

Town of Hampton
Board of Finance
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, March 19, 2013
7pm
Hampton Town Hall

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Chairman Rheo Brouillard.

Members present: Chairman Brouillard, Penny Newbury, Luciann Norton, Stan Crawford, Margaret Haraghey. Alternates present: Dan Meade, Jeff Clermont.

Members/alternates absent: Paul Wakely, Thayne Hutchins.

Others present: First Selectman Al Cahill, Selectman Michael Chapel, Treasurer Ellen Rodriguez, Substitute Recording Clerk Dayna McDermott-Arriola, and audience members.

Citizen Comments: none.

Additions to the Agenda:

Motion: Stan Crawford, seconded by Penny Newbury, to add Letter of Resignation to the Agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

Letter of Resignation:

Chairman Brouillard read a letter of resignation from alternate member Thayne Hutchins.

Motion: Margaret Haraghey, seconded by Penny Newbury, to accept with regret the resignation of Thayne Hutchins from the Board of Finance. Motion carried unanimously.

The Board of Selectmen will appoint an alternate member to the Board of Finance to fill the vacancy.

Annual Report Status:

Recording Clerk Kathi Newcombe had reported that the Board of Finance may use the book binding equipment at the Hampton Elementary School to produce the Annual Report. The Hampton Fire Company is the only department that has yet to submit a report, but it is in progress. Chairman Brouillard anticipates that the Annual Report will be completed by the end of the month.

2013-2014 Budget Work Session:

The latest draft of the 2013-2014 Budget was distributed. Treasurer Rodriguez reported that: budget requests from all departments, with evidence of need, have been submitted; the Regional District #11 Budget has not yet been determined; the Hampton Elementary School Budget has been approved by the Board of Education and the proposed expenditure is included in the latest draft. She also reported that she has not yet heard from the auditor.

Margaret Haraghey noted that the Hampton Elementary School Board of Education reduced its final budget by approximately \$40,000 in part by locating surplus funds from the 2012-13 Budget to apply to the 2013-14 Budget. She reminded members that school officials had

claimed there were insufficient funds in the current year's budget when they approached the Board of Finance last month to request the use of monies from the Capital & Non-Recurring Account to fund special projects. Chairman Brouillard suggested the Board of Finance ask the Board of Education if the line items that contained the surplus funds could be reduced accordingly in next year's request.

A general discussion of the budget process ensued.

Stan Crawford suggested that members review the proposal first to prepare for a full board discussion.

Penny Newbury suggested that the Board of Selectmen provide an overview of the proposal.

First Selectman Al Cahill reported: a 1% cost of living increase for all town employees, with the exception of adjustments made to the rates for the First Selectman, the Administrative Assistant, a Highway Department employee with the additional responsibility of Mechanic Fabricator, and the Transfer Station employees who will receive a 1% pay increase from Hampton and a 1% pay increase from Scotland; minor adjustments in the utilities line item due to usage; a decrease in overtime in the Public Works Department.

Penny Newbury requested that the budget present a separate line item for each town employee rather than the department totals shown.

There was discussion concerning the line item for the Fletcher Memorial Librarian. Selectman Cahill reported that the town attorney offered the legal opinion that the librarian was not considered a town employee, as the Selectmen have no supervisory authority over the position; however, Treasurer Rodriguez reported that the town issues a paycheck to the librarian which includes expenses such as FICA, workmen's compensation, etc.

Margaret Haraghey, who also serves as a member of the Library Board, reported that the current arrangement is viewed as the Town providing a payroll service to the library.

Luciann Norton suggested that a "leased employee" arrangement be considered.

Chairman Brouillard urged the Board of Selectmen to meet with the Library Board to negotiate a written agreement.

Selectman Cahill also reported on the Selectmen's decision to reduce the annual contribution to the Town's Open Space and Land Acquisition accounts to \$1, as a one year reprieve, given the results of recent referenda that approved expenditures of approximately \$300,000 from these accounts toward the purchase of open space and land for town use. The First Selectman said taxpayer approval of the purchases indicates confidence in the Town's ability to consider appropriate sites for open space and land use, noting that nothing precludes the Board of Selectmen's ability to ask taxpayers to fund the purchase of land if an opportunity presents itself as beneficial to the Town.

Stan Crawford pointed out that the town can bond for land purchase as the rates are extremely low. Selectman Cahill said that he would be comfortable with that when the Town's current debt service is paid.

Selectman Chapel added that a management plan for town owned land can be developed to include logging operations and the sale of house lots in order to fund the Open Space and Land Acquisition accounts.

Stan Crawford asked if the \$15,000 allotted in the account for Trucks & Equipment was sufficient according to the Five-Year-Plan. Selectman Cahill said he was confident that the

current funding will cover the amount the plan requires. Chairman Brouillard suggested the Selectmen develop a fixed asset schedule.

Selectman Cahill also noted that Hampton's share of the Regional District #11 Budget will necessarily increase this year, even if the school's budget does not, as the population of students from Hampton attending Parish Hill Middle/High School has increased.

Chairman Brouillard cautioned against the continued application of monies from the General Fund to balance the budget, noting that while the current General Fund balance indicates good financial health, this might not be the case if the account continues to be utilized.

The final discussion on the budget concerned revenues. Chairman Brouillard noted that the increase on the property tax line is approximately \$70,000, less than the anticipated expenses in the combined town and education budgets.

Luciann Norton questioned the amount of Inter-Government Revenues. Treasurer Rodriguez said the figures were estimates based on the Governor's proposed budget.

Selectman Cahill pointed out that the Transfer Station revenue line, amounting to \$10,000, was eliminated. The Board of Selectmen will no longer require taxpayers to purchase transfer station permits. The permit will be issued automatically to residents upon payment of taxes annually.

Chairman Brouillard suggested that members review the budget materials they received for discussion at the next meeting.

Next Meeting Date, Time, & Agenda: The next regular meeting will be held on Thursday, March 28, at 7 p.m. in the Town Hall Community Room. The Agenda will include the Annual Report Status and a Discussion of the Town Budget. The Education Budgets will be discussed at a subsequent meeting.

Adjournment:

Motion: Margaret Haraghey, seconded by Penny Newbury, to adjourn the meeting at 8:20.

Respectfully submitted,

Dayna McDermott-Arriola
Substitute Recording Clerk for the Board of Finance