

Town of Hampton
Board of Finance
Regular Meeting
February 8, 2023
6:30PM

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:32PM.

Roll Call: Kathy Donahue, Diane Gagnon, Ed Adelman, Joan Fox, Nick Brown, Kathi Newcombe, Stan Crawford. Staff and Others Present: First Selectman Allan Cahill (7:05), Selectman John Tillinghast, Treasurer Ellen Rodriguez, Hampton Elementary School Board of Education Vice-Chairman Mark Becker, Conservation Commission Chairman Mark Samios and member Mark Cardwell, Senior Organization President Lisa Grady and Secretary Debby Barton, Recording Secretary Dayna McDermott-Arriola.

Seating of Alternates

Motion: Joan Fox, seconded by Nick Brown, to seat Stan Crawford for Judy Buell. Motion carried unanimously.

Citizen Comments: none.

Approval of Minutes

Motion: Joan Fox, seconded by Ed Adelman, to approve the Minutes of the January 11, 2023 Special Meeting. Motion carried unanimously, Nick Brown abstaining.

Budget Presentations:

Conservation Commission: Chairman Mark Samios distributed the Conservation Commission's 2023-2024 budget proposal, reviewed the line items, and explained the increases: \$10,000 for an Open Space Fund; and \$25,000 for the Little River Preserve Grant Proposal. Mr. Samios explained the project, which will enhance passive recreation on the 51-acre town-owned property, and will include a parking lot, trails to the river, a board walk and a fishing pier, all accessible to people with limited mobility. The Recreational Trails Grant, to be submitted in March by the Commission, requires a Town contribution of 20% of the \$200,000 request, which can be matched with volunteer labor and donations, the \$25,000 budgeted amount to be used toward satisfying the Town's commitment requirement. A portion of the property is leased for agricultural purposes, and the commission requested that the rental fees be used toward maintaining the property by the Department of Public Works. To Chairman Donahue's question on the \$2000 cost of equipment for clearing and maintenance of trails, Mr. Samios confirmed that this piece of equipment is not currently owned by the Department of Public Works. Stan Crawford suggested that the amount quoted for the boardwalk and pier, at a recent meeting of the Inland, Wetlands & Watercourses Agency, was steep and could be accomplished for a lot less. He also suggested the development of a "wish list" for local organizations to inform potential volunteers of Town projects. Mr. Crawford also suggested that the \$10,000 budgeted for Open Space, which is in addition to the \$10,000 annually funded by the mandate of a Town Meeting, be placed in the Town's Capital & Non-Recurring Accounts. It was also confirmed the State intends to improve portions of the surface of the Airline Trail which have been reported as impassable.

Seniors Organization: President Lisa Grady distributed the Senior Club 2023-2024 budget proposal of \$4000 and explained the uses. Due to the increasing cost of food, the Senior Club increased the fee for the monthly luncheons for residents from \$5 to \$6, and the Town subsidy from \$3 to \$4 for a total of \$2880 (calculated as \$4 for 60 Seniors for 12 months). She reminded the board that volunteers prepare the well-attended luncheons. Ms. Grady reported that the \$300 budgeted for Community Out-Reach will assist the Club in finding and supporting seniors' needs, a collaborative effort with the Agent for the Elderly and the Selectmen. Chairman Donahue repeatedly requested their current account balance; Ms. Grady did not provide the information, claiming that the Senior Organization is a club.

Fire Marshall: Though the Fire Marshall was not present, the budget proposal of \$11,600 for 2023-2024 was distributed and First Selectman Cahill reported that the proposed salaries will be limited to a 3% cost-of-living raise, an amount the Board of Selectmen approved for all employees at their last meeting. To Ed Adelman's question, Mr. Cahill said that the position of Deputy Fire Marshal is statutorily required.

Reports/Actions

First Selectman: First Selectman Cahill reported that the Audit has been sent to print this week and that revaluation has started. He also reported that the Board of Selectmen approved a 3% raise for all town employees and re-established the Ordinance Committee, appointing the First Selectman, the Chairman of the Board of Finance, and the Town Clerk. Chairman Donahue requested information on the Northeast District Department of Health's increase in membership fees; Mr. Cahill responded that the Board of Selectmen empowered the First Selectman to research alternative options, which he subsequently found; however the current agreement with the NDDH requires a January 1st deadline for a town's withdrawal, so the change, and consequent charges, will occur in January of the FY2023-2024 year.

