

Hingham Advisory Committee Meeting  
Tuesday, January 6th, 2026 at 6:30 PM  
Town Hall, 210 Central Street, Second Floor, North Hearing Room  
& Third Floor, South Hearing Room

In Attendance: Carol Tully, Chair, Kevin Freytag, Vice Chair, Ted Ciolkosz, Secretary, Brenda Black, Ben Burnham, Tina Sherwood, John Germain, Jerry Seelen, Steve Pohl, Alan Macdonald, Brian Stack, David Leiphart, Elaine Cusker, Michael Herde, Mary Power

1. The Advisory Committee attended the Select Board meeting in the North Hearing Room and Advisory Committee Chair Carol Tully adopted the same language previously read by the Select Board as an Advisory Committee quorum was met.

2. A Hingham Center for Active Living (HCAL) presentation was then made by Project Manager Dan Pilotta and Project Architect Chris Wanty. Link to full Selectboard Meeting with HCAL presentation could be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Vxa3MglMyc>

The Design Development phase has now been completed, and updates were given about the schedule, project cost, design updates and next steps.

To recap the schedule to date, the HCAL Project Architectural firm, edmSTUDIO, completed a feasibility study in December of 2024, in April of 2025 Annual Town Meeting (ATM) voted to approve design funding for a new HCAL building, in May of 2025 the Schematic Design process began and was completed in September of 2025. The Design Development phase was recently completed last month, December of 2025, with Planning and Zoning Board permit applications submitted. Bringing us current to today's presentation to the Hingham Select Board.

As of today, the project estimate would be \$29,927,423. That figure would include about \$400,000 of offsite building construction for a new sewer line to the HCAL and electric utility connections but would not include other needed work such as a water line to the HCAL, a new hydration station, new fire hydrant, road paving, parking space restriping, etc. outside of the construction site.

Further breaking down the current \$29,927,423 estimate, \$19,964,549 would be used toward the construction of the 25,950 square foot (SF) building, \$6,213,950 for related sitework (140 parking spots), the aforementioned 400k of off-site construction along Bare Cove Park Drive and \$3,348,924 in soft costs such as furniture, testing, construction contingency, etc.

For reference, at 2025 ATM the estimated project cost totaled \$34,100,000 and in September of 2025 the total estimated project cost was \$30,609,757.

Design Updates included a refinement and simplification of the structural grid and stormwater systems, reviewing with the HCAL Building Committee which materials are to be used both inside and outside the building, mechanical systems that would more efficiently fit into and operate in the updated design (mechanical system "right-sizing"), location of windows related to reducing glare, parking lot modifications, stormwater runoff considerations, hardscaping, reduction of originally planned outdoor activities, etc., all with an eye toward trying to make things simpler and less expensive.

Next Steps, it's expected Planning/Zoning Board hearings would begin shortly in mid-January and for edmSTUDIO to complete bid documents (detailed information used by interested contractors to determine a potential bid for HCAL project work) in March. General Contractor (GC) bids would then be received by mid-April, followed by a vote on construction funding at 2026 Annual Town Meeting (ATM).

Of note, because the HCAL would be considered a "149 Project" (a project exceeding \$10,000,000 in cost) contractors are to be pre-qualified by a committee consisting of a member of the OPM team, a member of the Designer team and two members representing the Town of Hingham, to better verify any bidders would have adequate experience with projects of this size.

The Select Board then asked questions beginning with Select Board Chair William Ramsey, asking the OPM if he expected costs to come down any further. In response Mr. Pilotta stated the number received by the estimators is not the number they'd expect the project to cost, as it'd be the middle bid out of however many bids received that would drive the cost, and that he'd generally expect the construction numbers to continue to creep lower moving forward.

Elizabeth Klein then asked the OPM and Architect to further highlight the changes made so far. Project Architect Chris Wanty responded by referencing the Design Updates mentioned earlier but in greater detail stating, as the design process continues, previous estimations are tightened up and fine-tuned; For example, choices of materials are re-evaluated and changed, mechanical system right-sizing decisions to better fit the design were done (specifically changing from a fan coil system to a VRF system), in addition to a decision to reduce the number of parking spaces and make the entire parking lot impervious pavement to help lower related permitting time and expenses (while still maintaining the ability to more easily add parking if needed in the future), along with other refinements to help bring down cost. Lastly, design contingencies amounting to about 1mm at present, if not needed, could add to any reduction in planned cost.

