

Hingham Advisory Committee Meeting
Tuesday, February 3rd, 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, John Germain, Jerry Seelen, Steve Pohl, Alan Macdonald, Brian Stack, David Leiphart, Elaine Cusker, Michael Herde, Mary Power

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. Budgets - Hingham Center for Active Living (HCAL) budget presentation by Director Jennifer Young with AdCom liaison Alan Macdonald. HCAL reports directly to Town Administration, 1,226 seniors served with 302 new members past year, thousands of rides provided to supermarket, doctor appointments, etc. Goals to enhance food services, increase space and offered programs and capacity. Staff salary is about 429k, expenses run about 22k and mostly consist of transportation service-related costs on top of the \$16 per senior Massachusetts provides toward transportation. Recommend a total budget of \$451,800.

GAR Hall budget presented by Veterans Services Director Shannon Burke and liaison David Leiphart. Recommend a total budget of \$20,332.

Celebrations with Shannon Burke and AdCom liaison Mary Power. Responsible for Veterans Day, Memorial Day and Battle of Grape Island related remembrances and activities with a total recommended budget of \$15,241.

Veterans' Services budget with Shannon Burke. Veteran's Services manages all Veteran graves, memorials, Veteran emergency and food programs, Veteran Administration claims, work off programs, etc. Note, MA reimburses Town for 75% of related expenses. Proposed total budget of \$277,789.

Health Department with Executive Health Officer Susan Sarni, MPH and liaison Al MacDonald. Responsible for health code regulations and inspections which cover a variety of things from food (e.g. restaurants), water quality, soil testing, and building permits. Increased part-time clerical position from 20 to 25 hours per week but offset with decrease in social worker position hours. Total proposed budget of \$343,779.

Accounting Department budget presented with Town Accountant Ann Naughton and liaison Steven Pohl. Department is responsible for Town payroll, audit and financial reporting, workers compensation and budgets. Personnel expenses are up about 5.9% per contractual obligations with mainly flat expenses. Total requested budget of \$464,460.

Contributory Retirement budget with Hingham Assistant Town Administrator Katie Dugan and liaison Jerry Seelen. Per MA must be fully funded by 2040 and Hingham is on track to meet this goal by 2035. There are no staffing costs. Total expenses are \$7,547,646 which is a 5% increase over last Fiscal Year. Of note, the related catch-up contribution costs are estimated to drop by about 8mm in 2036, although the Town would still need to fund regular contributions.

General Insurance budget, again with Katie and Jerry, covering property and liability insurance had a requested budget of \$1,753,379 which is a 6% decrease due to rebidding of insurance coverage.

Group Insurance budget, presented by Katie Dugan, consists of GIC (Group Insurance Commission) and OPEB (Other Post Employment Benefits). GIC is for active Town employees while OPEB serves those who are retired. GIC has not yet released their updated premiums so only OPEB will be reviewed; OPEB requested budget is \$1,554,162, which only represents the catch-up contribution portion and does not include the regular contribution. It was noted by Mary Power and Steven Pohl if the Town of Hingham temporarily increased health insurance benefits the Town would need to determine if retirees would be included and what impact changing the coverage would have on OPEB contributions.

3. Worker's Compensation budget. Work's Comp. is tough to predict as it is variable from year to year. 330k is the proposed budgeted amount, which is shared between the Town and School Dept. While the Town is currently self-insured, it was suggested by Mary Power it would be a good idea for other options to be explored.
4. Warrant Article E, Salaries of town officers presented and recommended by Michael Herde.
5. Liaison Updates – Elaine Cusker informed AdCom at the 01/29/26 meeting of the Hingham Municipal Light Board it was voted to revise the rate relief qualifications and increase the benefit amount. This is to be paid for via a “customer charge” on bills.
6. Housekeeping – Three more budgets to be heard on Thursday, reviewed tentative dates for the Select Board to hear Warrant Articles
7. 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, Tina Sherwood, John Germain, Jerry Seelen, Steve Pohl, Alan Macdonald, Brian Stack, David Leiphart, Elaine Cusker, Michael Herde, Mary Power

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