

Town of Hampton
Board of Finance
Budget Workshop
May 21, 2025
7:30PM

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:30PM.

Roll Call: Kathy Donahue, Joan Fox, Judy Buell, Ed Adelman, Nick Brown, Judy Buell, Regina DeCesare, Fran Gustaveson, Kathi Newcombe
Staff and Others Present: First Selectman Allan Cahill, Treasurer Ellen Rodriguez, Hampton Elementary School Principal Vikki Smith and Board of Education members Mark Becker, Maryellen Donnelly, and Dave Halbach, Recording Secretary Dayna McDermott-Arriola

Motion : Fran Gustaveson was seated, on request, for Joan Fox, and Regina DeCesare was seated, on request, for Diane Gagnon.

Citizen Comments: Tim Studor thanked the board for the opportunity to speak, stating that education is important and every decrease in spending is a year the students lose.

Discuss Revised RD#11, Hampton Elementary School, and Town Government Budgets

Chairman Donahue distributed the new draft of the Hampton Elementary School FY2025-2026 Budget, which was revised earlier that evening, and reviewed the revisions: \$25,000 was removed from Special Education Transportation; \$46,857 was eliminated due to Open Enrollment Health Insurance changes; \$21,150 was removed from the proposed Strategic Research Based Intervention position by changing the salary from Masters Step 12 to Masters Step 8, adding \$2000 for Professional Development; lessening the Cost-of-Living-Adjustment from 3% for unaffiliated staff to 2.5% for a savings of \$3,028; and reducing the proposed Special Education Director from a .4 FTE to a .3FTE position, reducing wages and benefits by \$10,763. Chairman Donahue said that the Superintendent was still reviewing other areas for possible reductions.

Chairman Donahue distributed the new draft of the RD#11 FY2025-2026 Budget that the Board had revised the night before, resulting in a \$7,229,562 bottom line that reduced the original budget, rejected by all three towns at a May 2 referendum, by \$55,631. She explained that due to the retirement of the principal, the Vice-Principal was promoted to the Principal position. The Vice-Principal will be replaced by a Dean of Students, at Masters Step 5, for a ten month, rather than a twelve month, year. An additional \$7,000 was removed from non-certified staff line items in the Athletic Department, which haven't been used this year. Chairman Donahue stated that the revised budget will result in a \$13,978 decrease for Hampton's assessment.

Chairman Donahue distributed the new draft of the Town Government FY2025-2026 budget, revised at the prior finance board meeting on May 13. She explained the rationale for eliminating \$11,350 from the Conservation Commission's request, \$1,000 from the First Selectman's line item, as he rejected a raise this year due to the increases in all three budgets, and reducing, based on actuals, the Inland/Wetlands Clerk by \$202 to \$1,000, the Finance Board Clerk by \$874 to \$1,600, and the Building Inspector's Mileage by \$500 to \$700.

The following dates were proposed to meet statutory notification timetables:

Public Hearing: June 5, 2025 at 7:30PM

Special Meeting: June 5, 2025 at 7:45PM

Town Meeting: June 20, 2025 (to be set by Board of Selectmen)

Referendum: June 27, 2025 from noon to 8PM.

The Legislative Session ends on June 4, 2025.

Nick Brown inquired as to why the Board of Finance wasn't voting on these budgets at this meeting. Chairman Donahue explained that the Superintendent was still reviewing for possible revisions due to actual expenses, and that the Town Government was waiting for the contracted fee for the Auditor, the list of Contingency expenses to amend that line item, if necessary, and a discussion on the Legal Counsel line item due to the court appearance of the Town in the litigation with the Solar Park. Chairman Donahue also stated that the Finance Board does not approve final budgets until the Special Meeting after the Public Hearing, in order to receive citizen comments prior to final approval.

Ed Adelman stated that he was impressed that the Hampton Elementary School Board of Education was able to make reductions without impacting programming. Chairman Donahue noted that there has been an increase in programming with the FY2025-2026 budget proposal. Nick Brown noted that the latest version of the school's budget increases the bottom line by \$89,829 and that \$88,276 of that amount is in the Other Purchase Services, such as transportation and tuition, over which the school has no control. To Fran Gustavson's question on how the needs of the 23 students who qualify for SRBI are currently being met, Principal Smith said that a long-term substitute has been filling that role; Chairman Donahue added that the compensation for the substitute is currently on Step 1 of the teacher's scale.

Citizen Comments:

Mary Ellen Donnelly reported that the Board of Education voted, 5 – 1, to approve this latest budget at their meeting.

Board of Education Vice-Chairman Mark Becker said that the original version of the budget represented a 15% increase as it included an additional teacher for the early grades.

Adjournment: There being no further business to come before the Board, the Meeting adjourned at 8:03PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Dayna McDermott Arriola
Recording Secretary

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