

Hingham Advisory Committee Meeting
Tuesday, January 20th, 2026, at 7:00 PM
Town Hall, 210 Central Street, Third Floor, South Hearing Room

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

Absent: Michael Herde

1. The Chair called the Advisory Committee meeting to order and read the following statement. This meeting is being held remotely/or in person as an alternate means of public access pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025 and all other applicable laws temporarily amending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law. You are hereby advised that this meeting and all communications during this meeting may be recorded by the Town of Hingham in accordance with the Open Meeting Law. If any participant wishes to record this meeting, please notify the chair at the start of the meeting in accordance with M.G.L.c. 30A, § 20(f) so that the chair may inform all other participants of said recording.
2. Advisory Committee Chair Carol Tully provided an update, which would not have any impact on the budgets to be discussed tonight, regarding Article 4 related compensation adjustments (raises) for non-union employees (e.g. Fire and Police Chief salaries). In total the annual Article 4 figure typically comes in around \$300-400,000, however, within Cleargov the FY 2026 and FY 2027 budgets have not been fully updated to include Article 4 money due to the timing of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (C.B.A.) negotiations with Hingham Fire, Police and DPW departments. AdCom will be provided updated numbers including the Article 4 adjustments prior to reviewing the affected budgets.
3. Budgets – Began with Human Resources (H.R.), Director Lisa Campbell presented with Advisory Committee (AdCom) liaison Jerry Seelen. The Hingham H.R. Dept. serves approximately 300 full and part time, non-school employees, assists the Personnel Board with administration of Personnel By-law, works to ensure compliance with all applicable labor laws and regulation and assist over 1,100 employees, retirees and family members with enrollment in and understanding of the Town's health, dental and life insurance benefits, etc. Budget growth is about 2.2% over last fiscal year with a requested \$218,696 for personnel services, \$1,325 for expenses equating to a total requested budget of \$228,021.

Steven Pohl liaison for Conservation Dept. with Shannon Palmer, Conservation Officer. It's a three-person department with a budget primarily consisting (about 90%) of salary. Total proposed salary budget is \$218,696 with \$9,325 for expenses (vehicle fuel, office supplies, printing, etc.) and a total proposed budget of \$228,021.

Department of Public Works (D.P.W.) and Transfer Station budgets with D.P.W. Superintendent Ashley Broyer with Ted Ciolkosz, Brenda Black and Ben Burham, AdCom liaisons.

Carol Tully first inquired about initiatives, Ashley responded she is looking to build additional departmental self-sufficiency as far as hauling recyclables using employees with commercial driver's licenses (C.D.L.'s) and not needing to hire licensed outside contractors to drive (which is paid out of the Equipment Rental and Leasing line item in budget). Ashley is currently training three new employees to obtain their C.D.L.'s, which would typically cost over 8k per person if sent to learn elsewhere. Also, the fiscal year began with eight open positions between D.P.W. and the Transfer Station with only three vacant positions remaining; Ashley believes the recent collective bargaining agreement with the Town has helped make Hingham more competitive when hiring and has helped with dept. morale.

D.P.W. is also using new software to analyze Town roads and more efficiently map out and prioritize where grading, paving, repair, etc. work needs to be done while coordinating with Town engineer.

Moving to the D.P.W. budget, the proposed personnel services budget is \$3,025,934 for FY 2027, about a 4% increase between step increases and the recent C.B.A. negotiations, although the Sewer Dept. helps offset a portion of shared D.P.W. administrative salaries. On the expense side, utility costs have increased substantially with inflation and Ashley expects there could be an overage for sand and salt supplies beyond the budgeted amount prior to fiscal year end. Other expenses included overtime, fuel, tires, paving supplies, etc. bringing expenses to \$1,982,528 for a total budget of \$5,008,462.00, about a 2.9% increase over FY '26. Unanimously approved.

The Transfer Station, which collects household and construction trash as well as recycling, etc., has a personnel services budget of \$670,001.00 with expenses of \$1,327,462, plus an additional \$25,000 from Capital Outlay (tires) equated to a total budget of \$2,022,463. Salaries increased about 13.3% from last fiscal year and represented the biggest increase with expenses generally flat. Budget unanimously approved. It was noted Hingham is arguably undercharging for disposal of certain items compared to our peer towns, and in many cases does not charge enough of a fee to fully cover the total disposal cost, mattresses being cited as an example. Supt. Broyer plans to review and propose changes this coming year. Additionally, Ashley talked about the Curbside Composting program which residents could learn about and sign up for on the Town of Hingham website: <https://www.hingham-ma.gov/m/newsflash/Home/Detail/2194>

Bear Cove Park Committee Chair Ray O'Neil, with Adcom liaison David Leiphart, presented a budget with a salary line of \$27,184 for the park ranger and expenses such as fuel, dog park maintenance, equipment, etc. of \$15,300, flat from last year, for a total budget of \$42,484. Unanimously approved.

Athletic Fields budget presented by Recreation Dept. Director Mark Thorell and Chair Vicki Donlan presenting with liaison Mary Power. As a reminder, two years ago the Athletic Fields budget was separated from the Hingham Rec. budget, and covers costs associated with maintaining the approximately 86 acres of athletic fields across Town. Taking the approximately \$100,000 charged annually in field user fees into account, plus an additional \$44,000 from the School Dept. budget, the requested budget being considered tonight is the Town's portion, \$289,526. Unanimously approved.

