

Town of Hampton
Board of Finance
Regular Meeting
January 13, 2021
7:15 PM
Zoom Meeting

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:23 PM.

Roll Call: Kathy Donahue, Diane Gagnon, Ed Adelman, Nick Brown, Judy Buell, Kathi Newcombe, Alyssa Languth, Stan Crawford.
Staff and Others Present: First Selectman Allan Cahill, Selectman Bob Grindle, Treasurer Ellen Rodriguez, RD#11 Board Member Joan Fox, Hampton Elementary School Board Chairman Rose Bisson, Appointed Member Jessie Samios, Recording Secretary Dayna McDermott-Arriola.

Seating of Alternates:

Motion: Diane Gagnon, seconded by Judy Buell, to seat Kathi Newcombe for the vacancy. Motion carried unanimously.

Citizen Comments: The Registrars of Voters were directed to budget for a Town referendum after asking if the Executive Order on approving budgets would extend to the next fiscal year.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion: Ed Adelman, seconded by Diane Gagnon, to approve the Minutes of the December 9, 2020 Regular Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion: Diane Gagnon, seconded by Kathi Newcombe, to approve the Minutes of the December 30, 2020 Special Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion: Diane Gagnon, seconded by Ed Adelman, to approve the Minutes of the January 4 Special Meeting amended as follows under Old Business: Discussion and Action on Lease Purchase of Scott Air Packs for the Fire Department: "...both the Town and finance board attorneys participated in the drafting of the Executive Order *with the Office of Policy and Management.*" Motion carried unanimously.

Presentations: none.

Reports/Actions

First Selectman: Though First Selectman Cahill said he had nothing to report, he fielded several questions. Ed Adelman's asked for the status of the STEAP grant; Mr. Cahill replied that he had not received a contract yet, explaining the delay due to concerns raised on the plans for repairing the sills and replacing the roof of the Community Center as it is considered a historic building. Chairman Donahue asked for information on the distribution of the Covid vaccine to residents. Mr. Cahill responded that most of the members of the Fire Department have received the vaccine and that the next group to be vaccinated will be Town Hall employees and residents at least 75 years of age, who require, per the Department of Health, an email address to be considered. He expressed concern that no senior citizens be excluded for lack of access to this method of communication and is seeking assistance from the Seniors' organization. Chairman Donahue asked the First Selectman to address the underfunding of the Length of Service Award Program which benefits members of the Fire Department. Mr. Cahill said that the issue would be part of the budget discussion, though a new policy might be developed instead. Chairman Donahue reported receipt of a communication from Treasurer Rodriguez stating that approval of the qualifying Covid expenses under the CARES Act is required by the legislative body. Mr. Cahill stated that the Selectmen approved the qualifying expenses at their meeting, and it was decided to add to the

Agenda the finance board's approval of the Covid relief fund claim after Treasurer Rodriguez stated her belief that approval by both the Boards of Selectmen and Finance would suffice.

Tax Collector: The report of the Tax Collector was distributed to members; the collection rate to date is 67.7%.

Treasurer: Treasurer Rodriguez requested one transfer.

Motion: Nick Brown, seconded by Diane Gagnon, to approve the following transfer: \$10 from Town Clerk Mailing Costs #6003-05 to Town Clerk Professional #6003-07. Motion carried unanimously. Treasurer Rodriguez also noted that, after discussion with the auditor, the amount, \$134,000, in the Motion made at the December 9, 2020 Meeting that approved a transfer from the unassigned fund balance to the STEAP liability capital and non-recurring account was incorrect, and that the correct amount is \$128,205. It was agreed to add to the Agenda an amendment of the Motion on the funding of the STEAP grant.

Board of Education

Regional District #11: RD#11 Board of Education member Joan Fox reported that the school continues its remote learning due to reported cases of Covid, with the expectation that the school will reopen on January 25. Mid-terms will be administered remotely from January 22- 26. Officials are contacting area towns with respect to including Parish Hill as one of their selections for school choice.

Hampton Elementary School: Elementary School Chairman Rose Bisson reported that, though there were two cases of Covid last month, there has been no remote learning yet this year per the determination of the Board of Health.

Motion: Nick Brown, seconded by Ed Adelman, to move Item 9.b., Discuss Hampton Elementary School Teachers' Contract, to Item 6.d. Motion carried unanimously.

