

Town of Hampton
Board of Finance
Regular Meeting
May 17, 2023
6:30PM

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:35PM.

Roll Call: Kathy Donahue, Diane Gagnon, Ed Adelman, Joan Fox, Judy Buell, Nick Brown. Kathy Newcombe, Stan Crawford.

Staff and Others Present: First Selectman Allan Cahill, Selectman John Tillinghast, Treasurer Ellen Rodriguez, Hampton Elementary School Board of Education Vice-Chairman Mark Becker, Conservation Commission Chairman Mark Samios and members Marcia Kilpatrick, Mark Cardwell and Bruce Spaman (7:02), Recording Secretary Dayna McDermott-Arriola.

Citizen Comments: none.

Approval of Minutes

Motion: Ed Adelman, seconded by Diane Gagnon, to approve the Minutes of the April 12, 2023 Regular Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion: Diane Gagnon, seconded by Nick Brown, to approve the Minutes of the Budget Workshop Session of April 26, 2023. Motion carried unanimously.

Budget Presentations: none.

Reports/Actions

First Selectman: First Selectman Cahill announced that the Conservation Commission did not receive the grant to make trail improvements at the Hammond Hill property, and so the matching funds requested have been removed from consideration. He explained that the State, a competing bidder, determined that Hampton is not an underserved town. Stan Crawford noted that the application, nonetheless, received a very high score. Mr. Cahill also reported that the Board of Selectmen will meet on May 18 to set the call for the Annual Town Meeting and determine the questions, along with approval of the Municipal and Elementary School budgets, to be included on the ballot, namely requests to use American Recovery Funds toward Fire Department equipment and the KB Ambulance service, and to fund trail improvements at the Hammond Hill property.

Tax Collector: Chairman Donahue reported receipt of the Suspense List which was distributed to members and will be acted on at the next meeting.

Treasurer: Treasurer Rodriguez requested eleven transfers.

Motion: Judy Buell, seconded by Diane Gagnon, to approve the following transfers: \$1007 from #6006-02 Assessor Clerk to #6006-10 Assessor Office Supplies; \$87 from #6009-02 Election Other Workers pay to #6009-04 Election Postage and Supplies; \$290 from #6010-02 P & Z Legal Notices to #6010-04 P & Z DEP Land Use Fees; \$941 to #6013-04 Town Hall Oil from #6013-03 Town Hall Electricity; \$1576 to #6013-08 Town Garage Oil from #6013-03 Town Hall Electricity; \$545 to #6013-13 Fire Dept Oil from #6013-15 Community Center Cleaning; \$2642 to #6100-05 Paramedic from #6100-14 FD Incentive Administration Fee; \$95 to #6300-00 Sanitation Transfer Station from #6013-01 Sanitation Payroll; \$144 to #6300-02 Sanitation DEP Permit from #6300-05 Transfer Station Lease; \$180 to #6300-06 Sanitation MIDNEROC from #6300-05 Transfer Station Lease; \$250 to #7100-06 Fall Fest from #7100-16 Unemployment Compensation. Motion carried unanimously.
Treasurer Rodriguez distributed a report on the status of the disposition of the town's funds, and the latest draft version of the budget.

Boards of Education:

Regional District #11: Chairman Donahue reported that the RD#11 budget was approved by tri-town voters.

Hampton Elementary School: First Selectman Cahill reported the retirement of the principal and one teacher. To Joan Fox's question, Chairman Donahue stated that the 5% increase for paraprofessionals is included in the latest version of the budget. The pay scale for paraprofessionals and annual step increases was distributed. Ms. Donahue also reported that there is an additional student who will be tuitioning to the STEM Academy, as well as an increase in the tuition rate. She also observed that some of the actual expenditures to date suggest savings that could be applied to expenses in the proposed budget.

Board of Finance Committees

Policies and Procedures Committee: No report.

Correspondence: Chairman Donahue reported receipt of the schools' monthly financial reports, the library's budget proposal, the Suspense List, and correspondence from the elementary school Superintendent on increases in the tuition line item.

Old Business: none.

New Business:

Discussion and Possible Action on Scheduling Public Hearing

After discussion, it was agreed to schedule the Public Hearing for May 25, followed by a Special Meeting of the Board of Finance to finalize the budgets. First Selectman Cahill reported the Selectmen's intent to schedule the Annual Town Meeting for June 8th and the referendum for June 15th, which will allow for the statutorily required notices.

