

Town of Hampton
Board of Finance
Public Hearing
June 5, 2025
7:30 PM

Call to Order: The Public Hearing was called to order at 7:33 PM.

Budget Presentations and Public Input on Proposed 2024-25 Town Government and Hampton Elementary School Budgets

Hampton Elementary School Budget:

Board of Education Vice-Chairman Mark Becker presented the FY2025-2026 revised budget proposal, a 4.12%, or \$89,829, increase over the current year, stating that the majority of increases were caused by line items beyond the board's control, such as the transportation contract. One of the increases was for the expansion of the Scientific Research-Based Intervention (SRBI) position, which provides additional support to students, from three to five days per week.

Board of Finance Chairman Kathy Donahue noted that the board's revisions included lowering the proposed SRBI salary from a Masters Step 12 to a Masters Step 5, decreasing the unaffiliated staff salary raises from 3% to 2.5% to match the current cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA), and lessening the position of a proposed Special Education Director from the full time equivalent of .4 to .3.

Town Government Budget

Chairman Donahue presented the FY2025-2026 budget proposal, explaining that the Board of Finance and First Selectman reviewed five years of actual expenses to arrive at line item amounts. Increases included the 2.5% COLA for Town employees, the Tax Collector's contract, a new computer and upgrades to programs in the Assessor's Office, computer upgrades in the Town Clerk's Office for a new Land Records system, the costs of mandated Early Voting, line items for utilities and participation in regional programs, funds for the mandated Plan of Conservation and Development, and an increase of \$42,500 for the KB Ambulance Service. Chairman Donahue explained that American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds have been used to supplement the cost for the ambulance for the last few years, and that the towns were reassessed, with Pomfret paying half the costs, Hampton paying \$132,500, and Eastford, \$100,000, to match the amount of a competing service. First Selectman Allan Cahill and Chairman Donahue explained the decrease in the Conservation Commission's request to fund research to develop unimproved Town roads into hiking trails, and to improve a right-of-way-access to the Cohantic Cliffs due to safety concerns.

A draft of the Legal Notice for the Annual Town Meeting was distributed. Referendum questions, along with the school and government budgets, include transferring money from the Unassigned General Fund for: the purchase of a tractor and road mower for the Department of Public Works (\$150,000), part of their 5-Year Plan, the expense of a State mandated HVAC and Air Quality Evaluation Study of the elementary school (\$27,400), and funding the Volunteer Firefighter Length of Service Program (\$50,000).

Citizen Comments:

Mary Ellen Donnelly suggested that the word "mandated" be inserted on the ballot for the question on the elementary school evaluation study. Chairman Donahue thanked her for the suggestion.

Dennis Timberman inquired as to why there was no longer a fee for transfer station permits which generated \$15,000 in revenue. First Selectman Cahill explained that the Selectmen decided that taxes should cover this service, which generated only \$12,000 annually. Board of Finance member Nick Brown and Town Clerk Kaye Johnson explained that the fees required a lot of labor and clerical fees, as well as additional scrutiny by the auditor. Chairman Donahue noted that this is a service to which all residents in town have access. Stan Crawford noted that Eastford charges \$100 for a permit.

To Danielle McGiver's question on the cost of a referendum, the Registrar of Voters answered that each referenda cost approximately \$1,200. Ms. McGiver also questioned the cost of the Dairy Farm Abatement. Chairman Donahue said that with the rate of 25% applied, the amount is approximately \$3,000 in tax abatement. Nick Brown noted that the rate was reduced from the 50% of past years.

Adjournment: The Public Hearing adjourned at 7:50.

Respectfully submitted,

Dayna McDermott Arriola
Recording Secretary

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