

Town of Hampton  
Board of Finance  
Regular Meeting  
May 14, 2025  
7PM

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:03PM.

**Roll Call:** Kathy Donahue, Joan Fox, Ed Adelman, Nick Brown, Kathi Newcombe, Regina DeCesare, Fran Gustaveson.

Staff and Others Present: First Selectman Allan Cahill, Selectman John Tillinghast, Treasurer Ellen Rodriguez, Hampton Elementary School Board of Education Vice-Chairman Mark Becker, Recording Secretary Dayna McDermott-Arriola

Fran Gustaveson was seated upon request for Judy Buell, and Regina DeCesare was seated upon request for Diane Gagnon.

**Citizen Comments:** Tim Studer asked if the Board of Education budget would be discussed. Chairman Donahue stated that it was not on the Agenda for discussion as the school board was still reviewing for potential reductions.

**Budget Presentations**

**Town Government:** First Selectman Cahill reviewed the Town Government Draft Budget. A 2.5% Cost of Living Adjustment is being given to all Town employees. The Tax Collector's contract has increased by \$5,000 for the next year. The Assessor's costs have increased from \$11,996 to \$15,815 for upgrades to the new computer program as well as an additional \$3,000 for a new computer. Town Clerk Land Records has increased by \$6,000 for the State's new system in record keeping. The line item for Town Counsel has increased by \$12,500 due to the litigation concerning the Solar Park. The Conservation Commission has requested a \$14,650 increase for improvements to Town properties and to research unimproved Town roads. The Elections budget has increased by \$8,379 to cover the costs of Early Voting, which the Governor's budget does not intend to fund this year. The Plan of Conservation and Development, which is State mandated, represents a \$2,500 increase for the Planning and Zoning Commission. Line items for oil and electricity have increased, as have fees for the Transfer Station and our participation in the NDDH Health District and TVCCA due to our assessment. The Ambulance line item has risen from \$90,000 to \$132,500 per the contract, which has been negotiated at 5% for the next two years; ARPA funds have been supplementing that cost for the last few years. Mr. Cahill explained that the assessments were also revisited with Pomfret paying half of the contract and Eastford assessed at \$100,000 to prevent that Town from joining with another, which would have cost Hampton and Pomfret considerably more. The line item for Contingency has increased by \$5,000 because of the amount of "unknowns" due to potential State and Federal cuts and the costs of litigation with the Solar Park. The \$2,016,577 draft version of the budget represents a \$127,036, or 6.72%, increase.

**Approval of Minutes**

**Motion:** Fran Gustaveson, seconded by Ed Adelman, to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 9, 2025. Motion carried unanimously, Nick Brown abstaining.

**Motion:** Nick Brown, seconded by Joan Fox, to approve the Minutes of the Budget Workshop session of April 28, 2025. Motion carried unanimously.

**Reports/Actions**

**First Selectman:** First Selectman Cahill reported the signing of a three-year contract with KB Ambulance, and a contract with ATCON, currently responsible for computer security, to host the Town

website. The Department of Public Works is procuring bids for projects. The future purchase of a road mower and tractor are both part of the 5-Year plan.

**Tax Collector:** Chairman Donahue received and distributed the Tax Collector's *Regional Revenue Report*, which reported collection of \$4,373,586 as of April, 2025.

**Treasurer:** Treasurer Rodriguez requested seven transfers.

**Motion:** Nick Brown, seconded by Kathi Newcombe, to approve the following transfers: \$350 from # 6006-02 Assessor Clerk to # 6006-11 Assessor Web Hosting; \$1026 from # 6009-01 Election Registrar to # 6009-03 Election Training; \$73 from # 6009-05 Election Cards/Ballots to # 6009-04 Election Postage and Supplies; \$62 from # 6010-07 P & Z Supplies to # 6010-04 DEP Land Use Fees; \$64 from # 6013-12 Street Lights to # 6013-09 Town Garage Telephone; \$140 from # 6013-19 Comm. Center Elevator to # 6013-10 Comm. Center Electricity; \$155 from # 6201-08 Training and Testing to # 6201-07 Town Garage Maintenance. Motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer Rodriguez also reported that, while departments did not exceed the \$20,000 limit in expenditures, her requests for transfers resulted in the Contingency line item being overspent by \$5,000. She suggested the options of including a question on transferring funds from the General Fund at the Annual Town Meeting, or rescinding the motion that extended the amount over the \$20,000 limit. Chairman Donahue asked for a list of expenses paid by Contingency prior to making the decision. To Joan Fox's question on the amount of interest collected this fiscal year, Ms. Rodriguez answered \$48,000.

#### **Boards of Education:**

**Regional District #11:** Chairman Donahue reported that with the tri-town failure of the school's budget, (referendum results attached) the RD#11 Board of Education will meet on May 20 to review their budget request and set a new referendum date.

**Hampton Elementary School:** Chairman Donahue reported that the Hampton Elementary School Board of Education met on May 12 and discussed the removal of \$25,000 from the Special Education Transportation line item, though there was no motion made on the reduction. If approved, that would bring the budget down to a \$171,000 increase. Other areas were discussed, but in the absence of the Business Coordinator, no further decisions were made. The Superintendent and the Business Coordinator will meet to review line items.

