

Town of Hampton
Board of Finance
Regular Meeting
October 13, 2021
7:00 PM

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

Roll Call: Kathy Donahue, Diane Gagnon, Ed Adelman, Jessie Samios, Kathi Newcombe, Stan Crawford.

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

Seating of Alternates:

Motion: Jessica Samios, seconded by Diane Gagnon, to seat Stan Crawford for Nick Brown and Kathi Newcombe for Judy Buell. Motion carried unanimously.

Citizen Comments: none.

Presentations: none.

Approval of Minutes

Motion: Diane Gagnon, seconded by Ed Adelman, to approve the Minutes of the September 8, 2021 Regular Meeting with the following amendment: under Treasurer's Report "Chairman Donahue reported that unaudited surpluses from *Hampton Elementary School* will be returning to the General Fund." Motion carried unanimously.

Reports/Actions

First Selectman: First Selectman Cahill reported that the Town has received a summons challenging the assessment of the solar park on Route 6, a matter which has been referred to Town counsel. Maintenance of Bigelow Road is nearly complete, and the Selectmen hired Alex Bass, a professional tree cutter, to fill the vacancy on the Department of Public Works left by Toby Vertefeuille. At Chairman Donahue's request, Mr. Cahill informed members of the changes in the pay scales of the town crew with the new hire, noting that some towns are using Covid funds to increase these salaries to a competitive wage. Mr. Cahill reported that the Hampton and Scotland Ad Hoc Committee for Inter-district Education Cost Sharing has hired Attorneys Fred Dorsey and Daniel Murphy, at a rate of \$275 for attorney fees and \$125 for the services of a paralegal, to provide legal guidance as the committee drafts a cooperative agreement. Kathi Newcombe asked if a separate line item needed to be established for these services, as well as the fees for the committee's recording clerk. Mr. Cahill replied that the attorney fees, which will be shared with Scotland, can come from the Town Attorney's line for now, and that Scotland agreed to pay for the committee's website while Hampton will compensate the recording clerk. Mr. Cahill noted that after the Hampton Elementary School Board of Education established a committee to consider sharing services with Chaplin, he contacted the Town of Pomfret regarding tuition costs for students in Pre-K through grade 6, with the hopes that in a year or two, the Town will have multiple choices for educating the elementary school students. Chairman Donahue reiterated the question of rental properties raised last month. Mr. Cahill explained that the tenant of a property on East Old Route 6 wished to remain after the owner's taxes were delinquent, and a lease-to-purchase contract was developed by the former Tax Collector and approved at a 2015 Town Meeting. He noted that \$72,000 has been paid, regularly up until the Covid pandemic, and that there are only 8 or 9 remaining payments. He added that there was also a deficiency in the rental revenue line because the

Mennonite School in the lower level of Town Hall was closed for a number of months last year during the onset of the Covid pandemic. Lastly, Mr. Cahill stated that he was investigating the use of Covid funds for sanitizing features in the HVAC systems at Town Hall and the Community Center.

Tax Collector: Chairman Donahue reviewed the Tax Collector's report for September, which reported a collection rate of 53.6%, or \$2,089,207.80.

Treasurer: Treasurer Rodriguez reported that the Auditor's engagement letter has not been signed. First Selectman Cahill stated that he signed and sent it to the finance board; Chairman Donahue will check on this. Ms. Rodriguez also announced that the three-month Certificate of Deposit is due for renewal, and requested a few transfers.

Motion: Stan Crawford, seconded by Ed Adelman, to approve the following transfers: \$190 to #6010-08 P&Z Legal/Engineering from #6010-02 P&Z Legal Notices; and for Station Road Paving \$25,172 to #6202 LOCIP from #6208 Tree Removal; \$3,853 to #6250 Road Paving from #6208 Tree Removal; \$7,938 to #6250 Road Paving from #6201-01 Road Maintenance. Motion carried unanimously.

