

Town of Hampton
Board of Finance
Special Meeting
March 12, 2025
7:30PM

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:35PM.

Roll Call: Kathy Donahue, Joan Fox, Judy Buell, Ed Adelman, Nick Brown, Regina DeCesare, Fran Gustaveson.

Staff and Others Present: First Selectman Allan Cahill, Treasurer Ellen Rodriguez, Town Clerk Kaye Johnson, Conservation Commission Chairman Mark Samios and member Penny Newbury, Fletcher Memorial Library Board Chairman Bonnie Cardwell, Recording Secretary Dayna McDermott-Arriola Regina DeCesare was seated, upon request, for Diane Gagnon.

Citizen Comments: Jim Studer read from article on the positive correlation between schools and property values, stating that every dollar spent on education translates to a \$20 increase in the value of a home.

Budget Presentations

Town Clerk: Kaye Johnson distributed *Preliminary Comparison of Land Records Systems*, detailing the associated costs and comparisons of providers Avenu Insights & Analytics and Info Quick Solutions, Inc. She explained the need to upgrade the Town's Land Records System, which includes all financial reporting, as the transition to the new system will occur early in 2026. To Joan Fox's question, Ms. Johnson stated that all files since 1930 are digitalized and indexed, with hard copies and microfiche files at Town Hall dating back to the 1700's.

Conservation Commission: Mark Samios distributed the Conservation Commission's proposal of \$26,350, which included funding for trail maintenance, a bird inventory, grass cutting and further clearing at the Little River Park, conference fees, development of a trails website, expanding the parking area and cleaning the trails at the Cohantic Cliffs, and \$10,000 for legal research toward the roads project, which intends to research one old town road, neither maintained nor used, at a time with the goal of developing walking trails. Mr. Samios also advocated for the Town's funding of the capital-non-recurring accounts for Open Space and Land Acquisition.

Fletcher Memorial Library: Bonnie Cardwell distributed the library's proposed budget, with expenses remaining level, and the addition of the following projects included in the 5-Year Plan, which was also distributed: improved lighting in the entrance hallway, power washing north and west sides of the exterior, re-grading and paving the parking lot. Plans for subsequent years include painting the north and west sides of the building, and installing additional outlets for computers in the main library and at the librarians' desk.

Approval of Minutes

Motion: Judy Buell, seconded by Ed Adelman, to approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting of February 8, 2025 with the following amendment: under Board of Education "established a new Ad-Hoc Committee to *meet with* non-certified staff." Motion carried unanimously, Nick Brown abstaining.

Reports/Actions

First Selectman: First Selectman Cahill reported that the Towns of Hampton and Pomfret met with the Town of Eastford to convince them to remain with KB Ambulance Service, which they agreed to with a reduced assessment as follows: Hampton - \$132,500; Eastford - \$100,000; Pomfret - \$232,500. He also reported that the Tax Collector contract has been renewed with a \$5000 increase, and the Transfer Station

expenses have risen 3.5%. Mr. Cahill also stated that the Town is changing website hosts after he received no expedient response to the website being unavailable after the recent storm. Athens, which also provides the Town's cyber security, will serve as host with a slight increase and 24-7 availability. To Joan Fox's question on the costs of the Transfer Station versus trash pick-up service, Mr. Cahill said that all the information was forwarded to Selectmen Grindle to share with the Democratic Town Committee, as they requested the comparative figures.

Tax Collector: Chairman Donahue received and distributed February's report, with a net collection of \$4,307,642.

Treasurer: Treasurer Rodriguez requested seven transfers.

Motion: Nick Brown, seconded by Joan Fox, to approve the following transfers: \$7041 to #6004 Town Counsel from #7000 Contingency; \$121 to #6009-03 Election Other Workers Pay from #6009-01 Election Registrars Pay; \$135 to #6010-02 P & Z Legal Notices from #6010-08 P & Z Legal and Engineering; \$233 to #6013-03 Town Hall Electricity from #6013-14 Community Center Water; \$1199 to #6013-08 Town Garage Oil from #7000 Contingency, 729 to #6013-11 Community Center Oil from #7000 Contingency; \$889 to #6300-00 Sanitation Transfer Station from #7000 Contingency. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Rodriguez also reported that the value of 1 mill is \$216,271.

Boards of Education:

Hampton Elementary School: Chairman Donahue distributed copies of the Superintendent's budget summary for the three budgets options. She reported that at their most recent meetings, the Superintendent distributed three budgets for the Board's consideration, a 7.76% increase, a 12.06% increase, and a 15.90% percent increase, and another option which reduced some line items. She has requested the same information from the Superintendent as she requests every year. She stated that the Board of Finance will wait until the Board of Education adopts a budget before discussion. Nick Brown noted that many of the expenses were out of the board's control, including special education costs, and that the number of students requiring additional academic support based on test scores was alarming.

Regional District #11: Chairman Donahue reported that the Board of Education has yet to adopt a budget, but the proposal is a little over 3.8%. The assessments to the Towns, based on student count, are as follows: Chaplin – 52.76%; Scotland – 22.11%, Hampton – 25.13%, which results in a substantial increase to the Town.

Board of Finance Committees

Policies and Procedures Committee: none.

Correspondence: Chairman Donahue reported receipt of financial reports from the schools, the report from the Tax Collector, and contributions to the Annual Report and budget requests from various departments.

Old Business

a. Update on Requests for Contributions to Annual Report

Chairman Donahue reported receipt of contributions to the Annual Report from the Town Clerk and the Board of Finance, which will be distributed to members for review.

b. Update on Requests for Department Budgets

Chairman Donahue has received budget requests from the Recreation Commission. She would like to schedule a Budget Workshop on a Thursday as the Assessor is in the building on Thursdays. By general consent it was agreed to meet on March 27 at 6:30PM, at which

time they could expect an update on, or adopted, Board of Education budget.

Citizen Comments: none.

Suggestions for Next Agenda: Members were encouraged to send suggestions for the Agenda to the Chairman. Budget presentations will continue.

Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting: Budget Workshop March 27 at 6:30PM and Regular Meeting April 9, 2025 at 7PM.

Adjournment: There being no further business to come before the Board, the Meeting adjourned at 8:35PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dayna McDermott Arriola
Recording Secretary

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