Discuss Hampton Elementary School Teachers' Contract

Chairman Bisson reported on the major aspects of the recently negotiated contract: 1) the contract no longer provides health insurance to employees who work less than 15 hours per week; 2) employees' share of premium costs increased by 20.5%, 21%, and 21.5% over the three-year contract; 3) the contract awards teachers an 8.3% raise over three years. Though Mrs. Bisson relayed the negotiated step increases per year – 1.7%, .75%, and .5% -- she did not know the amounts of the raises each year. Ed Adelman noted that, while some advocated for a one-year contract in the event that the status of the school changes, the negotiating team was assured by counsel that if the school closes, the contract will be null and void. To Stan Crawford's question on how the public can access the contract, Mrs. Bisson said it is available to the public at the Town Clerk's Office, and Chairman Donahue added it is now online. At Chairman Donahue's request, Kathi Newcombe read the section of CGS10-153d which stipulates that the contract is binding unless the legislative body rejects it within thirty days of its filing with the Town Clerk. Though Mrs. Bisson delivered the contract to the Town Clerk on December 22, 2020, it was not noticed until January 5, 2021; Chairman Donahue will check with the Town Clerk on this discrepancy, and whether or not a legal notice in a newspaper is also required.

Board of Finance Committees

Policies and Procedures Committee: Chairman Donahue stated that the committee will meet on January 14. By general consent it was agreed that the Auditor should review the draft version of the Policies and Procedures Manual, at a cost of \$95 per hour and an estimated 3-5 hours. The finance board's attorney will also review the draft version. To Alyssa Languth's question, Treasurer Rodriguez affirmed that the draft version was sent to all Town departments for review.

Correspondence: none.

Old Business

- a. **Communications to Departments for Budget Requests and Submission to the Annual Report:** Chairman Donahue read the communication dated January 5, 2021 which was sent to all departments, offices, boards, commissions, committees, agencies and organizations requesting that budget proposals for FY2021-2022 be submitted to the Treasurer by February 8, 2021, and that contributions to the Annual Report be submitted to the Office of the First Selectman at the earliest convenience.
- b. **Development of Calendar for Budget Process:** Chairman Donahue said she would like the finance board to develop a calendar similar to area towns which details the steps in the budget process and is accessible to the public.

New Business

- a. **Schedule Budget Workshop Sessions:** Chairman Donahue asked members to compile a list of possible dates based on their availability for workshop sessions.

Additions to Agenda

Motion: Kathi Newcombe, seconded by Diane Gagnon, to add to the Agenda: Amendment of the Motion of December 9, 2020 on the STEAP Grant Funds. Motion carried unanimously.

Amendment of the Motion of December 9, 2020 on the STEAP Grant Funds

Motion: Diane Gagnon, seconded by Ed Adelman, to rescind the December 9, 2020 Motion: “to transfer \$134,000 from the unassigned fund balance to the STEAP liability capital and non-recurring account.” Motion carried unanimously.

Motion: Diane Gagnon, seconded by Kathi Newcombe, to approve the transfer of up to \$128,205 from the unassigned fund balance to the general fund STEAP grant fund to fund Grange/ Town Hall projects of which \$67,000 will be reimbursed by the State of Connecticut. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion: Diane Gagnon, seconded by Kathi Newcombe, to add to the Agenda Discussion and Action on the approval of the Covid Relief Fund Claim. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion and Action on the Approval of the Covid Relief Fund Claim

Motion: Diane Gagnon, seconded by Kathi Newcombe, to approve \$16,343.02 in qualifying expenses for the Covid Relief Fund Claim. Motion carried unanimously.

Citizen Comments:

Chairman Donahue announced that \$1650 has been collected from private donations and local businesses thus far for the Air Line Pamphlet.

Diane Gagnon reiterated the First Selectman’s concern that none of the senior citizens “slip through the cracks” in receiving the vaccine. The Registrars of Voters will provide a list to the Seniors organization and the Board of Finance of electors 75 years of age and older. Chairman Donahue and finance board members Nick Brown and Diane Gagnon volunteered to assist in contacting seniors and setting up temporary emails for their use.

Suggestions for Next Agenda:

Development of a Calendar for the Budget Process
Scheduling of Budget Workshop Sessions

Review Draft of Policies and Procedures
Budget Presentations from Departments

Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting: February 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.