

Town of Hampton  
Board of Finance  
Regular Meeting  
February 10, 2021  
7:00 PM  
Zoom Meeting

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

**Roll Call:** Kathy Donahue, Diane Gagnon, Ed Adelman, Nick Brown, Judy Buell, Jessie Samios, Kathi Newcombe, Stan Crawford.

Staff and Others Present: First Selectman Allan Cahill, Selectman Bob Grindle, Treasurer Ellen Rodriguez, Planning & Zoning Commission Chairman Kevin Grindle, RD#11 Board Member Joan Fox, Recording Secretary Dayna McDermott-Arriola.

**Citizen Comments:** none.

**Motion:** Nick Brown, seconded by Diane Gagnon, to move Agenda Item 5, Presentations, to Agenda Item 4. Motion carried unanimously.

**Presentations:**

**Planning & Zoning Commission:** Chairman Kevin Grindle presented the PZC budget request of \$40,517, an \$87 increase over the current year, noting reductions in the line items for Legal & Engineering and Notices due to reduced need, and increases in line items for Training for new members, and Planning Services, which represents a 2% increment for CHA Consulting Services.

**Inland, Wetland & Watercourses:** Member Stan Crawford presented the Agency's budget request of \$5478, a spending plan level with the current year.

**Approval of Minutes:**

**Motion:** Diane Gagnon, seconded by Ed Adelman, to approve the Minutes of the January 13, 2021 Special Meeting amended to include under Appointment of Member to Fill Vacancy on Board of Finance: "Chairman Donahue noted that the finance board was fortunate to have two excellent candidates." Motion carried unanimously.

**Motion:** Diane Gagnon, seconded by Nick Brown, to approve the Minutes of the January 13, 2021 Regular Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

**Reports/Actions**

**First Selectman:** First Selectman Cahill announced that department budget requests continue to be submitted, reporting a 4% no-bid increase in ConnectiCare employee health insurance and a 3% increase for CIRMA. The Board of Selectmen is recommending a 2% increment for hired and appointed employees of the Town and 0% for elected officials. The Selectmen have signed a five-year contract for revaluation through NECCOG with Vision Appraisal at a rate of \$6000 per year, and will be negotiating, along with the Towns of Eastford and Pomfret, with KB Ambulance. Capital projects in need of attention include issues with the generator at Town Hall and with the HVAC system at the Town Garage, and the upgrade of fixtures at the elementary school, a cost shared with Eversource, to accommodate LED lights and ultimately result in savings. To Chairman Donahue's question, Mr. Cahill stated that he is waiting for an update from the Fire Department on the Length of Service Award Program policy change that would eliminate the balloon death payment and instead grant yearly stipends. Kathi Newcombe asked if the entire STEAP grant award would be used to repair the tennis courts. Mr. Cahill said that, although that's the focus, the cost is less than \$100,000, leaving a surplus to address the Community Center's HVAC

\$15,000 proposal and some sill replacement for \$10,000. Stan Crawford questioned the United Services Town population figure, which Treasurer Rodriguez identified as 1,842; Mr. Cahill will check on the correct number. Ed Adelman asked if a plan for a park at Town Hall developed by Tom Gaines had been considered. Mr. Cahill replied that certain aspects were adopted, such as construction of a pavilion, one of the measures to connect the campuses of Town Hall and the Community Center, which was also part of the plan.

**Tax Collector:** none.

**Treasurer:** Treasurer Rodriguez announced that the audit was complete and requested one transfer.

**Motion:** Nick Brown, seconded by Ed Adelman, to approve the following transfer: \$40.00 to Election HAVA expenses #6009-06 from Election Postage #6009-04. Motion carried unanimously.

In response to Kathi Newcombe's question on increases in certain line items, Treasurer Rodriguez explained that deferred revenue is an audit adjustment control, that donations were made to the Emergency Fuel Fund, and that the Town Clerk has collected fees which have increased that department's Historic Documents Account and Discretionary Fund, which has been, at the Town Clerk's request, used for payroll cost over-runs for the Assistant Town Clerk. Ms. Newcombe also questioned changes in the Small Cities section of the balance sheet. Treasurer Rodriguez explained that the Small Cities Grant Office was disbanded and lien apportionments for the individual towns were provided by the auditor and added to the accounting system.

