

Town of Hampton
Board of Finance
Special Meeting
June 1, 2021
7:15 pm
Hampton Town Hall

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m.

Members/Alternates Present: Kathy Donahue, Nick Brown, Ed Adelman, Judy Buell, Jessie Samios, Diane Gagnon, Kathi Newcombe, and Stan Crawford.

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

Citizen Comments: The Recording Clerk informed the Board that, contrary to what was reported at the last meeting, there is no job description on file for the Town Clerk's Assistant.

Old Business:

Discuss and Act on Hampton Elementary School FY2021-2022 Budget:

Chairman Donahue read communications from Board of Education Chairman Rose Bisson and Business Coordinator Sally Lehoux concerning information provided by Kevin Chambers, who manages grants for the State Department of Education, on proposed legislation to exclude the 2020-2021 student count from the Minimum Budget Requirement calculations. When Chairman Donahue sent a written request to Mr. Chambers for the proposed bill and the calculations for the resident student reduction, his response clarified that the bill has been proposed by the State Department but hasn't been raised by the legislators in either the House or the Senate; however, the Appropriations Committee voted to extend the MBR and Education Cost Sharing reductions. After discussions with First Selectman Cahill, Chairman Donahue recommends postponing a vote on the budget until the legislative session closes and officials are provided with details on the MBR. She has also requested a meeting with school officials to review documentation.

Discuss and Act on Town Government FY2021-2022 Budget:

Treasurer Rodriguez reported that the mill rate with the current proposal is 23.94 and that an estimated \$150,000 surplus is anticipated this year.

Chairman Donahue relayed that Dave and Dale Demontigny, President and Treasurer of the Hampton Fire Company, confirmed that they never received statements from Hometown Firefighter & EMS Services, though the Fire Department provided the company with membership information annually. Chairman Donahue and First Selectman Cahill agree that the \$50,000 budgeted for the Fire Department Volunteer Incentive is sufficient this year until the rest of the issues are investigated and resolved, after which a separate vote to apply undesignated funds to reduce the deficit could occur.

Chairman Donahue provided information from surrounding towns on the compensation of Town Clerk Assistants as follows: Eastford budgets \$24,800 for both the Town Clerk and the Assistant; Scotland budgeted \$3,086 for the Assistant; and Franklin budgets \$2,778 for the Assistant. She stated that Town Clerk Shannon Haddad's request of \$6,000 for her Assistant, reduced by the finance board to \$4,850 when \$1,150 was transferred to training, constitutes a 94% increase, and that the current hourly rate of 17.32, which will be subject to the 2% raise awarded to Town employees in FY2021-22, covers 280 hours, or 5.38 hours per week. Chairman Donahue noted that in the past, Assistants were State certified Town Clerks from area municipalities who served in the Town Clerk's absence. Kathi Newcombe added that the statutes, which the Town Ordinance cites, stipulate that a Town Clerk Assistant performs the duties and responsibilities of the Town Clerk in her absence. Chairman Donahue suggested to Ms. Haddad that she contact area Town Clerks to substitute in Hampton.

Motion: Diane Gagnon, seconded by Jessie Samios, to maintain the Town Clerk Assistant's current salary of \$2,500.

After discussion, the vote was called, and with no member voting in favor, the motion failed.

To Jessie Samios' question, the amount of hours per week at a yearly salary of \$2,500 amounts to 144 hours per year and 2.7 hours per week for an Assistant Town Clerk. Nick Brown noted that the actual expenses from the line item in FY2019-20 were \$2,775, and Chairman Donahue explained that the former Town Clerk retired that year and the current Town Clerk received training. While acknowledging that salaries are the purview of the Board of Selectmen, Stan Crawford questioned entry level salaries of the same amount as experienced employees who have served for a length of time. He also noted that salaried positions often require additional hours, thanking those who serve in those positions at Town Hall for their extra work. Treasurer Rodriguez reported that this year's budgeted amount for the Assistant Town Clerk was overspent and that money from a Discretionary Fund has been used to compensate the Town Clerk's Assistant. To Judy Buell's question on when the budgeted amount was spent, Treasurer Rodriguez replied that the line item for FY2020-21, \$2,500, was depleted in January of 2021. She reported that there is \$700 left in the Discretionary Fund, which is supplied with fees for documents collected at a rate of approximately \$100 per month, and that the remaining amount in the account should cover the Assistant Town Clerk's wages for the remainder of this fiscal year. Chairman Donahue noted that the funds in the account accumulated over several years. Jessie Samios noted the importance of monthly reports from departments, included in the *Policies and Procedures for Town Agencies* the finance board is in the process of adopting, when departments spend more than is budgeted in a line item.

Motion: Judy Buell, seconded by Jessie Samios, to reduce the Town Clerk Assistant's salary to \$3000. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Donahue and Selectmen Grindle praised those who contributed to the commemoration of Memorial Day and those who helped to produce the Memorial Day video. Mr. Grindle and Stan Crawford said that there was discussion on budgeting extra for Memorial Day next year and the possibility of a fireworks display. The Memorial Day Committee will meet and come forward with a plan that the Board of Finance can consider. Chairman Donahue noted that private donations would probably help fund plans, noting the generosity of residents and local businesses in supporting the Air Line Pamphlet.

Citizen Comment: Mark Samios agreed with fiscal concerns raised by board members and the importance of measures to ensure that departments don't overspend their budgets without informing the finance board.

Adjournment:

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Dayna McDermott Arriola
Recording Clerk

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