Board of Education Vice-Chairman Mark Becker stated that the school board planned on discussing the budget at their regular meeting of May 28, but Chairman Donahue urged a sooner date in order for the finance board to conduct a final Budget Workshop and meet deadlines, imposed by the Board of Finance By-Laws and by State Statute, in order to present budgets to a referendum prior to the close of the fiscal year. She reviewed the budgetary process, suggesting a Public Hearing on June 5, followed by a Special Meeting, a Town Meeting on June 20, and a referendum on June 27. These dates meet the statutory timelines on public notices. Mr. Becker agreed to check with school board members on meeting the following week.

#### **Board of Finance Committees**

Policies and Procedures Committee: none.

**Correspondence:** Chairman Donahue reported receipt of financial reports from the schools, the reports from the Tax Collector, the bank statements, and the Registrars of Voters' budget request.

#### **New Business:**

##### **a. Discuss and Possible Approval of Dairy Farm Abatement**

Chairman Donahue announced that the Board of Selectmen approved the Abatement, 2-0 as Mr. Cahill recused himself, at 25%.

**Motion:** Nick Brown, seconded by Kathi Newcombe, to approve the dairy farm abatement at a rate of 25%. Motion carried unanimously.

**b. Discuss and Possible Action on Town Government Budget**

The finance board conducted a line item review of the Town Government's draft budget as follows:

First Selectman Cahill requested the removal of his raise this year due to the significant increases in the Town and school budgets. Members expressed their appreciation for his request.

**Motion:** Nick Brown, seconded by Kathy Donahue, to reduce the salary increase for the First Selectman, at his request, to 0%. Motion carried, 5-0.

**In Favor:** Kathy Donahue, Nick Brown, Ed Adelman, Joan Fox, Fran Gustaveson.

**Opposed:** Kathi Newcombe.

Board members discussed the Conservation Commission's request of \$26,350. Nick Brown noted the significant increases since FY2020-21 when the actual expenses totaled \$165, though it was acknowledged that the Town has acquired additional land since then, and that some of the recent increases were due to grant matching opportunities. Chairman Donahue questioned the plan for a parking area to access the Cohantic Cliffs, due to safety concerns on Route 97 and the current transition of ownership of the adjacent property. First Selectman Cahill concurred, noting liability issues on the State highway. He also opposed spending money on an attorney to research unimproved Town roads, noting that the roads are town owned and researched. Nick Brown concurred, and suggested that the Conservation Commission initiate fundraising opportunities to assist with projects, stating that he would lead by example and make the first donation. Chairman Donahue reported that the elimination of a parking area for the Cohantic Cliffs, and research on the Town's unimproved roads, would reduce the budget by approximately \$15,000.

**Motion:** Nick Brown, seconded by Kathi Newcombe, to reduce the Conservation Commission's budget to \$11,699, the actual expenses of FY2023-2024. Motion carried unanimously.

After discussion of the actual expenditures for the Inland/Wetlands Clerk, the Board of Finance Clerk, and the Building Inspector's Mileage, those three items were reduced.

**Motion:** Nick Brown, seconded by Kathi Newcomber, to reduce the Inland Wetlands Clerk proposed salary of \$1,232 to \$1,000. Motion carried unanimously

**Motion:** Nick Brown, seconded by Kathi Newcombe, to reduce the Board of Finance Clerk's salary of \$2,536 to \$1,600. Motion carried unanimously.

**Motion:** Nick Brown, seconded by Fran Gustaveson, to reduce the Building Inspector's \$1,200 Mileage line item by \$500. Motion carried unanimously.

After discussion, it was decided to retain the amounts for heating oil and electricity. It was also decided to retain \$50,000 in the Fire Department Volunteer Incentive line item.

Chairman Donahue said she would check on the interest rates of the annuities and the current status of the payments.

The amount for the Contingency line will be decided after the list of what was spent this fiscal year is reviewed.

**c. Discuss and Possible Approval of Board of Finance's Contribution to Annual Report**

By general consent, the Board of Finance's contribution to the Annual Report was approved with the following amendments: the inclusion of the donation and the vote count on the referendum that approved the fire truck; the inclusion of the findings of the Audit; the amount owed from the Solar Park, and the date of the revaluation.

## **Old Business**

### **a. Update on Requests for Contributions to Annual Report**

Chairman Donahue reported that the finance board is still waiting for some reports. The Town Clerk is revising the statistics on the number of births reported in the Annual Report as some Scotland residents, due to their zip codes, were erroneously included in the count.

### **b. Update on Requests for Department Budgets**

All requests have been received.

## **Additions to the Agenda**

**Motion:** Nick Brown, seconded by Kathi Newcombe, to add to the Agenda a discussion on the Fire Department's LOSAP funds. Motion carried unanimously.

## **Discussion of the Fire Department's LOSAP Funds**

Chairman Donahue reported on the current interest rates as follows. She will send members the information on the status of the stipends when it's received.

To Ed Adelman's question, Chairman Donahue reported that the LOSAP fund update most recently reported is at 70%.

## **Citizen Comments:**

Treasurer Rodriguez inquired as to the Auditor's contract. Chairman Donahue and First Selectman Cahill advocated for extending a three year contract to Stephen Hopkins, based on his performance over the last several years and reasonable contractual prices. First Selectman Cahill will contact Mr. Hopkins.

**Suggestions for Next Agenda:** A Budget Workshop will be scheduled to hear presentations on the Hampton Elementary School budget revisions and to finalize and approve the Town Government budget.

**Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting:** Budget Workshop (TBD) , Public Hearing and Special Meeting, June 5, 2025 tentatively, and Regular Meeting of June 11, 2025 at 7PM.

**Adjournment:** There being no further business to come before the Board, the Meeting adjourned at 8:58PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dayna McDermott Arriola  
Recording Secretary

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