

Town of Hampton
Board of Finance
Special Meeting
March 23, 2015
7pm
Hampton Town Hall Community Room

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m.

Members Present: Jeff Clermont, Ed Adelman, Penny Newbury, Nick Brown

Alternates Present: Stan Crawford

Members/Alternates Absent: Rick Matejka, Dan Meade, Luciann Norton, Mike Higgins

Staff and others present: Selectman Mike Chapel, Treasurer Ellen Rodriguez, Hampton Elementary School Superintendent Corinne Berglund, Principal Elise Guari, Business Coordinator Sally Lehoux, Board of Education Chairman John Burnham, Road Crew Foreman Toby Vertefeulle, Substitute Recording Clerk Dayna McDermott-Arriola, and a resident.

Chairman Clermont seated Stan Crawford for Dan Meade.

Citizen Comments: none.

Correspondences: Jeff read a letter from Conservation Commission Chairman Randy Thompson requesting that the capital and non-recurring accounts for the town purchase of land be increased by \$30,000.

Discuss 2015-2016 Town and School Budget Proposals

Hampton Elementary School Budget

Hampton Elementary School Superintendent Corinne Berglund reviewed the budget proposal:

- A \$28,839 reduction in certified staff due to the realignment of grades 4 - 6 which will eliminate one classroom teacher and increase the reading and math support positions by one day each
- A saving of \$24,349 by changing from contracted maintenance to hiring school employees for custodial services
- A savings of \$15,893 due to the change in the regional health insurance provider
- An increase of \$21,000 in legal fees for next year's contract negotiations

School Principal Elise Guari presented the school's C.A.R.E.S Program instituted to improve academics, to address the school's declining enrollment, and to promote collaborative multi-age groupings. The program will also facilitate the decision to combine the 36 students in grades 4, 5, and 6 into two classes of 18 students each.

Penny asked if this new instructional model would require training. The school will provide professional development and make curricular adjustments, according to Elise. Penny also challenged the need for additional support in math and reading in grades 4 - 6. Corinne explained that this was needed to provide students with individual instruction. Ed asked if similarly sized districts were instituting similar solutions for declining enrollments, to which Corinne answered in the affirmative, using Union as an example where the whole school has a non-graded approach.

Penny also inquired as to this year's Minimum Budget Requirement. Business Coordinator Sally Lehoux said that the .55% decrease in the budget reflects the maximum reduction per the town-wide decline in student enrollment. Stan asked if the Town budget could include an account for the school's legal fees to avoid its impact on the Minimum Budget Requirement. Sally said the Town can only establish an account for the school's capital expenditures. Chairman John Burnham will look into the legality of instituting a non-lapsing account for legal fees.

Town Government Budget

Selectman Mike Chapel reviewed the increases to the budget, including funds for the town purchase of a digital scanner, recreation commission and library programs, the PZC's 10 Year Plan of Development, the yearly GIS service, a new computer for the Town Clerk's office, matching IRA funds, and extra hours for road maintenance.

At Nick's request, Mike explained the need for a scanner and read a letter submitted by PZC Chairman Kevin Grindle stating the necessity of digitally archiving large documents such as plans, maps and blueprints, for use by residents and officials, to ensure quick access and safe storage of documentation. Mike noted that much of the operational costs would be passed on to the users who would be charged a fee, and much of the \$9,145 purchase cost could be absorbed through using a portion of the \$8,500 Historic Preservation Grant, and the \$600 Town Clerk's Discretionary Fund. Penny expressed concern over who would be responsible for inputting the considerable amount of current data. Ed suggested that a student intern could be used for the task. Mike will request that the PZC develop a plan for inputting the data. Jeff will invite the PZC to the next meeting.

Penny also questioned the Public Works Department in terms of compensating overtime hours and a part time employee versus hiring another full time employee. Road Crew Foreman Toby Vertefeuille explained that the tasks covered with part-time and overtime hours are sporadic and seasonal, such as mowing and snow removal. Mike and Toby explained that the amount budgeted was based on the average of the last several years, as well as new state regulations in terms of sweeping streets and clearing catch basins. Ed asked if the current equipment could meet the new requirements. Toby and Mike responded that rentals could be used and sub-contracted in collaboration with other towns. Toby asked if a decision was made regarding the purchase of a new truck. Jeff explained that, pending town approval, the town will purchase the truck outright with a transfer from the General Fund, rather than allocating \$30,000 annually.

Treasurer Ellen Rodriguez announced that the LOCIP funds were approved, but that other revenue sources are estimates until the State approves a budget. Ellen noted that adjustments to the town budget for the Treasurer's new computer, and the elimination of the truck installment, resulted in a total decrease of \$166,412 over the current year, a 9.37% reduction. Ellen also announced that, though the Regional District #11 Board of Education has adopted a budget, town assessments have not yet been levied. The Board of Finance will act on the town and school budgets at the next regular meeting.

Citizen Comment: none.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dayna McDermott Arriola
Substitute Recording Clerk