

Town of Hampton  
Board of Finance  
Regular Meeting  
April 12, 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, Judy Buell, Nick Brown.  
Staff and Others Present: First Selectman Allan Cahill (virtually), Selectmen John Tillinghast and Bob Grindle (7PM), Treasurer Ellen Rodriguez, Hampton Elementary School Board of Education Chairman Rose Bisson, Superintendent Samantha Sarli, and Business Coordinator Sally Lehoux, Fire Department Officials Richard Schenk, James Kilburn, and Jeff Stoddard, Recording Secretary Dayna McDermott-Arriola.

**Citizen Comments:** none.

**Approval of Minutes**

**Motion:** Joan Fox, seconded by Judy Buell, to approve the Minutes of the March 8, 2023 Regular Meeting. Motion carried unanimously, Nick Brown abstaining.

**Motion:** Nick Brown, seconded by Diane Gagnon, to approve the Minutes of the Budget Workshop Session of March 29, 2023. Motion carried unanimously, Judy Buell abstaining.

**Budget Presentations:**

**Board of Education:** Superintendent Sarli distributed the *Hampton Elementary School Budget 2023-2024* packet and reviewed items. She explained increases in the Special Education Director, from a .2 to .4 position due to the number of students requiring services, in Public Tuition for additional students attending STEM academy, in Legal Services for contract negotiations, in Instructional Supplies to comply with the State mandates for a new reading curriculum, and increases in the cost of electricity, heating oil, gasoline and diesel fuel. Decreases included Professional Development, as school administrators will develop these to correlate with the new reading curriculum, Health Insurance as less staff is utilizing the district's insurance, and in Certified Staff due to a reduction in the art and gym teachers' positions. To Ed Adelman's question on level spending for Purchase Property Services, Superintendent Sarli explained that these are contracted over multiple years. Nick Brown raised concerns on potential increases to public tuition and health insurance; Dr. Sarli explained that the likelihood of increases in health insurance is minimal as open enrollment is limited and it would only apply to new staff; however she acknowledged that there could be increases in public tuition, which is an ongoing option. To Joan Fox's questions on State funds for the mandated reading program and reimbursement for public tuition, Dr. Sarli stated that neither is available currently, though there is potential in the future for either. Chairman Donahue asked several questions, including class configurations for next year, class sizes, assignment of paraprofessionals, and student count, including whether or not the students from Scotland who were attending Hampton Elementary were counted this year per the October 1 census. Dr. Sarli did not provide an exact figure for the student population, but said that each classroom, configured as Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, grades 1 & 2, 3 & 4, and 5& 6, contain an estimated 16 – 18 students, with possibly 20 in the Kindergarten class; children continue to enroll in the Pre-Kindergarten program, which has 12 students thus far. She also stated that all paraprofessionals service Special Education students, and that there is one paraprofessional per classroom. Ms. Donahue also asked for the status of the anticipated heating/cooling system and if there were funds remaining in the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund III grant to apply to this future expense. Dr. Sarli explained that the committee is still investigating options for the project, that none of those expenses are included in this budget, that there is \$30,000 remaining in the ESSERFIII grant to apply to the project, and that other grants should be forthcoming. Board of Education Chairman Rose Bisson stated that the school awarded 3.5% cost-of-living increments in keeping with the amount the Town proposed for employees over a two-year period; however she heard that the Town was giving 5% increases to its employees. Chairman Donahue explained that the Board of Selectmen initially recommended a 3% cost-of-living increment, and that the Board of Finance asked to look at the budget with 5 % raises for the purpose of comparison, though no decisions were made. She suggested that the Board of Education send adjusted budgets to include these amounts for consideration. She also noted that the Governor's budget has reduced the town's Educational Cost Sharing grant by over \$70,000 due to the new formula for ECS, previously frozen for several years due to Covid 19. In addition, that reduction does not include any reductions per student drop in enrollment.

**Fire Department:** Fire Chief Richard Schenk distributed the *Hampton Volunteer Fire Company Budget 2023-2024* and reviewed items. There are increases in electricity, garbage removal, EMS consumable materials, and equipment, including radio upgrade and replacement, airbags, and personal protective equipment as new members join the department. Mr. Schenk also explained an increase in emergency reporting under a new program, in truck maintenance as an older vehicle continues to require many repairs, and the urgent need for an alarm system in the firehouse.

