

Town of Hampton
Board of Finance
Public Hearing
April 28, 2015
7pm
Hampton Town Hall Community Room

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Members Present: Jeff Clermont, Ed Adelman, Penny Newbury, Nick Brown, Rick Matejka, Dan Meade
Members/Alternates Absent: Luciann Norton, Mike Higgins, Stan Crawford
Staff and others present: First Selectman Al Cahill, Selectmen Mike Chapel and Bob Grindle, Treasurer Ellen Rodriguez, Hampton Elementary School Superintendent Corinne Berglund, Principal Elise Guari, Business Coordinator Sally Lehoux, Board of Education Chairman John Burnham, Board of Education Members Maryellen Donnelly, Ann Gruenberg, Recording Clerk Dayna McDermott-Arriola, and residents.

Presentation of the Proposed 2015-2016 Town Government and Elementary School Budgets and Public Input

Chairman Jeff Clermont announced the proposed expenditures: the General Government's proposal of \$1,627,923, an 8.31% reduction; the Hampton Elementary School's proposal of \$2,174,969, a .55% reduction; and Hampton's assessment to Regional District #11's proposal of \$1,748,834, an increase of 2.82%.

Presentation of the Town Government Budget

Al Cahill presented the Town Government Budget, listing the following increases: a 2% cost-of-living increment for all personnel, a \$5000 adjustment to the First Selectman's salary, \$2,000 for Town Hall maintenance, \$4,645 for the purchase of a digital scanner, \$746 in NECOG fees, \$3,000 for the Planning & Zoning Commission's 10-Year Plan of Conservation and Development, \$3,000 in IRA employee matches, \$4,000 for tree removal, \$2,000 for Fletcher Memorial Library programs, \$5,000 for the CNR account for replacement of trucks and equipment, and 400 additional part-time hours in the Public Works Department for road maintenance. There was a reduction of \$200,635 for debt service as the Town voted to pay the balance on the outstanding debts last year.

There were no questions or comments from the public.

Presentation of the Hampton Elementary School Budget

Superintendent Corinne Berglund stated that changes in the custodial services and the reduction of staff resulted in savings without sacrificing the education of the students.

Penny Newbury noted that the Board of Education had previously presented a thorough report to the Board of Finance on their budget.

Kathy Donahue asked for the amounts of the REAP grant and in the CNR accounts. Sally Lehoux reported \$15,625 anticipated for the REAP grant, none of which has been applied to the budget. Ellen Rodriguez reported \$53,299 in the CNR account. Kathy also inquired as to the budgeted amount for public tuition. Corinne responded that the \$18,000 in the budget covered the students attending magnet schools at the time the budget was developed, and that another student has since enrolled for an additional \$4,500.

Nick Brown asked if any of the federal grants were at risk. Sally said that while none were guaranteed, there were none considered at risk, and that the amount received through the school readiness grant would be dependent on student enrollment.

Kathi Newcombe raised issues concerning the Cooperative Office of Regional District #11 and Chaplin Elementary School. According to Kathi, documentation reveals that the Cooperative Committee has not

followed its own agreement in terms of the allocation of personnel and their compensation, as the current arrangement sets a 25/75 split for the shared services, yet no documentation, vote, or appendix exists to substantiate the division. Kathi suggested that Hampton and Scotland could be subsidizing Chaplin's administrative costs, and that the fiscal authority of the Town of Scotland, the Board of Selectmen, voted to withhold funding their portion of the Cooperative Office budget until these matters were resolved. Kathi requested that the Board of Finance, as the fiscal authority of Hampton, consider these matters as well.

Kathy Donahue also urged the Board of Finance to look into issues concerning the Cooperative Office, noting that the 25/75 split has never been subjected to a vote, and that, according to their meeting minutes, the Regional District #11 Board of Education has incorporated into their budget the Cooperative Office costs without reviewing them. Kathy also urged the Board of Finance to question Regional District #11's fund balances, currently \$667,266, with an anticipated \$340,000 surplus this year, as well as last year's surplus of \$94,716 from the Cooperative Office's budget. Kathy reported that these monies are in excess of the designated funds budgeted for Capital & Non-Recurring Accounts, and exceed the \$283,600 stipulated in the 5-Year Plan. Kathy suggested that the Board of Finance conduct audits of Regional District #11 and Cooperative Office records.

It was noted that attempts to raise these issues at the Cooperative Committee were unsuccessful as their meetings do not allow citizen comment.

Nick agreed that these are serious concerns that the Board of Finance intends to include on the Agenda of their next meeting.

Adjournment:

Motion: Penny, seconded by Dan, to adjourn at 7:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dayna McDermott Arriola
Recording Clerk