

Town of Hampton
Board of Finance
Regular Meeting
November 13, 2024
7PM

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:02PM.

Roll Call: Kathy Donahue, Ed Adelman, Joan Fox, Nick Brown, Diane Gagnon (virtually), Stan Crawford, Regina DeCesare, Kathi Newcombe.

Staff and Others Present: First Selectman Allan Cahill, Treasurer Ellen Rodriguez, Recording Secretary Dayna McDermott-Arriola

Motion: Nick Brown, seconded by Joan Fox, to seat Kathi Newcombe for Judy Buell. Motion carried unanimously.

Citizen Comments: none.

Approval of Minutes

Motion: Ed Adelman, seconded by Joan Fox, to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 11, 2024 with the following amendments: under Boards of Education: “Hampton Elementary School reportedly has 86 students with 12 students outplaced”; under Update on Length of Service Award Program: “Chairman Donahue reported that an *annuity with National Life* was opened...Both signers, James Kilburn and Rebecca *McCollum*, are on the account.” Motion carried unanimously, Diane Gagnon and Kathi Newcombe abstaining.

Reports/Actions

First Selectman: First Selectman Cahill announced that the contract from the Department of Environmental Protection for the Trail Grant totaling \$219,000 has been signed and that the Conservation Commission will facilitate the improvements the grant will fund. He also reported on the contract with Hometown Oil for a new oil tank at the elementary school. Mr. Cahill announced that the court at Town Hall has been paved, will cure through the winter, and be finished next spring. He also reported that the court hearing on the Solar Park litigation resulted in the issue being sent to the State Supreme Court for judgment. To Kathi Newcombe’s question, Mr. Cahill reported that Route 97 should be reopened within two weeks, and that the speed bumps on North Bigelow and Station roads have been removed.

Tax Collector: Chairman Donahue received and distributed the quarterly report, which reported a 58% rate of collection as of September 30.

Treasurer: Treasurer Rodriguez requested two transfers.

Motion: Nick Brown, seconded by Joan Fox, to approve the following transfers: \$23 from #6411-00 Veteran’s Liaison to #6402-00 TVCCA; and \$115 from #7100-16 Unemployment Compensation to #7100-06 Fall Fest. Motion carried unanimously.

There was some discussion on actual and expected overages in the Transfer Station Account, resulting in the decision to fund the current deficit and review the remainder at a later date.

Motion: Nick Brown, seconded by Ed Adelman, to transfer \$702 from #6300-04 Sanitation Trucking to #6300 Transfer Station. Motion carried unanimously.

There was discussion regarding the information Treasurer Rodriguez distributed on the current accounts.

Motion: Nick Brown, seconded by Joan Fox, to transfer \$400,000 from the Berkshire Bank Money Market account into the Short Term Investment Fund (STIF) General Fund account, and to empower the Treasurer, the First Selectman and the Board of Finance Chairman to consolidate accounts into an Insured Cash Sweep (ICS) program after researching rates and protections of existing savings accounts. Motion carried unanimously.

Boards of Education:

Hampton Elementary School: Chairman Donahue reported that Victoria Smith is serving as interim principal while continuing in her capacity as Special Education Director. The board is working on developing its goals, and a representative from the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) is presenting to members next week. Ms. Donahue suggested that Town agencies would benefit from a presentation from the Freedom of Information Commission considering the amount of complaints filed against the school board in the last year. First Selectman Cahill declined comment on the board's current investigation as the discussion occurred in executive session.

Regional District #11: Chairman Donahue reported that the board conducted a training session for the new member, and that changes have been made to the Central Office handbook.

Chairman Donahue read the following from a correspondence sent to district parents from Superintendent Skarzynski: "HES was informed that it will be losing its Title I and Title IV funding commencing in the upcoming school year. These funds are generally associated with improving the learning outcomes of lower income students; HES has received approximately \$25,000 annually through Title I and IV and the loss reflects just over a percent of the current budget. As a point of general information, this year's budget is 1.84% higher than the prior year and, while a single percent may not seem like a large amount, it is rather impactful in terms of the annual budget increases...A few years ago, the State recalculated the amount distributed to each town and/or city and identified those that were either 'overfunded' or 'underfunded.' Hampton was found to be 'overfunded' by a significant amount. The State subsequently established a timeline to phase in these cuts in aid; after having a hold-harmless period, these cuts are set to start with the next fiscal year on July 1, 2025. At this time, the reduction in aid to the town of Hampton for the next fiscal year is \$83,568. Ultimately, the amount cut from the current ECS of \$1,058,408 will be \$584,801 with the town receiving \$473,607."

Chairman Donahue noted that these reductions do not include student count which will also impact the amount. To Nick Brown's questions on the amounts awarded to other neighboring towns, Chairman Donahue suggested contacting State representatives.

Board of Finance Committees

Policies and Procedures Committee: none.

Correspondence: Chairman Donahue reported receipt of financial reports from the schools and the quarterly report from the Tax Collector.

Old Business

a. Update on Length of Service Award Program Funds

Chairman Donahue reported that the annuity is in place for five years, and that the savings account has been opened. She plans on setting up automatic transfers which will garner the most interest as possible with the least amount of effort on the part of Fire Department members. She also noted that Al Ameer has retired from the department after 60 years of service.

New Business

a. Schedule of 2025 Meetings

Motion: Kathi Newcombe, seconded by Nick Brown, to schedule the regular meetings for 2025 on the second Wednesday of every month at 7PM. Motion carried unanimously.

Citizen Comments: none.

Suggestions for Next Agenda: Chairman Donahue will be sending requests to Town entities for contributions to the Annual Report. Members were encouraged to send suggestions for the Agenda to the Chairman.

Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting: December 11, 2024 at 7PM.

Adjournment: There being no further business to come before the Board, the Meeting adjourned at 7:46PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dayna McDermott Arriola
Recording Secretary

This is a draft version of the Minutes until approved by the Board of Finance.