To Nick Brown's question, Mr. Schenk said that towns are currently sharing personal resources and equipment through mutual aid. Mr. Stoddard estimated that the purchase of a new truck is eminent as the vehicle nears the 30 year mark. Chairman Donahue stated that American Recovery Funds, and the use of the unassigned fund balance, can be used toward the purchase of some equipment.

### **Reports/Actions**

**First Selectman:** First Selectman Cahill reported on the KB Ambulance contract and that the Board of Selectmen discussed and endorsed a 5% raise for Town employees. The Highway Department is preparing for road projects, and Fiberoptics is replacing wires along Route 6.

**Tax Collector:** The March report has not been received.

**Treasurer:** Treasurer Rodriguez requested five transfers.

**Motion:** Judy Buell, seconded by Nick Brown, to approve the following transfers: \$432 to #6003-13 Town Clerk Computer/Equipment from #6003-12 Records Management Projects; \$551 to #6013-13 Fire Dept. Oil from #6013-19 Community Center Elevator Maintenance; \$1374 to #6100-13 DOT Physicals from #6100-15 Emergency Management Coordinator. Motion carried unanimously.

**Motion:** Ed Adelman, seconded by Diane Gagnon, to approve the following transfer requests: \$328 to #6300-00 Sanitation Transfer Station from #7000 Contingency; \$300 to 6300-06 Sanitation MIDNEROC from #7000 Contingency. Motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer Rodriguez reported that municipal funds have been transferred and invested to ensure their protection per the finance board's directive last month. Chairman Donahue requested a list with these specifics. Ms. Rodriguez also reported that Berkshire Bank will not reimburse the monies lost due to her error, and suggested that officials watch a cyber-security video, which she found very informative. Chairman Donahue reminded members that a personal signature is required for all Town employees when making direct-deposit account requests. Treasurer Rodriguez also reported that while the departments have submitted their budget requests, adjustments need to be made in the Building Department as funds to cover the Clerk are insufficient based on actual expenses. She also reported that the Town's assessment for Regional District #11 is \$80,000 more than previously anticipated due to student count, though First Selectman Cahill said he has yet to receive verification of residence for the additional students.

### **Boards of Education:**

**Regional District #11:** Chairman Donahue reported that the school has instituted some cost saving measures for Special Education services and transportation, and has entered a settlement agreement with the Superintendent's former Administrative Assistant, though the amount was not disclosed at the meeting. She also reported that the Board of Education scheduled five expulsion Hearings, and issued surveys to staff, students and parents regarding cyber-bulling issues.

**Hampton Elementary School:** Reported under Budget Presentation.

### **Board of Finance Committees**

**Policies and Procedures Committee:** The committee will be scheduling a meeting.

**Correspondence:** Chairman Donahue reported receipt of department budget proposals, the schools' monthly financial reports, and communications with Hometown Insurance and the Hampton Fire Company.

### **Old Business:**

#### **a. Update on Approved Length of Service Award Program Investment**

Chairman Donahue reported that the approved funds have been transferred.

**New Business:**

**a. Discuss and Act on Board of Finance Submissions' to Annual Report**

After discussion, it was decided to amend the statement regarding the AD-HOC Committee, to further clarify that this committee was established by the Board of Selectmen, as follows: *The Board of Selectmen established the AD-HOC Committee for Inter-district Educational Cost Sharing and appointed the finance board Chairman to represent the Town's fiduciary authority, serving on both the governance and the programming sub-committees, and reporting on the committee's progress throughout the fiscal year.* It was also decided to substitute the final paragraph of the report with page 69 of the FY2020-2021 Audit.

**Motion:** Judy Buell, seconded by Diane Gagnon, to approve the Board of Finance Submission to the Annual Report as amended.

**In Favor:** Kathy Donahue, Judy Buell, Diane Gagnon, Ed Adelman

**Opposed:** Joan Fox

**Abstentions:** Nick Brown

**Motion carried 4 - 1 - 1.**

**b. Discuss and Act on Budget Workshop(s) Dates & Times**

By general consent it was agreed to cancel the April 19 Budget Workshop Session and schedule it for April 26 at 6:30PM.

**Additions to Agenda:** none.

**Citizen Comments:** none.

**Suggestions for Next Agenda:**

Budget work session and discussion of budgets.

**Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting:** April 26, 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 7:53PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dayna McDermott Arriola  
Recording Secretary

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