

Town of Hampton
Board of Finance
Public Hearing
June 5, 2024
7PM

Call to Order: The Public Hearing was called to order at 7PM.

Budget Presentations and Public Input on Proposed 2024-25 Town Government and Hampton Elementary School Budgets

Chairman Donahue updated members and the public on the Regional District#11 budget, which was recently reduced by another \$48,000, resulting in an \$11,172 assessment for the Town of Hampton. She also announced that the Hampton Elementary School budget was reduced to a 1.84%, or \$36,312, increase over last year. She thanked school officials for reviewing their request and adjusting accordingly, noting that the finance board conducted a line-by-line item review of the Municipal budget. Penny Newbury asked several questions, including the absence of revenue listed for Local Capital Improvement Program (LOCIP) funds and Transfer Station stickers. Treasurer Rodriguez explained that the LOCIP revenue and expenses are now listed in the balance sheet as a special fund instead of the budget, and Chairman Donahue explained that the Board of Selectmen suggested that taxpayers be relieved of the cost of the stickers, which entails many administrative duties. Ms. Newbury also asked if the increase in Computer Support included maintaining the website. First Selectman Cahill explained that the Town failed a cyber-security audit, and therefore needed additional support in that department, noting that the Town Clerk and the Administrative Assistant manage the Town's website.

To Danielle McGiver's question, Treasurer Rodriguez stated that there is approximately \$8,000 remaining in the Youth Sports account, which will be transferred to the Recreation Commission after bills are paid. Chairman Donahue added that the cost of participation for Hampton youth in surrounding towns' sports programs is exorbitant, and that this might alleviate those costs, or fund a sports program in town along with potential sponsors.

Mark Becker noted that the Board of Education reduced their budget in spite of significant increases in health insurance and transportation, and asked if the Board of Finance intended to reduce the budget further during the Special Meeting. Chairman Donahue replied that those decisions would be made by members during the meeting following the public hearing.

Chairman Donahue also explained that the mill rate's decrease to 21.83 is the result of revaluation, which has changed taxpayers' assessments by 20 – 50%. She also explained that the Solar Park owes 1.1 million to the Town in outstanding taxes for the last three years, and that the Tax Collector is suggesting the Solar Park be removed from the Grand List. First Selectman Cahill noted that there is a court date scheduled for the following week to hear the matter. Officials did not have the answer to Dick Brown's question on whether or not the bank has sufficient funds to cover the amount if the court rules in the Town's favor. Stan Crawford voiced his hope that the Solar Park pay taxes on at least the acreage, if not the business, in the event that legislation makes Solar Parks tax-free.

Adjournment: The Public Hearing adjourned at 7:15PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dayna McDermott Arriola
Recording Secretary

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