Boards of Education:

Chairman Donahue attended the Finance Committee meetings of both Regional District #11, whose financial reports were distributed, and the elementary school, which has requested that the finance board transfer \$20,000 of the surplus funds to the school's Capital & Non-Recurring Account. According to the Auditor, the school can apply the expense of the technical equipment to the FY2020-21 budget, but the cost of the playground equipment must be moved to the current year. Reportedly, there are 72 students in the building and an additional seven students who are out-placed.

Board of Finance Committees

Policies and Procedures Committee: The committee continues to work on the *Accounting Policies and Procedures* document.

Fire Department Length of Service Award Committee Report: Chairman Donahue forwarded a term-life insurance proposal and a correspondence from Hometown Firefighter & EMS Service clarifying that, due to a change in the law, members become eligible after one year of service, not the five or ten previously assumed. First Selectman Cahill asked if members needed to apply to receive benefits. Chairman Donahue explained that, according to Treasurer Dale Demontigny, the Fire Department sends information, when a member reaches eligibility age, to Hometown and they contact the member. Because of many outstanding questions, Chairman Donahue will schedule a Special Meeting with Mr. Sagistano. She is also inquiring as to different life insurance coverage, with multiple tiers of amounts and ages, and would like to discuss these with members of the Fire Department. Kathi Newcombe noted that, with the benefit currently at \$10,000 and age 65, much of the account was depleted the year the Town needed to pay \$47,000 due to an untimely death. To Stan Crawford's question on whether the Town should look into a competitive program, Chairman Donahue said the committee at this point is still trying to collect necessary information.

Ad Hoc Committee for Inter-district Education Cost Sharing: Chairman Donahue reported that the governance sub-committee met twice to work on drafting a cooperative agreement and set the following meeting dates: October 26, November 9, and December 14. The meetings are at 10AM. She also reported that the programming sub-committee is discussing class size and staffing requirements; current enrollment indicates that if Scotland's 101 students and Hampton's 72 were combined in one school, one classroom would be needed for each grade.

Correspondence: Chairman Donahue received the Tax Collector's Report, Hampton Elementary School's request for the transfer of surplus funds to the school's CNR account, and information from Hometown Firefighter & EMS Services.

Old Business

- a. **Update on Accounting Policies and Procedures:** The committee continues to work on the documents.

Additions to Agenda:

Motion: Ed Adelman, seconded by Jessica Samios, to add to the Agenda Hampton Elementary School's request to add \$20,000 of the unspent funds to the school's CNR account. Motion carried unanimously. To Kathi Newcombe's question, Chairman Donahue clarified that the surplus was from last year's budget and that she has requested the school's 5-Year Plan. Chairman Donahue confirmed Ed Adelman's question that, per ordinance, the school needs the Board of Finance's approval to spend the funds.

Motion: Kathi Newcombe, seconded by Diane Gagnon, to approve the Hampton Elementary School's request to transfer \$20,000 of the surplus from FY2020-21 to the school's CNR account. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion: Diane Gagnon, seconded by Stan Crawford, to add discussion and action on renewing the three-month Certificate of Deposit. Motion carried unanimously.

Stan Crawford suggested that the amount deposited be rolled-over for another three months and then re-evaluated.

Motion: Diane Gagnon, seconded by Stan Crawford, to roll over the amount in the Certificate of Deposit for another three months. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion: Kathi Newcombe, to add discussion of establishing a line item for the Ad Hoc Committee for Inter-district Education Cost Sharing's recording clerk. After Treasurer Rodriguez confirmed that the amount, which is currently coming from the line item for the Board of Finance's Recording Clerk, can be recorded separately, Ms. Newcombe withdrew her motion.

Citizen Comments: none.

Suggestions for Next Agenda: Chairman Donahue asked members to forward suggestions for the next regular meeting. A Special Meeting will be scheduled to meet with Mr. Sagistano from Hometown Firefighter & EMS Services.

Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting: November 10, 2021 at 7PM.

Adjournment: There being no further business to come before the Board, the Meeting adjourned at 8:05PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dayna McDermott Arriola
Recording Secretary

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