

Town of Hampton  
Board of Finance  
Regular Budget Meeting  
Tuesday, April 23, 2013  
7pm  
Hampton Town Hall

Meeting Minutes

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m. by Chairman Rheo Brouillard.

Members present: Chairman Brouillard, Margaret Haraghey, Paul Wakely. Alternates present: Dan Meade, Jeff Clermont.

Members/alternates absent: Stan Crawford, Penny Newbury, Luciann Norton.

Others present: First Selectman Al Cahill, Treasurer Ellen Rodriguez, Hampton Elementary School Board of Education Chairman John Burnham, Chaplin Board of Finance Chairman Dick Weingart, members of the Hampton-Chaplin Ambulance Corps, Substitute Recording Clerk Dayna McDermott-Arriola, and audience members.

**Motion:** Margaret Haraghey, seconded by Paul Wakely, to seat Dan Meade and Jeff Clermont. Motion carried unanimously.

**Citizen Comments:** none.

### **2013-2014 Budget Work Session**

#### **Hampton-Chaplin Ambulance Corps Presentation:**

Trudy Brockett, Hampton-Chaplin Ambulance Corps (HCAC) Treasurer, represented the HCAC as Chief Ben Brockett was unable to attend. Mrs. Brockett introduced the other members of the HCAC in attendance, and reported that there are 15 active members in the HCAC, which answered 500 calls last year, including mutual aid to surrounding towns. Mrs. Brockett explained that the HCAC, unlike the ambulance corps of most municipalities, is not a town organization, but rather a private, non-profit corporation providing a service to the towns of Hampton and Chaplin for a fee. Mrs. Brockett clarified that the HCAC is a separate entity from the Fire Department, and though the ambulance is housed in the Fire Department complex, the HCAC is looking for an alternate site to allow more space than the current location provides due to the Fire Department's vehicles and equipment. Mrs. Brockett explained that the towns traditionally have budgeted \$12,000 annually for the HCAC, an amount that is deposited into a fund for the purchase of a new ambulance, which is needed every 5-7 years. Mrs. Brockett reported that other revenue is obtained through fundraising and insurance billing, which has decreased due to residents' ability to pay and the reluctance of the HCAC to follow through with collection agencies. Mrs. Brockett explained that the response to medical emergencies has changed in the last couple of years and has impacted the HCAC financially; paramedics must now be dispatched from the hospital for certain medical interventions for which HCAC members are not licensed. The towns are billed by the dispatched paramedics for each response. Last year, these charges amounted to \$32,000; this year, the amount is \$40,000. The HCAC has been using monies in the fund designated for the purchase of a new ambulance to cover these expenses. Due to these charges, the HCAC has requested \$36,000 this year.

Chairman Brouillard asked several questions regarding the HCAC finances, such as the total revenue collected and current cash assets. Mrs. Brockett was unable to answer with specificity and suggested that Chief Brockett could provide precise figures, noting that the financial records of the HCAC are subject to an annual audit. Margaret Haraghey suggested that the old town garage be used to house the ambulance and equipment; Mrs. Brockett said that this was under consideration. Dick Weingart inquired as to the insurance billing on transient calls, such as accidents on Route 6. Mrs. Brockett explained that billing for accidents is too complicated a process to complete as it involves auto insurance and often court proceedings, all of which require at least a year to process. Paul Wakely questioned the need to fund the town library at a greater rate than the HCAC, noting the vital service the HCAC provides. Mr. Wakely suggested that the amounts allotted for the two organizations be reversed. First Selectman Cahill reported that the General Government Budget has allotted \$24,000 for the HCAC in the current proposal, \$12,000 less than requested and \$12,000 more than what has been traditionally budgeted. Mr. Cahill praised the HCAC for their service, yet expressed his concern that a business model needed to be adopted to manage the HCAC finances. Mr. Weingart concurred with Mr. Cahill's assessment and suggested that a committee, comprised of Hampton and Chaplin representatives, form to analyze the financial data of the HCAC. Chairman Brouillard asked if the HCAC would be amenable to Mr. Weingart's suggestion. Mrs. Brockett said that neither a committee, nor combining with the Fire Department, would change the financial reality of the HCAC. Chairman Brouillard requested a review of the financial report several times; the reluctance of the HCAC to share the financial report was an expressed concern of officials present. In the end it was decided that both towns would benefit from reviewing the financial report.

#### **Budget Work Session:**

The Board of Finance members deliberated whether, as appointed rather than elected officials, they should present their recommendations on the General Town and Elementary School budgets to the voters, which could include a reduction of the requested amounts, or wait to hear taxpayer commentary at the Public Hearing, as was originally proposed. Chairman Brouillard reviewed the proposals: an increase of \$173,139 in Hampton's assessment for the Regional District #11 budget, and an increase of \$40,979 for the elementary school budget amount to a one mil and a quarter increase, even with the General Government reduction of \$3602. Mr. Weingart explained that, while the Board of Finance has line item discretion over the General Government Budget, they can only alter the bottom line of an education budget. Mrs. Haraghey proposed a zero percent increase for the elementary school budget, stating that the Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR) should not be increased due to its impact on this and future budgets. John Burnham explained that the school could only reduce the MBR through increased efficiencies, cooperative arrangements, and a decline in student census, and that the budget could only be reduced by one half of one percent, in Hampton's case, \$11,000. Jeff Clermont stated that reductions to the elementary school budget are necessary because of the increase in the RD#11 budget, over which the Board of Finance has no control. Chairman Brouillard agreed that the Hampton Elementary School Board of Education and the Board of Selectmen presented reasonable requests, but that the significant increase to taxpayers with the RD#11 budget necessitated reductions. Dan Meade said the citizens he spoke with expressed that they cannot afford additional taxes. Mrs. Haraghey noted that many residents are on fixed incomes. Mr. Wakely reminded members that towns are still uncertain what the State will contribute in revenue. Chairman Brouillard suggested that the Board of Finance limit the impact of the total budgets to a one mil increase. This would require the elementary school to reduce their budget by \$40,979, and the town to reduce the government budget by \$15,000, and return \$10,000 for the transfer station permits to the revenue line. This would reduce the increase to approximately 123,000, or one mil.

**Motion:** Margaret Haraghey, seconded by Dan Meade, to reduce the Hampton Elementary School Budget proposal to \$2,256,188 and the General Government budget to \$1,700,986. Motion carried unanimously.

**Set Public Hearing Date, Time and Location**

**Motion:** Margaret Haraghey, seconded by Dan Meade, to hold the Public Hearing on May 2, 2013 at 7 p.m. at the Hampton Community Center. Motion carried unanimously.

**Next Meetings: Date, Time and Agenda**

The next meeting of the Board of Finance will be held after the Public Hearing adjourns on May 2, 2013.

Mr. Weingart praised the Board of Finance for the process it employs in dealing with the town budgets.

**Adjournment**

Chairman Brouillard adjourned the meeting at 8:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dayna McDermott-Arriola  
Substitute Recording Clerk