

Town of Hampton  
Board of Finance  
Special Meeting: Budget Workshop  
May 1, 2024  
7PM

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:01PM.

**Roll Call:** Kathy Donahue, Nick Brown, Joan Fox, Ed Adelman, Kathi Newcombe, Stan Crawford, Diane Gagnon (7:10 virtually)  
Staff and Others Present: First Selectman Allan Cahill, Selectman John Tillinghast, Fire Chief Rich Schenk and Department Member James Kilburn, Fletcher Memorial Library Board Chairman Bonnie Cardwell, Hampton Elementary School Interim Superintendent Andrew Skarzynski, Finance Director Sally Lehoux, and Board of Education Chairman Rose Bisson and Vice-Chairman Mark Becker, and Recording Secretary Dayna McDermott-Arriola

Kathi Newcombe was seated for Judy Buell at her request.

**Citizen Comments:** none.

**Budget Presentations**

- a. **Fire Department:** Fire Chief Rich Schenk distributed and presented the department's budget request of \$93,550, a decrease of \$19,900 due to reductions in line items for Radio Upgrade and Replacement, Lighting, Personal Protective Equipment, and the Alarm System, which was purchased this year. A new item, Smoke Ejector/Fan & Battery, was added for \$7,250 as the department moves toward a battery operated generator.
- b. **Hampton Elementary School:** Interim Superintendent Andrew Skarzynski presented the Hampton Elementary School's budget proposal of \$2,215,614, a \$75,326, or 3.52%, increase over the current year. Mr. Skarzynski distributed a packet which included the budget proposal, an expanded version with explanatory text, projected grants, student enrollment and staffing levels, and the history of budgets from FY2010-2011 to present. Mr. Skarzynski explained that the positions of Special Education Director, which increased from .2 to .4, and Scientific Research Based Interventions (SRBI) instructor, which decreased from .8 to .6, are now combined. He explained that increases of \$8,569, \$12,450, \$3,063, and \$10,100, for Professional, Psychological, Speech & Hearing Services and Occupational Therapy will facilitate the development of intervention plans so that students can receive services in the school rather than out-of-district placement, noting that the \$32,393 increase in special education transportation is a legal obligation. The budget reflects a 3.5% increase for non-certified staff, which is the same as the amount negotiated in the teachers' contract. Mr. Skarzynski explained that there was some savings in tuitioning to Scotland Elementary School for extended learning in the summer, and in the substitute line item, which decreased by \$11,521. Finance Director Lehoux explained that Health Insurance increased by \$84,879 due to new staff requiring this benefit.  
Chairman Donahue listed many items for the Board to consider, such as the non-certified raise increase, as the Town and EastConn are awarding 3% and the State, 2.5%. She also requested all administrative and teacher contracts, noting that the former Superintendent's salary included a stipend in lieu of insurance, as well as a pay increase which, reportedly, the Board of Education did not approve. She also asked officials to review the amount unspent in line items, as surpluses could be used to pre-purchase supplies for next year, adjusting the

proposed budget accordingly. In terms of staffing, she questioned the need for a paraprofessional in Kindergarten, with the enrollment report projecting 4 – 7 students, and the possibility of offering after school clubs for certain music programs, such as chorus and theater, a practice in other schools. Chairman Donahue stated that the proposal for the Regional District # 11 budget, if approved, will result in a \$193,479 increase for Hampton’s assessment. The Educational Cost Sharing Grant formula, previously frozen during Covid, will result in a projected incremental loss of \$584,801 over the next seven years. Our current ECS grant is \$1,058,408, which will be reduced to \$473,607 by 2032. This doesn’t include any changes in enrollment. Chairman Donahue will send this list for consideration to the Superintendent and to the members of the finance board.

- c. **Fletcher Memorial Library:** Library Board Chairman Bonnie Cardwell distributed and presented the library’s budget proposal for \$57,905, less than the current year’s \$63,139.56, due to the completion of several maintenance projects. Ms. Cardwell cautioned, however, that with the retirement of the long-serving librarian, the hourly rate for that position might need to be increased from the current \$20 per hour. The Board is considering a range of \$20 - \$25; there are no benefits with this position. To Joan Fox’s question on the possibility of an E-Book service, Ms. Cardwell said that the Board is looking into offering the service, which costs \$800 per year.
- d. **Registrars of Voters:** The Registrars of Voters’ budget proposal was distributed and presented at \$31, 368.84, a decrease of \$1,498 due to the fact that some hours and items will be covered through the Early Voting funds from the State. These include new computers, and mandated hours prior to the Election.

Treasurer Rodriguez distributed the draft version of the FY24-25 budget, which included all department requests and the 3% Cost-of-Living adjustment for all employees. This version of the budget represents an 8.8% increase. Chairman Donahue asked members to review the budget; a work session to discuss line items will be scheduled prior to the Public Hearing. To Stan Crawford’s question on the percent in the reserves, Ms. Rodriguez said that the Town Audit, as of June 30, 2023, reported 24%, but Chairman Donahue reminded members that the paving of the parking lots, campus improvements, the funds the Town approved to compensate for the Motor Vehicle Department’s errors, and an amount toward the purchase of the fire truck has since been subtracted from that amount.

**Citizen Comments:** none.

**Suggestions for Next Agenda:** Next agenda will include the Suspense List, the Dairy Farm abatement, and the scheduling of another budget workshop and the Public Hearing. The new Grand List should be available, and the percentage in the reserve, to date.

**Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting:** May 8, 2024 at 7PM in the Community Room of Town Hall.

**Adjournment:** There being no further business to come before the Board, the Meeting adjourned at 7:55PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dayna McDermott Arriola  
Recording Secretary

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

