

Town of Hampton
Board of Finance
Special Meeting
March 28, 2017
7pm
Hampton Town Hall Community Room

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

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

Members/Alternates Absent: Stan Crawford

Staff and Others Present: First Selectman Al Cahill, Selectmen Bob Grindle and Michael Chapel, Fire Department Chief Noel Waite, Conservation Commission Chairman Randy Thompson, Treasurer Ellen Rodriguez, Recording Clerk Dayna McDermott-Arriola.

Citizen Comments: none.

Approval of Minutes

Motion: Mike Higgins, seconded by Dave Fowler, to approve the Minutes of the February 14, 2017 Meeting. Motion carried, 5-0, Nick Brown and Rick Matejka abstaining.

Presentations: FY 2017-2018 Budget Proposals

Conservation Commission: Commission Chairman Randy Thompson, Penny Newbury, and Linda Gorman performed a presentation illustrating support for retaining \$20,000 in the Open Space Account. The Commission is concentrating on possible easements along the Little River. According to Chairman Thompson, currently there is \$171,000 in the Open Space Account and \$31,000 in Land Acquisition, which is funded annually by ordinance. First Selectman Cahill noted that there would have been \$90,000 less if two town approved purchases had been realized. Perry Matchinis suggested that the percentage of undeveloped land in town should be considered, adding that much of the open space is underutilized by residents. Ms. Newbury countered that the commission has to view the protection of land in terms of greenways through the Last Green Valley. Residents Jamie Boss and Marcia Kilpatrick advocated for funding the account for aesthetic and environmental reasons. Finance board members expressed concern regarding the impact of the State budget on this year's municipal spending plan. Chairman Thompson reminded members that the town currently has \$812,000 in undesignated funds, and that the Grand List has increased by 1.68%.

Ambulance Corps: tabled.

Fire Department: Chief Noel Waite presented the department's budget request, which is reduced for the third year in a row despite slight increases in equipment maintenance. There was discussion on a possible addition to the fire house to accommodate another ambulance, the plan recently altered to construct east of the building, and a possible tax abatement for members. Mr. Waite explained that the town participates in the Length of Service Award Program with 6-8 members receiving benefits. Currently there are 16 active members in the department and Mr. Waite believes 25 would be sufficient. The department is entering into arrangements with neighboring towns, also facing decreases in participation, for coverage. Mr. Waite reported that the department responds to approximately 25 incidents in town per year, chiefly brush fires. Chairman Clermont suggested that the department develop a 5-Year Plan.

Reports/Actions

First Selectman: Al Cahill reported that the Northeast and Northwest Councils of Government chairmen penned letters in opposition to the Governor's proposed budget, especially challenging for small towns versus larger municipalities. Regarding the Town Government budget, he reported that health insurance,

which is part of the Regional District #11 pool, has risen 9.5%, and workmen's compensation, 9%, partly due to large claims at the elementary school. Modifications have been made to accommodate the reconfiguration of services for the Planning and Zoning Commission. First Selectman Cahill is advocating salary adjustments equaling \$3 an hour for the road crew Foreman and \$1 an hour for the third member of the road crew, and an additional \$15,000 in the Building Maintenance CNR Account for campus improvements, such as the completion of the lower level of Town Hall and refurbishing of the tennis courts which have fallen into a state of disrepair and consequent disuse. The boards of education have approved level spending plans for their respective schools, but the First Selectman would like to delay finalizing the municipal budget until more information is known on State funding. He has received no answer on last year's Minimum Budget Requirement deferment request, nor further information on the State relaxing MBR requirements.

Tax Collector: Chairman Clermont reviewed the Tax Collector's Report, which reported deposits for the month of February of \$47,729.56, and online payments of \$7,882.08, for a total of \$55,611.64. Year-to-Date, the Town has deposited \$3,740,119.27, and received online payments of \$112,778.11, for a total of \$3,852,897.38.

Motion: Perry Matchinis, seconded by Rick Matejka, to accept the Tax Collector's report. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Clermont reviewed the Tax Collector's information on the Dairy Farm Abatement.