Discussion and Possible Action on Budgets

Chairman Donahue explained that she and the First Selectman met to recommend certain changes, among them a proposal to use \$10,000 in American Recovery funds for trail improvements at the Hammond Hill property as a separate question on the ballot. Conservation Commission Chairman Mark Samios, noting that the Commission intends to reapply for the grant next year, requested \$23,000 of the initial request for \$25,000 in matching funds for the trail improvements. Other Commission members advocated for that amount due to the value of the site and the desire to complete the project correctly. First Selectman Cahill confirmed that the Highway Department will contribute the labor, some of the materials, and the equipment, and Chairman Donahue stated that if additional funds were needed, the Commission could return to the Town and request them. Nick Brown expressed his confidence in the expertise of the First Selectman and the Finance Board Chairman with respect to these types of projects.

Along with a correction, and the \$16,000 removed for equipment and the \$10,000 for the alarm system, both of which will be proposed to voters to be covered with American Recovery funds, Chairman Donahue and First Selectman Cahill recommended that the American Recovery funds be used toward the \$1,200 for air compressed filters and \$3,500 to replace equipment, for a total of \$6,700.

Motion: Nick Brown, seconded by Diane Gagnon, to remove \$6,700 from the Fire Department's request, to be covered by American Recovery funds, bringing the total Fire Department request to \$80,750. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Donahue also reported that the library's request shows a slight increase over last year, and that the finance board might consider decreasing the Recreation Commission's request for \$6,900 as there is \$3,824 in the Commission's existing account. She stated that approximately \$1,500 could be removed from the budget proposal and still cover the proposed activities: Arbor Day, the Memorial Day band, Flock Theater, and the bus trip to the Woosox game. Stan Crawford expressed his concern that the Town should not be responsible for funding a bus that is transporting only 40-50 people; some members concurred. Chairman Donahue stated that it is not the finance board's responsibility to dictate what the Recreation Commission chooses to fund, that the finance board's purview is limited to the funding.

Motion: Diane Gagnon, seconded by Nick Brown, to reduce the Recreation Commission's budget request by \$2000.

In Favor: Chairman Donahue, Diane Gagnon, Nick Brown, Judy Buell, Ed Adelman

Opposed: Joan Fox

Motion carried, 5- 0.

Chairman Donahue expressed her concern that the Contingency line item is under-funded in the proposed budget, reduced to \$15,000 from \$30,000, noting that there are costs involved if it becomes necessary to request additional funding from the Town. Treasurer Rodriguez reported that \$19,000 remains in this year's contingency fund.

Motion: Diane Gagnon, seconded by Nick Brown, to place \$20,000 in the Contingency line item. Motion carried unanimously.

First Selectman Cahill reported that the Capital & Non-Recurring Building Maintenance Account has not been funded for years, and that there are several projects requiring attention, among them repairs to the Town Hall parking lot and paint for the exterior of the Community Center. Treasurer Rodriguez reported \$8898 in interest from the Capital & Non-Recurring Accounts, which could be moved to the Building Maintenance Account.

Motion: Judy Buell, seconded by Diane Gagnon, to move \$8898 in collected interest from Capital & Non-Recurring Accounts to the Building Maintenance Account. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion: Nick Brown, seconded by Diane Gagnon, to place \$10,000 into the Building Maintenance Capital & Non-Recurring Account. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Donahue reported that the State Legislature is still deliberating the funding of Educational Cost Sharing, with the Governor's budget reducing the town's amount by \$750,000, and the Appropriations Committee's suggestion to extend the freeze imposed during the Covid pandemic for another two years. She asked that the budget reflect the potential reduction. She also stated that the Minimum Budget Requirement is reduced this year due to a drop in student population.

To Joan Fox's question, Treasurer Rodriguez stated that the mill rate will increase by 1.82 with the latest draft of the budget and a \$300,000 reduction in the Grand List.

Additions to Agenda: none.

Citizen Comments: HES School Board Vice-Chairman Mark Becker asked if the \$10,000 the Board of Finance granted the school to cover additional fuel costs is included in the current year's budget. Chairman Donahue explained that the amount will be included under the projected, but not the approved budget.

Suggestions for Next Agenda:

Chairman Donahue requested that members forward suggestions for the next regular meeting.

Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting: Public Hearing, May 26, 2023 at 7PM in the Lower Level of Town Hall.

Adjournment: There being no further business to come before the Board, the Meeting adjourned at 8:03.

Respectfully submitted,

Dayna McDermott Arriola
Recording Secretary

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