1. Public Comment
Chair Christie asked for public comment.
None

2. Review and Discussion of Revised Petition for Sole Owned Pole License Request of Liberty Utilities along Dogford Road and to Authorize Town Manager to Execute All Necessary Documents
Mel Emerson appeared on behalf of Liberty Utilities which has submitted a revised pole license request for the installation of poles 47 & 47-84, with conduits, cables and devices in a public way along Dogford Road to provide service to a new customer at Lot 9-112 Pinneo Hill Road. Pole 47 is a replacement of an existing pole and pole 47-84 is a new stub pole and anchor. This revised pole installation configuration was developed, in cooperation with a private property owner at the intersection of Dogford and Pinneo Hill Roads, who agreed to allow placement of utility poles on his property to eliminate the need for on-road installation which would have necessitated the trimming of several trees on Pinneo Hill, a scenic road.

Selectboard members Joanna Whitcomb and Nancy Carter expressed their gratitude to Mel Emerson and Liberty Utilities for the thoughtful revised approach given the extent to which the public loves the protected overhead tree canopy on scenic roads like Pinneo Hill.

Selectboard Member Geraghty MOVED to approve the license request and authorize Town Manager to sign all necessary documents. Vice Chair Rassias SECONDED the Motion. The board voted all in favor.

3. Recommendation to Adopt Police Corporal Job Title, Labor Grade 16
The Hanover Police Department proposes the addition of a police corporal position per shift for a total of three. These positions are for internal candidates as current patrol officers are performing the duties of this supervisory roles during their shifts. The position of police corporal has been developed with an assigned labor grade of 16. The upgrading of these positions was approved by the Selectboard as part of their adoption of the FY 2019-2020 budget. Staff recommends that the Selectboard adopt this new job title and labor grade so that the Department can begin recruiting to fill these positions.

Selectboard Member Whitcomb MOVED to adopt Police Corporal job title, Labor Grade 16. Selectboard Member Carter SECONDED the Motion. The board voted all in favor.
4. Recommendation to Adopt Previously Tabled Abatement as Recommended by Advisory Board of Assessors
On September 3, 2019, the Selectboard accepted Recommendations by the Advisory Board of Assessors with the exception of one tabled request. It was hoped this one request could be heard at the next Selectboard meeting however, Town staff was unable to consult with Town Counsel until recently. The decision to wait until sufficient legal consultation could occur stems from the complexities of this particular parcel which had been deeded by the Town due to failure to pay taxes in 2018, but which was subsequently reacquired by the owner after a lengthy legal process in December 2018. In question was whether or not the Town was obligated to abate taxes for a property owned by the Town until December 31, 2018. This request is now ready for the Selectboard to accept. The Selectboard’s role is simply to accept what the Board of Assessors has decided as a final step in the Town process.

Selectboard Member Whitcomb MOVED to accept the abatement recommended by the Advisory Board of Assessors. Selectboard Member Carter SECONDED the Motion. The board voted all in favor.

5. Appointments: Sustainable Hanover
Sustainable Hanover Committee- Stowe Beam, David McManus, Marjorie Rogalski and April Salas, all long-standing members, have indicated their desire to have their appointments renewed by the Selectboard.

Selectboard Member Whitcomb MOVED to approve the appointments requested. Selectboard Member Carter SECONDED the Motion. The board voted all in favor.

6. Banner Request - Norris Cotton Cancer Center for the Prouty
Ms. Griffin noted these requests can be accommodated for light posts and overhead banner.

Vice Chair Rassias MOVED to approve the banner requests. Selectboard member Geraghty SECONDED the Motion. The board voted all in favor.

Ms. Griffin noted that these banner requests have to be approved because they need a license because the location is in the right-of-way. The Town has to accept liability.

Selectboard Member Whitcomb noted that six weeks is a long time to have light pole banners up for one requester. Ms. Griffin said it’s been explained to the requester that if another request is made for light post banners during the same timeframe, half of the poles will be replaced with banners from the other requester.

7. Approval of Minutes – December 16, 2019
The minutes were discussed and amended, but then the conversation moved on to discussing the new sidewalk plow and how much pedestrian traffic there is in Hanover and no motions were made or approved.