Motion: Nick Brown, seconded by Rick Matejka, to approve the Dairy Farm Abatement. Motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer: Ellen Rodriguez reported that the inventory of fixed assets at Town Hall, the Town Garage, the Transfer Station and the Community Center is complete. An inventory of the Hampton Elementary School, which would cost less than \$5000, is also needed. First Selectman Cahill suggested that the Town budget an amount annually to cover the expense of the inventory of Town owned property, which is conducted every five years. There were three requests for transfers.

Motion: Nick Brown, seconded by Mike Higgins, to approve the transfer of: \$200.00 from #6006-07 Assessor Mapping to # 6006-06 Assessor Computer Support; \$147.00 from #6007-03 Town Hall Maintenance to #6007-01 Town Hall Photocopier; \$123.00 from 6013.17 Community Center Supplies to #6013-16 Community Center Alarm. Motion carried unanimously.

Board of Education: none.

Board of Finance Committees:

HR Committee: none.

Fiscal Policy and Procedures Committee: none.

Correspondence: Finance Board members have received the State's proposed budget, and budget requests from the Recreation Commission and Library Board. Perry Matchinis noted his opposition to increasing the library budget for the purpose of offering free museum passes to patrons. Ed Adelman defended the additional expense as part of the expanded role of the library. Dave Fowler asked if the passes were available only to Hampton residents.

Old Business

Discuss Tax Abatements for Certified Members of the Fire Department and Ambulance Corps: Fire Chief Waite will discuss the subject of tax abatements with members at their next monthly meeting and invited finance board members to attend.

Discuss Renewal of Auditor's Contract: The proposal offers a 3% increase and extends the contract with Town Auditor, Stephen Hopkins, for four years.

Motion: Perry Matchinis, seconded by Mike Higgins, to accept the terms of the contract with Stephen Hopkins, Town Auditor. Motion carried unanimously.

Discuss Board of Selectmen's Request to Transfer 20K from the General Fund to the Highway Department to Cover Loss of LOCIP Funds: First Selectman Cahill explained that the loss of LOCIP

funds impacted the completion of projects on Parker Road and left the Town with three options: to postpone completion of projects; to request from the Town Meeting the total amount of the loss, \$28,000; or to request that the Board of Finance transfer the allowable amount, \$20,000, from the General Fund to cover the amount required to complete projects, the option he advocates in order to keep up with the 5-Year Plan.

Motion: Nick Brown, seconded by Perry Matchinis, to approve the request to transfer 20K from the General Fund to the Highway Department to cover the loss of the LOCIP funds. Motion carried unanimously.

New Business

Preliminary Review of the Town Government Budget: A draft version of the Town Government budget was distributed for review. Not all line items are complete. First Selectman Cahill explained some of the details of the State's proposal, chiefly reductions in revenue and a municipal contribution to the Teachers' Retirement Board. He reiterated his position of delaying as long as possible approval of the budget in order to assess the impact of the State budget on the town budget.

Motion: Chairman Clermont, seconded by Perry Matchinis, to reduce line item 6012.01, Board of Finance Administration, from \$2000 to \$1250. Motion carried unanimously.

Review Amendments to Board of Finance Ordinances: First Selectman Cahill reported that the Ordinance Committee has yet to meet.

Discuss MBR Shortage: tabled.

Review Procedures for Notifying Commissions, Departments, and Organizations of Budget

Presentations: Chairman Clermont reported that officials, employees, and commission, committee and board chairmen would be notified of requests to appear before the Board of Finance by the Recording Clerk.

Citizen Comment: Resident Jamie Boss listed potential liability issues related to conditions at the Community Center, namely the door opening onto the top of the staircase and the lack of a handrail, the lack of signage in the elevator detailing operation instructions, and safety and sanitation issues with the kitchen. He also suggested methods for conserving heat. First Selectman Cahill concurred that there was room for facility improvement at the Community Center. Fire Chief Waite suggested the installation of a door with a window on the stairs.

Suggestions for Next Agenda:

Discuss MBR Shortage

Hear Budget Presentations for the Ambulance Corps, the Board of Education, and the Registrars of Voters.

Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting:

April 11, 2017 at 7 pm in the Community Room of Town Hall.

Adjournment:

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Dayna McDermott Arriola
Recording Clerk

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