Bathing Beach Trustees budget presented by Mary Power and Bathing Beach Chair Ed Johnson. Total salary cost is \$32,138 with expenses of \$8,800 for a total requested budget of \$40,938. Unanimously approved. Of note, the Hingham D.P.W. handles trash removal on site, the Hingham Recreation Dept. hires the Bathing Beach lifeguards, and the Select Board largely manages the Bath House which was opened in September of 2020. The Bath House seasonally offers food, restrooms and an attached community room available for rent on Friday's and weekends.

Next, a vote on the Hingham Recreation Revolving Fund. Presented by AdCom liaison Mary Power and Hingham Recreation Director Mark Thorell. The requested Revolving Fund figure is 2.9 million for FY 2027, up from 2.7mm last fiscal year. The requested increase is proposed as a hedge against a potentially strong summer camp enrollment which could increase

salary/expenses by a couple hundred thousand dollars. Mary Power made a motion to limit the amount the Hingham Recreation Revolving fund established under Article 46 of MA General Law to 2.9mm for FY 2027. Motion carried with those present (Michael Herde absent).

Note, this Revolving Fund covers the Hingham Recreation Dept. Director and other staff salaries as well as expenses. Also, Hingham Rec. Dept. revenue comes in seasonally over the course of two fiscal years (the Town of Hingham Fiscal Year ends in June; roughly 1.5mm is generated in July and August from summer camp fees with another 1mm over the subsequent ten months from offered classes, birthday parties and other activities) and is currently exceeding projections with revenue at just under 2.1mm year to date. Director Thorell expects the Hingham Rec. to generate a total of around 2.5-2.6mm by the end of this fiscal year (June of 2026).

The Hingham Select Board Salary budget presented by Assistant Town Administrator for Finance Katie Dugan and liaison Dave Leiphart. There are seven individuals in the group for a total salary cost of \$904,364 (a 5.2% increase over last year due to step increases) with expenses increasing \$75,200 (an increase of 3.5% over last year) for a total requested budget of \$979,364. Unanimously approved.

Legal Services budget with Katie Dugan and Dave Leiphart. The requested FY27 budget is essentially flat from prior FY at \$400,000 (an increase of \$4,628 over FY26), however, like the salt and sand budget it's tough to predict. For reference, over FY23-25 the average spend was about 300k but YTD the Town has spent about 260k roughly six months into the FY. Katie estimated we're trending toward a 520k figure for FY26. Unanimously approved.

4. Warrant Articles – Article H, a perennial article authorizing the Disbursement of Light Dept. Receipts presented by John Germain. Expected figure is about 480k, but no less than 450k, for FY27. Also, HMLP received reimbursement of \$380,284 from the Federal government related to the installation of solar panels at Foster Elementary School which is currently in unassigned fund balance. John went on to recommend Article H, it was seconded and unanimously approved.

Article N, to approve a one-year authorization for FY 2027 allowing the Select Board to accept and grant easements when necessary for the facilitation of public works or other benefits to the Town, was presented by Alan MacDonald. Note, as of a vote at last year's Annual Town Meeting the Select Board is now able to accept, in addition to grant, easements of this kind. Recommendation was made and unanimously approved.

Article AAA, a zoning article to correct a typo with regard to the definition of building height, was presented by Kevin Freytag. Recommendation was made and unanimously approved (with Michael Herde absent).

5. Liaison Updates – Brenda Black provided a Hingham Center for Active Living (HCAL) Building Committee update relating to a Zoning Board of Appeals meeting last week. Of note, a Zoning Board traffic study resulted in no requirements for the planned senior center use given there have historically not been a significant number of accidents at that location. The planning board review process is underway and may recommend that major events at the HCAL be scheduled to avoid coinciding with heavy commuter rail times. Although a traffic light may not be required at the intersection of Bare Cove Park Drive and Fort Hill Street the Town intends to continue planning for a traffic light. The HCAL Building Committee went before the Planning Board on February 9th to continue the permitting process.

David Leiphart updated AdCom on Hingham Affordable Housing Trust zoom info sessions held to date with both residents, and neighbors and abutters of the Lincoln School Building with regard to why they want to both enhance and potentially convey the property to a private entity, as well as related zoning board guidelines. The Select Board (SB) met earlier this evening and may have voted a related article into this year's Town Warrant, which would authorize but not require the SB to dispose of the property as a precursor to the request for proposal process.

6. Housekeeping – Article 4 info has been uploaded to the AdCom dropbox. Contact Carol Tully with any questions. Updates have been made to the Warrant Articles list. Article FF (unassigned fund balance to be used toward temporarily subsidizing employee health care premiums) and Article LL (electronic voting devices at ATM) are both new. Reminder to share voted articles with the assigned editor, 'Cc the Chair and have Town Counsel review as necessary. Plan on meeting every Thursday evening in addition to Tuesday nights moving forward. Upon further consideration it was determined a recusal by Advisory Committee member Mary Power from deliberations and voting on Articles concerning the Hingham Center for Active Living was not necessary. Lastly, Russ Tierney informed AdCom a joint hearing must be held by the SB and AdCom to consider a Weir River Water Company rate increase next Wednesday, 01/28/26. This will be the first such meeting since the Town purchased the water company.
7. Approval of 12/16/25 meeting minutes – Unanimous with Mary Power and Tina Sherwood abstaining.
8. Motion to Adjourn - A motion was made and seconded to adjourn - the following members of the Advisory Committee voted in favor of the motion: Kevin Freytag, Ted Ciolkosz, Brenda Black, Ben Burnham, John Germain, Jerry Seelen, Steve Pohl, David Leiphart, Elaine Cusker, Alan Macdonald (Michael Herde – absent / Brian Stack and Tina Sherwood were dropped from zoom call immediately prior and did not vote).

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