

Meeting Minutes of the Special Meeting of Hanover Board of Selectmen held via Zoom conference call on Monday, April 27, 2020 @ 6:00 PM

Present via conference call: Chairman John Tuzik, Vice Chairman Emmanuel Dockter, Selectman David Delaney, Selectwoman Jocelyn Keegan and Selectman John Barry. Also present Town Manager (TM) Joe Colangelo, Assistant Town Manager (ATM) Ann Lee and via conference call Executive Assistant Janet Tierney, and Finance Director (FD) Lincoln Heineman.

At 6:00 p.m. the Chair opened the meeting.

The Chair informed those watching that they may share their comment or questions by hitting star 9 or raising their virtual hand. The Chair then asked for any public commentary. Seeing none, the Board moved onto the first and only agenda item the evening, a discussion of the Special and Annual Town Meeting Warrants.

TM stepped through the articles with the Board and FD.

Colleen Smith shared her screen so all could see the articles being discussed.

The Board had no comment on articles 1-8.

TM and FD pointed out to the Board that article 8 has the updated language which returns remaining funds in unused capital projects or capital projects that have been completed and have remaining funds in them, to free cash to increase the reserve fund for emergency or unforeseen expenditures.

Vice Chair Dockter discussed the placement of the potential additional CPA related article and how it would tie into current article 7. The Board agreed there is a need to keep both CPA articles.

The Vice Chair discussed the proposed article language provided by Town Counsel, which encapsulates the Board's discussion at the last meeting. Namely, it reduces the CPA surcharge down to the minimal amount needed to cover the ongoing debt requirements for FY21 and FY22 and then returns to the current 3% in FY23. It would be an article for a Home Rule Special Legislation, which if approved at Town Meeting, would need to then be approved by the Legislature.

TM clarified that it is written as the Town would collect .5% instead of 3%, but in actuality with the outstanding debt obligations, the Town would be collecting 1.2% due to the ongoing debt requirement.

FD informed the Board that currently under the CPA act 5% or roughly \$66,000 of the CPA surcharge is allocated to supplement CDMI salaries, which is then appropriated every year at Town Meeting. He informed the Board that if the CPA surcharge is reduced, this amount will be a budgeting issue to be addressed through the operating budget.

Selectwoman Keegan requested the dollar amount in savings for the people if this process is adopted. .

Approved
6/15/2020

TM informed the Board that on average it will be about a \$100 savings per household for two years if the CPA surcharge was reduced as discussed. Selectwoman Keegan estimated that alternatively the State match would provide roughly \$15 of savings per household.

The Board voted to approve the article language drafted by Town Counsel for inclusion in the warrant. Chair, aye, Vice Chair aye, Selectman Delaney, aye, Selectman Barry, aye, Selectwoman Keegan, nay.

The Chair shared his opinion that reducing the CPA surcharge is an opportunity to provide some relief to the people in town, and the residents deserve the opportunity to vote on this at Town Meeting.

Vice Chair Dockter clarified that reducing the surcharge does not directly reduce the budget. It doesn't directly reduce expenses or directly increase revenues, and it is separate from property taxes. He went on to say that the Board has three goals. One is to keep the amount property tax payers pay flat. If the surcharge is reduced this will reduce the property tax payers pay amount which means the Board doesn't have to reduce the property tax amount as much to get to a flat payment. The Vice Chair shared that the expectation is that FY22 is going to be very difficult and difficult decisions are going to be made. He could not imagine looking a Teacher, Firefighter, Policeman or DPW worker in the face and telling them that they are going to have to take a pay cut or that the Town is going to make an adjustment in staff, if we did not at least put this on the table for consideration. This approach automatically returns the CPA to 3% in FY23 which will avoid this step being used in an opportunistic way by those opposed to the CPA surcharge.

The Chair thanked the Vice Chair for the work he has done on this.

The Board moved on to discuss the rest of the warrant articles.

Vice Chair Dockter raised the question of the wording and placement of the election language in the warrant as the election will be taking place before the Town Meeting this year. FD informed the Board that due to the fact that Hanover always includes the election hours in the warrant, in Town Counsel has advised that the hours should be included in the warrant this year as well.

TM agreed to reach out to Town Counsel for guidance on the election language and placement within the Warrant.

The Board Voted to open the Warrant.

The Board Voted to remove Articles 21-30, 33 – 35, 37, 38, and 44

The Board voted to add the CPA surcharge article drafted by Town Counsel as article number 7.

The Board voted to add draft article number 8, rescinding capital projects.

The Board fielded online comments from residents regarding the proposed election hours and discussed their varying opinions on what would be reasonable hours, all thing considered, for the physical polls to be open at the High School.

TM informed the Board that the election is being run as part of the incident command structure headed by Chief Blanchard and TM is confident that whatever the Board decides, Chief Blanchard and his team will be able to get it up and running.

The Town Clerk via conference call informed the Board that as long as the election starts no later than 12 Noon and stays open for at least 4 hours the Town will legally be fine.

The Board voted to close the Town Meeting Warrant.

The Board voted to open the Special Town Meeting Warrant.

The Board voted to remove Article 2 regarding the OPEB Trust Meals Tax.

The Board voted to include the Clerk's petition article affirming her decision to waive the \$10 Dog Licensing Late Fee during the Corona Virus Emergency and reinstating the fee two weeks after the stay at home advisory ends.

The Board voted to close the Special Town Meeting Warrant.

The Vice Chair directed the Clerk to keep Incident Commander Chief Blanchard informed on the number of mail in ballots requested and returned so that the Chief could use those numbers in planning for election day at the High School.

FD informed the Board of the process of handling mail in ballots once they are received at Town Hall.

The Clerk informed the Board that residents can use the "Track My Ballot" system available on the Secretary of the Commonwealth website to see where their mail in ballot is in the process.

At Selectman Delaney's request FD informed the Board that a request for election help is being sent out to volunteers who have offered to help during the crisis, and people interested in volunteering are encouraged to fill out a volunteer form noting that they are interested in volunteering at the election. The volunteer form can be found via the Town Website's Covid 19 link.

The Clerk assured the Chair that restrictions due to the Covid Crisis will not impede anyone from requesting a mail in ballot.

The Clerk stated that the Town absolutely needs a signature on the request for a mail in ballot. The Town Clerk's Office and the Town Hall are currently closed to the public so people requesting a mail in ballot may print, sign and scan, and then email, mail or drop off the signed request to the Town Hall. The request form has been made readily available online.

The Board voted to set the election hours on June 27th, 2020 from 12:00 Noon to 6:00pm.

Vice Chair Dockter, aye, Selectwoman Keegan, aye, Selectman Barry, aye, Chairman Tuzik, nay, Selectman Delaney, nay.

The Board agreed to discuss any concerns with the election hours at the next meeting.

In response to an online request, the Board ran through the list of articles removed from the Warrant, and informed everyone that a copy of the updated warrant would soon be available on the Town's website.

The Meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Approved
6/15/2020