

Town of Hampton  
Board of Finance  
Regular Meeting  
April 8, 2020  
7:00 PM  
Zoom Meeting

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

**Roll Call/Seating of Alternates:** Lisa Sanchez, Kathy Donahue, Diane Gagnon, Perry Matchinis, Ed Adelman, Nick Brown and Alyssa Languth.

Staff and Others Present: First Selectman Allan Cahill, Selectman Bob Grindle, Treasurer Ellen Rodriguez, Hampton Elementary School Board Chairman Rose Bisson, Recording Clerk Dayna McDermott-Arriola.

Chairman Sanchez reviewed the stipulations listed in the section of the Governor's Executive Order titled "Suspension of In-Person Open Meeting Requirements" and the ground rules developed to adhere to the guidelines.

**Citizen Comments:** none.

**Presentations:**

**Fletcher Memorial Library:** The library board's budget proposal, level with last year's, was delivered to Town Hall.

**Highway Department:** First Selectman Cahill presented that the Public Works budget is the same as last year, with the exception of a cost-of-living increase for employees. Additionally, \$15,000 has been removed from the Road Maintenance line to create a separate line item for Equipment Maintenance.

**Board of Selectmen:** (reviewed under First Selectman's Report)

**Town Clerk:** The Town Clerk was not present but the budget request was distributed at the last meeting.

**Treasurer:** Treasurer Ellen Rodriguez reported that the budget request remains the same except for an increase of \$1,500 due to necessary changes for the Quick Book License renewal.

**Approval of Minutes of March 11, 2020 Regular Meeting**

**Motion:** Kathy Donahue, seconded by Diane Gagnon, to approve the Minutes of the March 11, 2020 Regular Meeting. Motion carried unanimously, Nick Brown abstaining.

**Reports/Actions**

**First Selectman:** The latest draft version of the municipal budget, nearing completion, was distributed and reviewed. It was noted that a new line item, amounting to \$250, was included for the Conservation Commission, and that the Fire Department's request was revised to reflect the costs of the air packs. First Selectman Cahill stated that the proposal represents a 2% cost-of-living increment that compares to the raises for employees of the Hampton Elementary School. Kathy Donahue countered that this year's cost-of-living adjustment is 1.6%, the amount social security recipients receive.

To Nick Brown's question on whether or not there would be additional costs under Tax Collection, Mr. Cahill said that minimal operational expenses still need to be included. Chairman Sanchez questioned the increase to the Town Clerk's Assistant. Treasurer Rodriguez stated that the explanation accompanying the proposal listed extra training for new office personnel. Chairman Sanchez also questioned the Town Counsel line item. Mr. Cahill stated that legal counsel for both the Board of Selectmen and Finance would need to be included; members agreed to discuss their board's administrative and legal expense lines. To Perry Matchinis' question on the increase to the Assessor Web Hosting line, Treasurer Rodriguez stated the explanation noted the need to add PDF property cards. The decrease in payroll for the Registrars of Voters and Election Officials, questioned by Kathy Donahue, was explained as the result of less voting events anticipated in FY2020-2021. To Ed Adelman's question on the possibility of additional expenses

due to an anticipated increase in absentee ballots during the pandemic, it was explained that the federal government has committed \$5 million to the State to provide municipalities with precautionary supplies and additional personnel. To questions concerning the costs of an ambulance service, Mr. Cahill stated that the figures supplied were estimates as the proposal from KB Ambulance Service is still in progress; the cost of utilizing the services of paramedics through NECCOG reflects a quarterly stipend and charges per transport.

Under the Public Works Department, Kathy Donahue questioned the increase in Town Garage and Generator Maintenance; First Selectman Cahill stated that he did not have the maintenance contract, but that it might be based on issues encountered this year. Perry Matchinis suggested that the line item for Road Paving be separate from the rest of the Public Works Department's budget to protect it from being spent on other projects. He also questioned the \$30,000 for tree removal. Mr. Cahill explained that this was budgeted for the removal of trees beyond the expertise of our crew, or the purview of the electric company, noting that there were 19 trees deemed too dangerous this year, and that LOCIP funds, usually dedicated to road maintenance, applied to tree removal this year. To Diane Gagnon's question, Mr. Cahill stated that more than the 250 trees originally identified have been removed. To Perry Matchinis' question, Mr. Cahill said that cleaning debris caused by tree removal is budgeted under road maintenance. To Ed Adelman's question, First Selectman Cahill explained that any unplanned expense is covered under Contingency. Mr. Adelman also requested that the Dial-a-Ride service be correctly identified for clarification. Chairman Sanchez asked why C.A.T.S. Northeast was defunded; Mr. Cahill said that it was a redundant expense covered under NECCOG, which Chairman Sanchez challenged, stating she would supply evidence to the contrary. Under the Capital and Non-Recurring Accounts, Kathy Donahue suggested that the finance board revisit funding these accounts as the budget evolves, noting the financial hardships many residents now face as a result of the pandemic. Under Revenue, Treasurer Rodriguez stated that the reduction in Educational Cost Sharing, basically the same as last year, is based on the most recent information from the State.

