Town of Hampton

 Board of Finance

Regular Meeting

December 12, 2017

7:00 pm

Hampton Town Hall Community Room

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m.

Members/Alternates Present: Jeff Clermont, Ed Adelman, Perry Matchinis, Rick Matejka, Mike Higgins, Nick Brown, Stan Crawford

Staff and Others Present: First Selectman Al Cahill, Selectman Bob Grindle, Treasurer Ellen Rodriguez, Recording Clerk Dayna McDermott-Arriola

**Citizen Comments:** none.

**Election of Officers**

1. **Chairman**

Nomination of Jeff Clermont to serve as Chairman by Perry Matchinis, seconded by Rick Matejka. There being no other nominations, Jeff Clermont was elected Chairman.

1. **Vice-Chairman**

Nomination of Nick Brown to serve as Vice-Chairman by Mike Higgins, seconded by Ed Adelman. There being no other nominations, Nick Brown was elected Vice-Chairman.

1. **Clerk**

Nomination of Perry Matchinis to serve as Clerk by Ed Adelman, seconded by Nick Brown. There being no other nominations, Perry Matchinis was elected Clerk.

**Approval of Minutes:**

**Motion:** Ed Adelman, seconded by Rick Matejka, to approve the November 14, 2017 Regular Meeting Minutes. Motion carried 6-0, Nick Brown abstaining.

**Presentations:** none.

**Reports/Actions**

**First Selectman**: First Selectman Cahill reported that the solar project is nearly complete, with the panels moved from the Fire Department to Town Hall. He also reported that the Town Hall window replacement, funded through a capital account and an anticipated grant, has begun. All departments have been contacted for contributions to the Town’s 2017 Annual Report and for FY2018-19 budget requests. Mr. Cahill reported that insurance discussions have commenced and that a 10 - 18% increase is expected due to above average claims at the school. To questions on the cost of insurance for Town employees, Mr. Cahill said that the Town contributes approximately $11,000 per month, and that dental insurance remains low and has not risen. Mr. Cahill also reported that the Town Planner ascertained that Hampton is ineligible for USDA grant funding due to the per capita income of residents, and will therefore need to apply for a loan to build an addition on to the Fire Department.

First Selectman Cahill stated that the recommendation of the Regional District 11 Dissolution Committee is due on December 18, 2017, and that if the committee votes against dissolution, residents will not have an opportunity to vote on the question, according to the advising attorney’s interpretation of the governing statute. Nick Brown, the finance board’s representative on the committee, offered a brief overview of the committee’s findings, stipulating that calculating projections for the exact financial impact of district dissolution is difficult. Eliminating the costs of special education, which fluctuate annually and currently approximate $1 million a year, the committee determined the per pupil cost of educating students at Parish Hill High School is $17,000 - $17,500, and that the tuition rate for sending Hampton students to Woodstock Academy, the most likely alternative, would be $13,500, according to Mr. Brown. This would amount to an approximate savings of $4000 per student for a total of $240,000 per year, though Mr. Brown noted that the savings to Hampton is less impactful than to Scotland and Chaplin due to the lower enrollment of Hampton students attending Parish Hill, resulting in a lesser assessment. He also noted that Brooklyn is currently sending seven students to Parish Hill at a tuition rate of $7,500 per student, and that district citizens have been vocal at committee meetings in support of Parish Hill. Mr. Brown stated that he is now unconvinced that students would receive a better education elsewhere, and that the amount of upheaval closing the school would cause does not justify savings that appear neither substantial nor definite. Based on these factors, Mr. Brown announced that he has changed his previously stated opinion and is now against district dissolution. First Selectman Cahill remarked that there are only 59 students in grades 7 – 12 from Hampton attending Parish Hill, a population that continues to decline, along with grant funding and reimbursement from the State for educational costs, adding that while he understands emotional attachments to the school, the tax burden and lack of school choice is resulting in the devaluation of property and, consequently, the Grand List.

**Tax Collector**: Chairman Clermont reviewed the Tax Collector’s Report, which reported deposits for the month of November of $13,509.97, with $592.04 in online payments, for a total of $18,802.01. Year to date the Town has deposited $2,169,877.24 and received $89,182.35 in online payments for a total of $2,259,059.59. The Town has paid $2,271.38 in refunds and bounced checks for $2,433.51 for a net collection of $2,252,084.

**Motion:** Perry Matchinis, seconded by Mike Higgins, to approve the Tax Collector’s report. Motion carried unanimously.

**Treasurer:** Treasurer Rodriguez reported that the audit is nearly complete.

**Board of Education:** none.

**Board of Finance Committees:**

**HR Committee:** none.

**Fiscal Policy and Procedures Committee:** none.

**Other:** Chairman Clermont and Mike Higgins raised questions on the number of alternates to the Board of Finance, their terms, and the process of appointment. First Selectman Cahill said that, per the by-laws, the Selectmen may appoint three alternates for five-year terms. He suggested that anyone interested in filling the remaining alternate position may contact him directly or attend a meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

Ed Adelman noted that the Agenda was not posted on the Town website. The Recording Clerk explained that Minutes and Agendas are sent to the Town Clerk and the Administrative Assistant with a request to post at Town Hall and on the Town website as well as confirmation of receipt.

Perry Matchinis said that the interest rates for municipal Certificates of Deposit at United Bank are 1.15% and 1.25% and suggested that increasing rates are a trend. He also stated that Webster Bank’s interest rates for loans are 2.92% for three years, 3.15% for five years, and 3.64% for ten years.

**Correspondence:**  none.

**Old Business**

**Review Board of Finance By-Laws:** tabled.

**Review 2018 Schedule of Regular Meetings:** The schedule approved last month accommodates all members.

**New Business:** none.

**Citizen Comment: none.**

**Suggestions for Next Agenda:**

Budget Presentations

By general consent, it was agreed that all departments would be asked to present their budget proposals for FY2018-19 to the finance board. Chairman Clermont noted that departments that did not present last year, such as the Ambulance Corps, would be reminded of the request for a presentation. Mike Higgins suggested that the departments’ budget requests be distributed prior to the presentations in order for finance board members to review the proposals.

Perry Matchinis read a memo from the Superintendent to the Hampton Elementary Board of Education regarding reductions in State grants and asked if this is a concern the finance board will have to address, to which First Selectman Cahill responded that the difference between anticipated and actual revenue should be made up by the school internally.

Nick Brown suggestion that Hampton follow Chaplin’s practice of funding an account earmarked for fluctuations in student enrollment at Parish Hill. Stan Crawford challenged the notion of pre-taxing residents, and Perry Matchinis stated that, based on recent and predicted population figures, an increase in student attendance doesn’t seem to be large enough to result in a significant cost impact.

**Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting:** January 9, 2018 at 7 p.m. in the Community Room at Town Hall.

**Adjournment:**
There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dayna McDermott Arriola

Recording Clerk

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