Julie Strehle asked Dan Pilotta about where additional costs could potentially come down. Dan responded, under MA general law it's required that a broad spectrum of vendors and materials exist. That should bring an additional efficiency to the bidding process as vendors could compete for the business to help control costs. Also, recycling material on-site such as using existing boulders as landscaping features, etc.

The Advisory Committee then separated from the Select Board meeting and reconvened upstairs in the South Hearing Room.

### 3. Advisory Committee Liaison Updates –

General HCAL discussions to continue at another meeting although conversation did ensue concerning a recusal by Mary Power from deliberations and vote on the Article concerning the building of a Center for Active Living.

David Leiphart updated fellow Hingham Advisory Committee (AdCom) members on the Affordable Housing Trust chaired by Jack Falvey which last met on 12/10/25 to talk about expenses related to the Lincoln School Apartments. The Affordable Housing Trust determined they would like to pursue an RFP for a construction project but would need to wait for the Select Board and ATM approval first. Specifically, there are 60 existing units and would like to add an additional 30-50 units with the Town of Hingham ceding control of ownership and management to a private entity. It was emphasized the Town would negotiate protections related to affordable housing and have discussions with abutters which could lead to a related warrant article at ATM.

Brian Stack updated AdCom on the Hingham Public School budget after speaking with School Committee Chair Jen Benham. The previously budgeted 1.2mm for Out of District (OOD) expenses are now looking to be underfunded as we started the school year with 52 OOD students and that has grown to 58 students year to date. Any difference in expenses would be paid out of the Town Municipal budget. Lastly, while Massachusetts has approved an OOD funding increase of 3.6%, school tuitions are averaging about a 10% tuition increase.

4. Fund Balance Update - Assistant Town Administrator for Finance, Katie Dugan, and Town Administrator, Tom Mayo, presented FY25 Fund Balance memo. Unassigned Fund Balance is currently about 11.3mm over the financial policy specified amount. Total Fund Balance sits at about 57.7mm, which is subdivided and categorized as either Restricted, Committed, Assigned or Unassigned funds. Note Fund Balance figures are based on "ACFR 70" (Annual Comprehensive Financial Report) and not General Ledger accounting. General Ledger accounting is the daily, transactional recording of financial activity, while the ACFR is the final, audited, high-level reporting product produced annually in accordance

with Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) requirements and indicate the fund balance as of 6/30/25.

Tina Sherwood asked to confirm the 7mm from last year's Unassigned Fund Balance had been spent. It had. Additionally, whether Tom and Katie expected we'd need more money from Unassigned Fund Balance this year. Tom responded he did not know for sure yet, but we could potentially need money for a new Hingham Public Library Chiller. Steve Pohl asked about the 138mm in TAE (Total Annual Expenditures) and Katie clarified Water, Sewer and other self-funding entities plus Teacher's Union pension contributions could be backed out of the total.

5. Five Year Forecast – Katie Dugan presented Version 1 of the Five-Year Forecast, keeping in mind the budgeting process would be continuing over the next 6-8 weeks. There is a currently an estimated 1.1mm shortfall but would likely be less due to an expected 2% increase in funding by the Commonwealth of MA (which would equate to about 200k more than last year) and given local receipts are being forecasted as flat in an effort to be conservative even though they could be around 500k higher. Also, the Town is using an assumption of 12% for healthcare inflation but it could very well be less. All things considered, the deficit could be as small as 3-400k which the Tax Mitigation Stabilization Fund could then cover.

6. Housekeeping – AdCom Chair Carol Tully provided updates as to timelines around hearing Municipal department budgets given the Select Board would begin hearing budgets on 01/13/26 and encouraged AdCom members to begin scheduling time with Dept. Heads now. Also reviewed currently available Warrant Articles (perennials and others) to alert members to begin working on their assignments so we could start adding those to our agenda moving forward; All articles would be due for submission by 01/20/26 so keep an eye on the WASS (the Advisory Committee's Warrant Article Tracking System). Carol also provided an update on the Dropbox storage limit issue and informed the committee a link would be sent which members could use to open and download (but not upload) related data. Anything to be uploaded should be sent to the Chair. Carol will be forwarding any letters from the public to AdCom members with regard to any public feedback.

7. Vote previous meeting minutes – 10/28/25, 11/04/25, 11/18/25, 12/02/25. All approved unanimously.

8. Motion to Adjourn – Motion was made to adjourn and seconded, approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Theodore D. Ciolkosz, Jr., Secretary