

Town of Hampton
Board of Finance
Regular Meeting
March 10, 2021
7:00 PM
Zoom Meeting

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM.

Roll Call: Kathy Donahue, Diane Gagnon, Ed Adelman, Nick Brown, Judy Buell, Jessie Samios, Kathi Newcombe, Stan Crawford and Alyssa Languth.

Staff and Others Present: First Selectman Allan Cahill, Selectman Bob Grindle, Treasurer Ellen Rodriguez, RD#11 Board Member Joan Fox, Seniors' Co-Chairman Lisa Grady, Conservation Commission Chairman Mark Samios and Member Penny Newbury, Recording Secretary Dayna McDermott-Arriola.

Citizen Comments: none.

Presentations:

Seniors Organization: Co-Chairman Lisa Grady presented the \$4000 budget request, reminding finance board members that the organization increased the annual subsidy from \$2000 to \$4000 last year as the number of meals provided increased from eight to twelve with many more residents participating in the luncheons, which the group plans to resume in April under the pavilion. The itemized budget the organization distributed designated some of the funds toward one-time purchases of necessary kitchen equipment. Ms. Grady reported that the organization began the year with a balance of \$8,147 in their account, which is currently \$5,240 after purchases, and will be \$3,740 after the purchase of equipment, including a grill and warming pans, recently approved by the membership. Diane Gagnon, who volunteers to prepare the meals, listed some of the kitchen equipment that has been purchased, and Ms. Grady stated that the complete list will be sent to the Board of Finance. Ms. Grady said that along with the continuation of its community outreach functions, the organization plans to expand its social aspect with programs and trips, noting that with 729 residents 55 and over, the \$4000 request amounts to \$5.48 per senior.

Conservation Commission: Chairman Mark Samios presented the Conservation Commission's budget request of \$605, detailing the cost per project: \$170 for the Knotweed Project which seeks to eradicate this invasive species from the town's roadsides; \$270 for the Trails Project for the printing and purchase of signs to map and mark Hampton's trails; \$100 for trees for the celebration of Arbor Day at the elementary school. Mr. Samios added that \$65 is budgeted for UConn's annual conference, and that the commission advocates \$10,000 in funding the Open Space Acquisition Account. Stan Crawford praised the commission for their stewardship of the town's trails.

Registrars of Voters: Dayna Arriola presented the Registrars' budget of \$28,644.14, which is \$285 less than the current year and takes into account increases for election officials due to minimum wage requirements, additional personnel if Covid guidelines are in effect during the municipal election, and increased costs for the annual canvass which includes, every four years, non-voters. First Selectman Cahill relayed that the Governor's Executive Order expires on April 19, and Selectmen are seeking answers to the proposed method of adopting this year's budgets.

Chairman Donahue announced that the remaining departments will be contacted as to availability in attending a meeting to present budget requests.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion: Ed Adelman, seconded by Nick Brown, to approve the Minutes of the February 10, 2021 Regular Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Reports/Actions

First Selectman: First Selectman Cahill announced that Covid Response funds have been approved for the town, through FY2022-23, and the schools, through FY2023-24, though precisely what is covered is still unknown. He also reported that the Selectmen are retaining the services of Town Planner, John Guskowski, who has started his own company, and that to date, the road crew has removed 700 trees. Mr. Cahill also reported that documents concerning the Fire Department’s Rewards Program were forwarded and will be reviewed, and that the Towns of Hampton, Eastford and Pomfret have not yet met to negotiate a contract with KB Ambulance, noting that the Corps completed the year with a \$170,000 deficit due to a decrease in call volume and an increase in employee health insurance. He anticipates a \$50,000 increase per town. Mr. Cahill also reported that the committee of school and town officials from Hampton and Scotland met and charged the school superintendents with identifying areas to collaborate in order to reduce redundancies and promote better education. To Ed Adelman’s question, Mr. Cahill responded that the committee meetings are posted and open to the public and meeting minutes are available. Chairman Donahue added that the committee decided to postpone further discussion until after the schools adopted their respective budgets.

Tax Collector: The Tax Collector report, which was distributed, notes a 95.5% collection rate to date.

