, 2023 Select Board Meeting
- Materials related to openings on the Hull Cultural Council, the Affordable Housing Committee, and the No Place for Hate Committee
- Letter to the Select Board from the Chair of the Hull Retirement Board regarding a 5% COLA increase for FY23
- List of Select Board Goals and Objectives