#### **Board of Education**

**Regional District #11:** RD#11 Board of Education member Joan Fox reported that the school reopened on February 3, with 148 students in attendance and 52 students continuing to learn remotely. She also announced that, according to reports from the State Department of Education, Parish Hill High School's graduation rate of 96.5%, with a rate of 100% for special needs and minority students, is significantly above the State average, and that the school suspension rate is ranked in the lowest tier in the State. Ms. Fox also reported that the school was awarded a \$154,000 emergency relief fund grant, that the Board of Education approved a student science trip to Costa Rica for April of 2022, and that the Town of Sprague has started discussions on naming Parish Hill as one of their selections for school choice.

**Hampton Elementary School:** none.

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

**Policies and Procedures Committee:** Chairman Donahue stated that the draft version of the *Accounting Policies and Procedures* was distributed for members' review and would be re-sent to include the changes made at the most recent committee meeting and after the Auditor's review.

**Review and Possible Action on Approval of *Budget Management Policies and Procedures for Town Agencies*:** Chairman Donahue stated that the *Budget Management Policies and Procedure for Town Agencies* was distributed for members' review, clarifying that the draft is based on the Town of Chaplin's manual and may be amended as needed for Hampton's use. To Ed Adelman's question on the *Mid-Year Budget Adjustment Form*, Chairman Donahue stated that the form would be included and used when needed. Mr. Adelman also questioned the need for the language "including the Board of Education", suggesting that the words "board, commission, committee" be added instead to "...agency has a statutory obligation for compliance with this policy..." Chairman Donahue noted that boards of education have a different set of statutes than those that govern municipalities. To Nick Brown's question on whether the Treasurer and the

Selectmen reviewed the document, Chairman Donahue confirmed that they were both part of the discussion. Mr. Brown also suggested that the statutory references are reviewed to make sure they are current. The *Budget Management Policies and Procedure for Town Agencies* will be amended for suggestions, and errors noted by Jessie Samios, and final approval will be an Agenda item at the next meeting.

**Correspondence:** Chairman Donahue distributed the Governor’s Executive Order #10, which includes information on taxes, and electronic copies of the Audit, which will also be mailed to members. She is also scheduling a time for the Auditor to present his report to the board, noting that both she and the First Selectman approved the “Views of responsible officials and planned corrective actions”, in response to the Auditor’s “Schedule of findings and questioned costs” regarding the October, 2019 purchase of the bucket truck.

**Old Business**

- a. **Development of Calendar for Budget Process:** Chairman Donahue stated that the *Citizens’ Guide to the Town Budget* distributed to members was the Town of Pomfret’s and can be used as a template, encouraging suggestions on amendments for Hampton. Ed Adelman praised the document, noting that it is full of information yet easy to digest. He suggested that the timeline include that the finance board “meets monthly” and that dates are available on the Town website. Stan Crawford suggested a detailed explanation of revenue sources, noting that while education absorbs nearly all of the property taxes collected, education grant funding is in decline. Chairman Donahue added that decreases in student enrollment could also affect adjustments in the Education Cost Sharing Grant. By general consent, it was agreed to review the document, with amendments, at the next meeting.
- b. **Schedule Budget Workshop Sessions:** Chairman Donahue asked members to identify a Wednesday meeting date between the February and March regular meetings for the sole purpose of scheduling some of the department budget presentations.

**Additions to Agenda:** none.

**Citizen Comments:** Nick Brown announced that, with the State closing its largest incinerator, resulting in an increase in tipping fees for out-of-state disposal, and with organic material constituting 20%-40% of household waste, he has met with the Green Energy Committee to discuss providing compost containers to households. Additionally, an Eagle candidate from our local Scouts is interested in spearheading the project. Finance board members voiced support for this initiative. First Selectman Cahill announced congratulations to alternate member, Alyssa Languth, on the birth of a baby girl.

**Suggestions for Next Agenda:**

- Final Approval of *Budget Management Policies and Procedure for Town Agencies*
- Review of *Accounting Policies and Procedures*
- Review of *Citizens’ Guide to the Town Budget*
- Budget Presentations from Departments

**Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting:** March 10, 2021, at 7PM.

**Adjournment:** There being no further business to come before the Board, the Meeting adjourned at 8:22 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dayna McDermott Arriola  
Recording Secretary

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