

**Hanover Advisory Committee**  
**550 Hanover Street**  
**Hanover, MA 02339**  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, February 13, 2017 – 6:00 pm

**Opening:**

The meeting was opened at 6:03 p.m. by Edward Hickey, Chairman.

**Committee Attendees:**

Edward Hickey  
Angela Blanchard  
Joan Port-Farwell  
Wayne Moores  
Sandra Hayes  
Jerry O'Hearn  
Brandon Freeman  
Gavin Little-Gill

**Absent**

Emmanuel Dockter

**Review of Meeting Minutes**

Angela Blanchard made a motion to accept the minutes from January 31, 2017 as written. This was seconded by Jerry O'Hearn. All were in favor and the motion passed.

**General Discussion**

The Committee discussed their preliminary impressions of the draft FY18 budget produced and provided to them by the Town Manager Troy Clarkson. Chairman Ted Hickey stated that the Committee would be joining the Board of Selectmen for a presentation of said budget by Mr. Clarkson at 7 pm in the first floor large hearing room, and he would like the Committee to come to an informal consensus regarding their position and questions prior to the presentation. Joan Port-Farwell called the Committee's attention to the following portion of the Town Manager's budget memo that stated *"we conducted a review of the potential of raising the levy limit by only 2%, but determined that such a reduction in available funding for services, given the high demand, and the ambitious goals of the Board and Advisory Committee to continue to embark on new and bold initiatives, would stymie our ability to fulfill those goals."* Mrs. Port-Farwell stated that she would like a less than 2 ½ increase and cannot recall the Advisory Committee making past determinations or recommendations regarding services and goals that counter a reduction. Mr. Hickey expressed his disappointment that an increase of less than 2 ½ was not implemented. He is concerned that a system of underestimating revenue and overestimating expenses to achieve free cash seems counter to best business practices. Mr. Hickey made mention of zero based budgeting, and noted that similar figures appear in the budget from year to year. Joan Port-Farwell commented on multiple portions of the budget including outsourcing and stipends. Mrs. Port-Farwell believes returning to quarterly billing is a counterproductive idea and will cost the Town more money. She also stated that a portion of the large overlay account should be transferred to free cash, and the new finance director (once hired) should request an audit before taking over the books. Jerry O'Hearn stated his concern that line items in the budget that have not been expended for multiple years are still being budgeted for. Gavin Little-Gill stated that many of the budget figures are not the actuals and are just estimates. Mr. Little-Gill would like to obtain the actuals, and the Committee agreed. Mr. Little-Gill also stated that it's his understanding that the Town is unable to locate the contract documents for the current financial software being utilized. Angela Blanchard and Sandra Hayes stated that the Municipal

department's budgets look straight forward, and they did not have any issues. They also informed the Committee that the position of Town Planner and Conservation Agent are being combined into one position with a new title. Angela Blanchard stated that new information from Police Chief Walter Sweeney indicates that police cruisers are being driven to or sometimes beyond standard mileage for replacement in part due to delays in receiving newly ordered cruisers.

The Committee again reviewed a spreadsheet of hypothetical tax projections produced by Gavin Little-Gill and did some calculations of the possible future tax savings if a less than 2 ½ increase was implemented over the course of multiple years.

#### **Next Meetings**

The Committee's next meeting will be held on Monday, February 13<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm (directly after this meeting) in the first floor large hearing room and is a joint meeting with the Hanover Board of Selectmen.

#### **Adjournment**

Sandra Hayes made a motion to adjourn. This was seconded by Gavin Little-Gill. All were in favor, and the meeting adjourned at 6:57 pm.

**Hanover Advisory Committee**  
**550 Hanover Street**  
**Hanover, MA 02339**  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, February 13, 2017 – 7:00 pm

**Joint Meeting with the Hanover Board of Selectmen**

**Opening:**

The meeting was opened at 7:04 p.m. by Brian Barthelmes, Chairman of the BOS

**Attendees:**

Brian Barthelmes, Board of Selectmen  
Robert O'Rourke, Board of Selectmen  
John Tuzik, Board of Selectmen  
Troy Clarkson, Town Manager  
Ann Lee, BOS Selectmen Administrator  
Edward Hickey, Advisory Committee  
Angela Blanchard, Advisory Committee  
Joan Port-Farwell, Advisory Committee  
Wayne Moores , Advisory Committee  
Sandra Hayes, Advisory Committee  
Jerry O'Hearn, Advisory Committee  
Gavin Little-Gill, Advisory Committee  
Brandon Freeman, Advisory Committee  
Anthony Marino, Assistant Town Manager  
Chelsea Stevens, Acting Director of Finance  
Jeffrey Blanchard, Fire Chief  
Walter Sweeney, Police Chief

**Troy Clarkson-Presentation of Draft FY18 Budget**

Town Manager Troy Clarkson presented an overview of the FY18 proposed budget. Mr. Clarkson touched on many topics of the budgeting process including estimating revenues and expenses, how funds are appropriated within the Town, prioritizing capital plan projects and achieving the goals set forth by the Board of Selectmen. The Hanover Public Schools receive the largest annual appropriation as the Town places a high value on education. Mr. Clarkson noted that the budget is balanced without the use of free cash, and the Town of Hanover is the only community in Plymouth County that has received an award for their budget. Mr. Clarkson highlighted cost savings including keeping large portions of legal administration in house and combining the Town Planner and Conservation Agent position.

Advisory Committee Chairman Edward Hickey expressed the Committee's disappointment that a tax increase of less than 2 ½ percent wasn't implemented in the FY18 budget. Mr. Hickey highlighted the financial struggles of many residents and the future implications of a continued 2 ½ percent tax increase each year. Troy Clarkson stated that his office is mindful of the burden annual tax increases place on the community; however, he feels a reduction of the increases will limit the availability of town provided services the community has grown accustomed to and enjoys. Mr. Clarkson agrees that the current tax increase model is not sustainable and is willing to explore avenues to reduce spending including regionalization of certain town services with surrounding communities and possible tax relief from forecasted increased revenue from Rt. 53 commercial revitalization. Edward Hickey agreed that regionalization may be feasible at some point and increased revenue from Rt. 53 businesses would be a

welcomed outcome. Mr. Hickey inquired if the Town could reduce free cash and the annual budget yet still keep the current level of town services by increasing efficiency. Troy Clarkson stated that he believes town departments are fairly efficient currently, and any reduction in free cash could adversely affect the Town's ability to manage unexpected financial needs. Mr. Clarkson is open to any suggestions for budget reductions in town departments. Edward Hickey stated that the Advisory Committee will be meeting with each department to review their individual budgets and looks forward to working closely with Mr. Clarkson and the Board of Selectmen on ideas to reduce the budget. Joan Port-Farwell stated her concern at the increased level of outsourcing of certain town department functions yet not seeing the expected reduction of staff in those same departments since less work should theoretically equal less staff. Mrs. Port-Farwell also stated that the possibility of returning to quarterly tax billing would be unwise and would double costs. Troy Clarkson stated he will look into these issues and is committed to making town services as efficient as possible.

#### **Next Meetings**

The Committee's next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 15<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm.

#### **Adjournment**

The Advisory Committee adjourned and departed the joint meeting at 8:04 pm.