Treasurer: Treasurer Rodriguez requested two transfers, each with options for covering the continued shortfall in funding the Clerk for the Planning & Zoning Commission and the Building Department to date, or for the rest of the year. Chairman Donahue stated that she would prefer that the finance board deal with the immediate need and allow the departments to decide on the transfer of funds from their budgets to cover the anticipated shortfall for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Motion: Nick Brown, seconded by Diane Gagnon, to transfer \$321 to Planning & Zoning Clerk #6010-00 from Planning & Zoning Officer #6006-01, and \$67 to Building Inspector Clerk #6100-10 from Burning Permits #6100-12. Motion carried unanimously.

Kathi Newcombe asked if there was a revenue line for Covid funds. Treasurer Rodriguez replied that, per the auditor’s recommendation, the funds were applied directly to the line items. Ms. Newcombe also asked if the Town’s bank accounts were still insured. Treasurer Rodriguez replied that the amounts in both accounts have exceeded the FDIC limits; she will check to see whether a third account needs to be created in the same, or a different, bank.

Boards of Education:

RD#11 Board of Education member Joan Fox reported that conversations are continuing with the Towns of Sprague and Canterbury on listing Parish Hill as a selection for school choice. She noted that letters written by staff to all families were well received, and encouraged everyone to visit the school’s website. Chairman Donahue reported that both the Regional District #11 and Hampton Elementary School Boards of Education are working on their respective budgets.

Board of Finance Committees

Policies and Procedures Committee: Chairman Donahue announced that the draft version of *Accounting Policies and Procedures* is currently being reviewed by the auditor.

Review and Possible Action on Approval of *Budget Management Policies and Procedures for Town Agencies*: By general consent, it was agreed that the auditor should also review *Budget Management Policies and Procedure for Town Agencies* prior to receiving approval.

Correspondence: Chairman Donahue reported receipt of two correspondences from the Tax Collector: the Suspense List; and Dairy Abatement applications for Eva South Farm, LLC, and Clark W. Woodmansee III Trust Agreement. By general consent, members agreed with Chairman Donahue's suggestion that additional financial information and the governing statutes be provided prior to approving the applications. Mr. Adelman noted that this procedure was different than in former years.

New Business

- a. **Approval of Suspense List (CGS 12-165):** Chairman Donahue relayed the explanation received from the Tax Collector regarding the Board of Finance's statutory requirement to approve the suspense list of outstanding bills currently with collection agencies, or slated for tax sales.
Motion: Diane Gagnon, seconded by Nick Brown, to approve the Suspense List. Motion carried unanimously.
- b. **Review and Approval of Board of Finance Annual Report:** tabled.

Old Business

- a. **Schedule Budget Workshop Sessions:** The departments which have yet to present will be contacted and a Special Meeting will be scheduled accordingly on a Wednesday evening.
- b. **Review of Citizens' Guide to the Town Budget:** The suggestions, that monthly meetings be noted in the timeline and that explanations of revenue sources be included, were reviewed.

Additions to Agenda: Chairman Donahue reported that it has recently come to the attention of Town officials that the Fire Department Length of Service Award Program has not been properly funded, a deficit which has compounded since its inception, resulting in a funded ratio of 10.7% of the accrued liability of \$484,022, and current assets of \$51,563, as of December 31, 2020. Research is being conducted on the history of the incentive program, and Town and Fire Department officials will be meeting to compile a list of information needed from the program administrator. After the necessary documentation is obtained, the Board of Finance will need to discuss, and decide on the method of rectifying, the matter.

Citizen Comments: Joan Fox requested that the Agenda list the department budget presentations.

Suggestions for Next Agenda:

- Approval of *Budget Management Policies and Procedure for Town Agencies*
- Review and Approval of *Accounting Policies and Procedures*
- Approval of *Citizens' Guide to the Town Budget*
- Approval of Annual Report
- Approval of Dairy Farm Abatement Applications
- Discussion of KB Ambulance Contract
- Discussion of Fire Department Length of Service Award Program and Fund Deficit

Nick Brown suggested adding one of the Agenda items to the Special Meeting planned for Budget Presentations.

Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting: April 14, 2021, at 7PM.

Adjournment: There being no further business to come before the Board, the Meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dayna McDermott Arriola
Recording Secretary

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