

TOWN OF HAMPTON
Special Town Meeting
October 4, 2013
Minutes

1. Call to order.
First Selectman Allan Cahill called the meeting to order at 7:02PM and read the beginning of the legal warning.

2. To elect a moderator for said meeting.
Ed Burchfield volunteered to serve as moderator.
MOTION: Allan Cahill/ Bob Grindle moved/ seconded to elect Ed Burchfield as moderator for town meeting. All in favor; motion passed.

Moderator Burchfield read the call of the town meeting in its entirety.

3. To hear discussion on the Hampton Elementary School Education Budget for FY July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014 as recommended by the Board of Finance, and to appropriate sums of money as required.
MOTION: George Askew/ Rose Bisson moved/ seconded to hear discussion on the Hampton Elementary School Education Budget for FY July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014.

Selectman Bob Grindle asked for a proposal from the Board of Education and Board of Finance on changes.

On behalf of the Board of Finance, Chair Rheo Brouillard explained the process and the request to the Board of Education for a zero increase, and explained why the board was resubmitting the same number as the last referendum.

John Burnham explained that the Board of Education disagrees with the Board of Education's assessment of the last referendum results and drew attention to a pamphlet that had been distributed at the meeting that explained the reductions the BoE had proposed. He stressed that the BoE does not support these cuts, and that he hoped the question would fail and that the results would show the town thinks the number is too low.

Mark Becker indicated that a better scale (rather than per pupil cost) would be to compare other schools with similar populations.

Kathi Newcombe clarified that what is being show as a reduction to the guidance counselor line item is the same as last year and also the business coordinator line item is back to what it was originally. She also suggested that these cuts to staff hours were suggested by Dr. Graseck last year.

Superintendent Dr. Paul Graseck stated that the business coordinator hours were listed as 29.75 hours but she actually regularly worked over 30 hours per week because of the workload. The hours were increased due to the anticipated future workload to 32 hours per week. After failed budget referendums, the hours were then cut back to 30 and then to 29.75 so the position would not qualify for health insurance.

Discussion continued regarding the education budget and comparison to other years and other towns, and the effect “the minimum” would have on students and new families moving to town.

Elizabeth Lindorff read an excerpt of a letter to the boards regarding art education and education in general.

Advisory questions were added to the ballot to let voters indicate how they felt about the budget number after voting to approve or disapprove the budget. Discussion was held regarding the meaning and repercussions of those questions would have on future budgets, should this budget fail.

Suggestions were offered by the audience of ways to format the ballot, create a reserve fund for the schools, and where money should come from to fund this budget should it pass.

Wendy Timberman read a letter to the boards in support of the Hampton Elementary School, staff and education.

Richard LeBlanc, an employee of the Hampton Elementary School spoke in support of the education of Hampton’s children.

Susan Steinrich, an employee of the Hampton Elementary School read a piece about her role at the school.

Irene Brown spoke about the music program at HES and the cuts that would be made if the budget passes, and the disadvantage students would face going to Parish Hill.

Maryellen Donnelly also spoke about the music program and teacher, and how this reflects on the town.

Kate Donnelly stated that the issue is not just about the budget numbers, but the leadership of the town letting values of homes decrease because of the education budget.

Discussion continued about the next steps, if the budget passes whether to increase the mil rate or to take from the general fund.

Adjournment.

MOTION: Bob Grindle/ Kathi Newcombe moved/ seconded to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:21PM.

At its meeting held on September 26, 2013, the Board of Selectmen voted, pursuant to Section 7-7 of the Connecticut General Statutes, that item 3 on the call of the October 4, 2013 Special Town Meeting be submitted to referendum vote on October 15, 2013, between the hours of Noon and 8:00 p.m. at the Town Hall, 164 Main Street, Hampton, CT.

The designation of the questions on the ballot for said referendum vote shall be as follows:

1. "Shall the Town of Hampton appropriate \$2,132,079 for the Hampton Elementary School for 2013-2014 fiscal year?"

a. Advisory Question Only: Is the proposed Hampton Elementary School Budget of \$2,132,079 for the 2013-2014 fiscal year "Too High" or "Too Low"?

b. Advisory Question Only: Do you support up to a .5 mil increase in taxes to fund the HES budget? "Yes" or "No"

Respectfully Submitted,
Liz Stillman
Recording Secretary