8. Administrative Reports
- Ms. Griffin noted she will be in department budget meetings all week.
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- Ms. Griffin noted the legislative session is gearing up. There are a number of bills before the legislature that can impact municipalities. One would reinstate many of the reductions to retirement benefits that had been eliminated in 2012. The cost to municipalities would be $200,000,000. There are also some renewable energy bills she will be keeping her eye on as well as a property tax issue. It would reduce the amount of tax revenue donor towns could retain in-town.

9. Selectboard Reports

Selectboard Member Joanna Whitcomb
Selectboard Member Whitcomb had nothing to report.

Selectboard member Nancy Carter
Selectboard member Carter noted the Planning Board is meeting tomorrow night and proposed zoning amendments will be discussed. She also noted there was an article in Valley News about short-term rentals in Hanover. The Planning Board would like to hear from residents about this issue. They will host two listening sessions where no votes will be taken on Tuesday, January 21 at 7:30pm at the Black Community Center and Saturday, January 25 at 10:30am at the same location.

Selectboard Member Bill Geraghty
Selectboard Member Geraghty noted the Hanover Finance Committee met tonight and on January 14th and 15th will be the final votes on the budget for the school board and the Town. The Finance Committee will meet again on the 16th.

Vice Chair Athos Rassias
Vice Chair Rassias had nothing to report.

Chair Peter Christie
Chair Christie had nothing to report.

10. Other Business

Ms. Griffin gave an update on the assessing situation. There is a draft of responses to the assessing questions which were posed during the public meeting held September 16th which she has shown the Selectboard members and would like their final comments before posting to the website. Friday is the due date for responses to an RFP for revaluations- a full measure and list in either the 2020 or 2021 tax years. It’s also the due date for feedback for a third-party review which was sent to eight consultants who do this kind of work. Dave is departing from the Assessing office and Ms. Griffin is starting to put some feelers out for a new Assessor.

The board expressed strongly that the position should be posted, and a thorough hiring process should be conducted before hiring the next assessor.
Ms. Griffin noted she is looking for someone to serve in an interim capacity before and during the hiring process.

Public comment:
David Harrison, resident came to the meeting to hear about the assessing update. He is looking for answers to the questions that were raised in September and wondered if there have been talks with the state since the petition was filed.

Chair Christie responded that the BTLA received the petition and that will be a trial. They don’t communicate with the Town with any status updates. Multiple conversations have occurred between the Town and the Department of Revenue Administration. The Town has used them as a sounding board to come up with the strategies they are enacting. There is a possibility of filing a joint petition with the Town and the DRA in relation to the BTLA petition, but that might not be necessary because the Town has done everything the petitioners have requested.

Mr. Harrison wondered what is the status of the 2018 assessments? Is the Town sticking with it? Is the Town doing anything to correct it?

The board responded that there is no going back now that the tax year and the abatement process are over. The state said the 2018 revaluation is over. Residents can appeal their 2019 valuations moving forward, but the law states there is no going back and changing previous tax year revaluations.

Ms. Griffin said the answers to the questions will be posted to the website as soon as possible. Some of the answers required the Town to reach out to the DRA regarding legal questions. The Town met with them during October to gather these answers. During that same time the Town was also working on answers to questions being asked by the BTLA regarding the petition.

The board again reiterated all of the steps they are doing to improve the process moving forward: gathering information on a third-party review and costing out a full town measure and list.

11. Adjournment
The board needed to attend a non-public session. The board took a roll call vote to enter the non-public session.
Rassias- yes, Whitcomb- yes, Carter- yes, Geraghty- yes Christie-yes
The board entered non-public session at 8:09pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joanna Whitcomb,
Secretary of Selectboard
SUMMARY

Item 2
Selectboard Member Geraghty MOVED to approve the license request and authorize Town Manager to sign all necessary documents. Vice Chair Rassias SECONDED the Motion. The board voted all in favor.

Item 3
Selectboard Member Whitcomb MOVED to adopt Police Corporal job title, Labor Grade 16. Selectboard Member Carter SECONDED the Motion. The board voted all in favor.

Item 4
Selectboard Member Whitcomb MOVED to accept the abatement recommended by the Advisory Board of Assessors. Selectboard Member Carter SECONDED the Motion. The board voted all in favor.

Item 5
Selectboard Member Whitcomb MOVED to approve the appointments requested. Selectboard Member Carter SECONDED the Motion. The board voted all in favor.

Item 6
Vice Chair Rassias MOVED to approve the banner requests. Selectboard member Geraghty SECONDED the Motion. The board voted all in favor.