*The Board recessed at 8:35PM. The Meeting reconvened at 8:40PM.*

**Tax Collector:** First Selectman Cahill will forward the Tax Collector's report to the Finance Board for distribution.

**Treasurer:** The Treasurer requested three transfers.

**Motion:** Kathy Donahue, seconded by Nick Brown, to approve the following transfers: \$650 from #6005-02 Treasurer Computer Supplies to #6005-07 Treasurer Payroll Service Fees; \$1505 from #7000 Contingency to #6100-10 Building Inspector Clerk; \$81 from #6206 Small Tools to #6207 Signs. There was discussion on transferring funds from #6201.03 Public Works Payroll Overtime, instead of from #7000 Contingency, to cover \$1505 for #6100-10 Building Inspector Clerk. Treasurer Rodriguez announced that \$17,184 of #7000 Contingency has been used this fiscal year.

**Motion:** Kathy Donahue amended her motion as follows: \$650 from #6005-02 Treasurer Computer Supplies to #6005-07 Treasurer Payroll Service Fees; \$1505 from #6201.03 Public Works Payroll Overtime to #6100-10 Building Inspector Clerk; \$81 from #6206 Small Tools to #6207 Signs. There was discussion on also transferring from #6201.03 Public Works Payroll Overtime the hazard pay the Board of Selectmen approved to compensate the Transfer Station employees, an amount First Selectman Cahill estimated at \$1500.

Kathy Donahue withdrew her previous Motion.

**Motion:** Kathy Donahue, seconded by Perry Matchinis, to approve the following transfers: \$650 from #6005-02 Treasurer Computer Supplies to #6005-07 Treasurer Payroll Service Fees; \$81 from #6206 Small Tools to #6207 Signs. Motion carried unanimously.

**Motion:** Kathy Donahue, seconded by Perry Matchinis, to approve the following transfers: \$1505 from #6201.03 Public Works Payroll Overtime to for #6100-10 Building Inspector Clerk; \$1500 from #6201.03 Public Works Payroll Overtime to #6300-01 Sanitation Payroll. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Boards of Education**

**Regional District #11:** Chairman Sanchez announced that a letter was sent to the RD#11 Board of Education asking them to consider the reduction of ECS funds this year when crafting their budget. She also reported that, while the RD#11 school board has not approved a budget, the latest version available on their website reflects an approximate 1% increase. The school board meets next on April 28 after a Public Hearing scheduled for April 21.

**Hampton Elementary School:** Chairman Bisson provided a brief overview of the budget the school board adopted which reflects a 3.99% increase, noting that additional special education costs total \$144,000. She said that in order to maintain level spending, two teachers would have to be eliminated, a suggestion that a large group of parents rejected during their last meeting. Perry Matchinis questioned the need for two teachers in the combined classrooms; Chairman Bisson said the staff was not prepared to operate with only one teacher for each level. Chairman Bisson was unable to provide Diane Gagnon with the student enrollment figures she requested; Kathy Donahue stated that, in the interest of clarity, she has sent a Freedom of Information request to the school for this year's Minimum Budget Requirement and the enrollment, staffing and scheduling information needed to review the budget before any decisions are made. Ed Adelman suggested that the school board members should be entrusted with the task of developing their budget based on their knowledge of the school's needs. Chairman Sanchez countered that the finance board needs to exercise due diligence this cycle as taxpayers will not be able to vote on the budgets due to the Governor's Executive Order, reminding members that taxpayers for the last several years have only approved school budgets that reflect the MBR.

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

**Human Resource Committee:** Kathy Donahue reminded members that the considerable material involved in the analysis of comparative compensation warrants a special meeting, suggesting that it be postponed during the period of crisis. Nick Brown countered that he did not want to continue delaying discussion as a possible adjustment to the Treasurer's salary has been postponed for a year. Kathy Donahue reminded members that the compensation of all Town employees is included in the comparisons. By general consent, it was agreed to schedule a special meeting for the purpose of reviewing the material.

**Correspondence:** none. The Recording Clerk will obtain and deliver the finance board's mail while Town Hall is closed.

### **Old Business:**

- a. **Review Rates of Certificates of Deposit:** Treasurer Rodriguez reviewed the current rates.

### **New Business:**

- a. **Review Annual Report:** tabled.
- b. **Review 5-Year Plan:** First Selectman Cahill stated that the plan was not finalized, and decisions depend on whether or not the capital accounts are funded this year.
- c. **Discuss and Possibly Act on Setting Finance Board Public Hearing Date:** First Selectman Cahill explained that, per the Governor's Executive Order, the Board of Selectmen voted to authorize the Board of Finance to craft this year's budgets within 1% of the current year's, and to set the mill rate accordingly. After discussion, it was agreed by general consent that the budgets could not be developed further until the RD#11 Board of Education approved their proposal at their April 28 meeting.

- d. **Discuss Board of Finance Access to Town Website for Posting of Documents:** Chairman Sanchez reiterated the need for access to the Board of Finance's page, especially with the posting requirements stipulated in the Governor's Executive Order.
- e. **Discuss and Act on Governor's Executive Order on Municipal Tax Collection and Forbearance:** First Selectman Cahill explained the options presented for tax collection under the Executive Order. He has been conferring with the other Town's using Windham's services to decide collectively on the ultimate decision.

**Additions to Agenda:** Ed Adelman requested that the discussion on alternate meeting dates and times remain for a future agenda.

**Citizen Comments:** none.

**Suggestions for Next Agenda:**

By general consent, it was decided to schedule a Special Meeting to discuss:  
Alternate Meeting Dates and Times  
Board of Finance's Legal and Administrative Line Items  
Annual Report  
Comparative Compensation Materials

**Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting:** Special Meeting on April 29, 2020 at 6PM.

**Adjournment:**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 10:04PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dayna McDermott Arriola  
Recording Clerk

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