Tax Collector: The January report has not been received.

Treasurer: Treasurer Rodriguez requested one transfer.

Motion: Nick Brown, seconded by Stan Crawford, to approve the transfer of \$348 to #6010-04 P & Z DEP Land Use Fees from #6010-08 P & Z Legal/Engineering. Motion carried unanimously.

Kathi Newcombe asked if there was any further information on the recent payroll fraud. Treasurer Rodriguez said that \$40 has been compensated and that the bank's fraud department is continuing to work on the claim.

Boards of Education:

Hampton Elementary School: A draft budget of the FY2023-2024 was reviewed by board members with a special meeting scheduled to discuss the proposal. Vice-Chairman Mark Becker was present to discuss the school's request for use of contingency funds for fuel.

Motion: Nick Brown, seconded by Stan Crawford, to move Agenda item 9.a. Discussion and Possible Action on Hampton Elementary School's Request for \$10,000 from the Contingency Funds for Fuel Expenses to Item 6. d. Board of Education. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on Hampton Elementary School's Request for \$10,000 from the Contingency Funds for Fuel Expenses

Chairman Donahue requested electronic copies of all oil invoices, along with signed agreements and commitments for additional oil purchases, including prices for the remainder of the school year, however she had not received those at the time of the meeting. Mr. Becker explained that the school budgeted \$30,000 for the year's fuel expenses and \$28,511 of that amount has been spent. At this time, the school requires another delivery, with a portion of the cost included in the lock-in contract, the remainder subject to market price. While the Town transferred \$10,000 of the anticipated fuel costs to the Municipal Contingency Fund to be accessed by the school if necessary, if there is a delivery subsequent to the impending one, the existing budget will be used to pay for it. To Nick Brown's question, Mr. Becker said that fuel consumption in the school is a little less than last year.

Motion: Stan Crawford, seconded by Nick Brown, to approve the Hampton Elementary School's Request for \$10,000 from the Contingency Funds for Fuel Expenses. Motion carried unanimously.

Regional District #11: Joan Fox reported on the recent Legislative Breakfast and potential increases in Educational Cost Sharing Funds and maintaining free lunches until the end of the year. The school's accounting practices were reviewed with no changes suggested. Chairman Donahue added that she attended a Finance Committee Meeting where it was announced that the school has several new students requiring special education services which will result in additional costs.

Board of Finance Committees

Policies and Procedures Committee: The committee did not meet.

Correspondence: Chairman Donahue reported receipt of several contributions to the Annual Report from Town entities, updates from Hometown Insurance on current annuity rates, and the schools' monthly financial reports, reminding members that they may receive these directly on request.

Old Business:

a. Update on Approved Length of Service Award Program Investment

Chairman Donahue reported that the Town Attorney suggested the Legislative Body at a Town Meeting officially approve the Length of Service Award Program, as that was never official at the program's

inception. Current interest rates range from 4.75% to 5.45% with terms ranging from one to ten years.

Additions to Agenda

Motion: Nick Brown, seconded by Diane Gagnon, to discuss and take action on the Length of Service Award Program Investment. Motion carried unanimously.

Discuss and Take Action on the Length of Service Award Program Investment.

Motion: Stan Crawford, seconded by Nick Brown, to invest \$250,000 in a ten year term at American National Insurance Company at an interest rate of 5.45%. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion: Nick Brown, seconded by Stan Crawford, to discuss and act on the investment of the Certificate of Deposit Maturing in April of 2023. Motion carried unanimously.

Discuss and Act on the Investment of the Certificate of Deposit Maturing in April of 2023

After discussion it was agreed by general consent to table this item until next month.

Citizen Comments: none.

Suggestions for Next Agenda:

Budget presentations will be scheduled as they are received.

Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting: March 8, 2023 at 6:30PM in the Community Room at Town Hall.

Adjournment: There being no further business to come before the Board, the Meeting adjourned at 7:45PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dayna McDermott Arriola
Recording Secretary

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