

Town of Hampton
Board of Finance
Special Meeting
May 7, 2026
7PM

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

Roll Call: Kathy Donahue, Ed Adelman, Joan Fox, Nick Brown, Kate Donnelly Colt, Regina DeCesare, Fran Gustavesen, Treasurer Ellen Rodriguez, First Selectman Allan Cahill, Selectman John Tillinghast, Treasurer Ellen Rodriguez, Assessor Jodie Heon, Town Clerk Kaye Johnson, Hampton Elementary School Board of Education Chairman Mark Becker and Vice-Chairman Maryellen Donnelly, and Recording Secretary Dayna McDermott-Arriola.

Citizen Comments: none.

Budget Presentations

Assessor: Jodie Heon distributed and presented the Assessor's budget request of \$66,459, a \$5,275 increase over the current year. She explained that the majority of expenses are in contracted fees, with a \$4,365 increase in Computer Support. Ms. Heon requested a 10% market adjustment to align her salary with comparable towns, however the Selectmen's budget proposal awards all town employees a 4% raise.

Town Clerk: Kaye Johnson distributed and presented the Town's Clerk's budget request of \$69,383, a \$2,161 increase over the current year. She reported that the Land Records system was updated this week, the contract for Land Records increased 3.5%, and receipt of a grant for \$5000 covered related computer equipment. She anticipates a \$4000 Historic Documents Preservation Grant, to be submitted in September, to cover the \$5000 allocated for Records Management Projects. Other savings were realized in less hours and training for the Town Clerk Assistant, and in Legal Notices as the Secretary of State is no longer mandating that the town provide information to voters in Spanish. The revenue portion of the budget realized a slight decrease based on recent trends.

Green Energy Committee: Chairman Kate Donnelly-Colt distributed and presented the Green Energy Committee's budget of \$2,500, the same amount as the current year. She explained that this covers education for the community on energy and the environment, composting materials, lectures and film series, and mailings to the community, and that current events regarding energy and the environment determine what is explored and presented.

Elections: Registrar of Voters Dayna McDermott Arriola distributed and presented the Election Department's budget of \$48,147, a \$9,124 increase over the current year due to several factors including training for the new State Computerized Voter Registry System, increased costs associated with the new tabulators' programming and maintenance, the possibility of two State primaries, and Early Voting for both the Primaries and the State Election, with no legislative discussion on reducing the hours and/or days for small towns, and no commitment for State funding.

Budget Work Session

The Selectmen distributed the draft of the FY2026-2027 Town Government Budget. Chairman Donahue reviewed the line items. There is a 4% place-holder for town employees' salaries. First Selectman Cahill reported that the grant, submitted by Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (NECCOG) on behalf of the Towns of Hampton, Scotland and Canterbury, toward the costs of combining Tax Collection services, was denied. NECCOG intends to appeal the decision, but the appeal won't be heard until September and will not, therefore, affect the FY26-27 budget. The grant was meant to cover 75% of the costs the first year, 50% the second, and 25% the third in the three year contract between the Towns.

Therefore, the Selectmen have budgeted \$50,000 for Tax Collection. With increases in all departments, except the Inland, Wetlands and Watercourses Agency, Road Paving, the Fletcher Memorial Library, and the Green Energy Commission, all of which remained the same, and decreases in Legal Expenses for the Town, the General Government proposal is \$6,032,080, a 8.35% increase over the current year. Chairman Donahue stated that the amount budgeted, \$25,000, for the Fire Department Volunteer Incentive Program might change after its status is discussed with Hometown Fire Fighters Insurance; other items will also be reviewed after the Public Hearing.

Nick Brown asked how the Selectmen arrived at 4% raises. First Selectman Cahill said that he reviewed the increases awarded to other NECCOG towns. He also noted that a fourth member is needed for the road crew, but with an estimated cost of \$120,000, did not include it in this year's budget.

Chairman Donahue reported on the \$57,000 additional funding from the State, \$14,000 for the town and \$42,000 for the two schools. She also reported that she met with the Superintendent, continued to request more detail on the Special Education needs, asked him to reduce the 10% raises for the Principal, Business Coordinator, and Administrative Assistant, and to use the non-lapsing account to off-set some of next year's purchases. She also suggested that the Selectmen could add some of the school's proposed capital improvement project costs as referendum questions rather than including those expenses in the school budget. To Ed Adelman's question on who decides the referendum questions, Mr. Cahill responded that the Selectmen create the call for the Town Meeting and the subsequent referendum. Chairman Donahue reviewed the upcoming process: the Public Hearing is scheduled for May 13, followed by a meeting to finalize and adopt the school and municipal budgets. The Selectmen, per statute, will schedule a Town Meeting at least two weeks after the Public Hearing, and the referendum seven to fourteen days after the Town Meeting.

Citizen Comments: Chairman Mark Becker announced that the Hampton Elementary School Board of Education is not making any changes to its budget. He requested that Chairman Donahue refrain from calling the Administrations' salary increases "raises", stating that the 10% is based on 3.5% merit and 6.5% equity, noting that the principal makes less hourly than the top paid teacher in the school and that the Administrative Assistant's hourly wage is \$20 instead of \$25 like other towns. He also stated that the school's Business Coordinator explained the specific reasons for last year's surplus, and that the capital and non-recurring account is required to address many concerns, such as multiple plumbing services for the school's septic system. He also advocated for an additional special education teacher, noting that out-placing students at approximately \$100,000 per student, or liability suits if student needs are not addressed, are more expensive than a teacher's salary.

Vice-Chairman Maryellen Donnelly stated that larger school districts have more administrative staff to perform administrative duties, and that Hampton has only one person serving in each of those administrative positions.

Adjournment: There being no further business to come before the Board, the Meeting adjourned at 8:01PM.

Dayna McDermott Arriola
Recording Secretary

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