

Town of Hampton
Board of Finance
Special Meeting
June 5, 2025
7:45PM

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:50PM.

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

Staff and Others Present: First Selectman Allan Cahill, Selectman John Tillinghast, Superintendent Andrew Skarzynski, Principal Vikki Smith and Board of Education members Mark Becker, Mary Ellen Donnelly, Dennis Timberman, Elizabeth Lindorff, and Stephanie Bora, Treasurer Ellen Rodriguez, and Recording Secretary Dayna McDermott-Arriola

Regina DeCesare was seated for Diane Gagnon on request.

Chairman Donahue requested a moment of silence in memory of Glen Newcombe.

Citizen Comments: Board of Education Vice-Chairman Becker remarked on the “wonderful children” who graduated from the elementary school earlier in the evening.

Discussion and Possible Action on FY2025-2026 Municipal Budget and FY 2025-2026 Hampton Elementary School Budget

Municipal Budget: Chairman Donahue expressed concern over the amount in the Contingency line due to the continued legal costs of litigation with Huntington National Bank concerning the Solar Park. First Selectman Cahill explained that the Town recently lost the suit, but that the Board of Selectmen voted unanimously to appeal the decision based on the fact that the amount owed is a large percentage of the Grand List. To Ed Adelman’s question, Mr. Cahill said that Hampton was the last town involved in these suits, as some of the other towns settled. Hampton rejected a small settlement in the hopes of recovering some of the 1.5 million that is owed the Town over the last few years in personal property taxes and interest. Treasurer Rodriguez reported that there is \$5,000 remaining in Contingency, and by general consent, it was agreed that the amount budgeted for FY2025-2026 will remain at \$25,000. Chairman Donahue stated that if additional funds are needed, a Town Meeting can be called for approval. Chairman Donahue also reported that the State held the towns harmless for the next two years for the Education Cost Sharing grants, and that the Regional District #11 budget was defeated for a second time on June 3.

Hampton Elementary School Budget: Chairman Donahue reported a projected school enrollment for next year of 56 students, excluding those who are tuitioning elsewhere. On Chairman Donahue’s request, Principal Smith reported that, thus far, there are 10 students in next year’s pre-school, and 11 in Kindergarten.

Chairman Donahue suggested that the \$6,826 remaining in the Hampton Elementary School Board of Education’s non-lapsing fund, and earmarked for educational purposes, be included in the FY2025-2026 spending plan, reducing the budget by that amount.

Chairman Donahue reported, and Vice-Chairman Becker confirmed, that the school has an estimated \$171,500 surplus this year due to staff changes which included a vacancy for the Scientific Research-Based Interventionist, later replaced with a substitute, a combined interim principal/special education director, paraprofessionals reduced from 6.5 to 6 hours per week, a paraprofessional position filled partially with a substitute, and an unfilled custodian position for much of the year, all totaling \$85,000, reductions in benefits totaling \$48,500, and a \$38,000 reduction in the cost of an outplacement. Some of

the surplus may be, or has been, used toward a number of capital projects, including a \$4000 facility condition assessment, the replacement of water holding tanks, the cleaning of clogged gutter downspouts, and a new kitchen stove. The \$27,400 cost for the inspection and evaluation of the HVAC system, required by Statute every five years, will be a separate question on the ballot to be voted on by referendum. Chairman Donahue again requested an update on the school's 5-Year Plan. Chairman Donahue reported that if all the referendum questions are approved, there will be approximately 17% remaining in the unassigned Fund Balance.

Motion: Judy Buell, seconded by Nick Brown, to use the \$6,826 remaining in the school's non-lapsing fund to reduce the budget. Motion carried unanimously.

Citizen Comments:

To Chelsey Guilmette's question on where it is stated that the money in the school's reserves be spent on education, Chairman Donahue stated that the Statute governing school reserves stipulates that it must be used for educational purposes.

Tim Studor inquired as to the revenue line for pre-school tuition. Chairman Donahue explained that there were issues with billing and several parents owe money for the pre-school programs, but that those figures are currently being reviewed for accuracy and school officials are working on the collection of past due accounts.

Adjournment: There being no further business to come before the Board, the Meeting adjourned at 8:09PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Dayna McDermott Arriola
Recording Secretary

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