

Town of Hampton
Board of Finance
Special Meeting
June 29, 2026
7PM

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:04PM.

Roll Call: Kathy Donahue, Ed Adelman, Kate Donnelly, Joan Fox, Regina DeCesare, Fran Gustavesen, Treasurer Ellen Rodriguez, Hampton Elementary School Board of Education Chairman Mark Becker, Business Coordinator Sally Lehoux, Recording Secretary Dayna McDermott-Arriola.

Regina DeCesare and Fran Gustavesen were seated, upon request, for Judy Buell and Nick Brown.

Citizen Comments: none.

Approval of Minutes

Motion: Kate Donnelly, seconded by Ed Adelman, to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of April 23, 2026. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion: Fran Gustavesen, seconded by Regina DeCesare, to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of May 7, 2026 with the following amendment under Citizen Comments: "Mark Becker...requested that Chairman Donahue refrain from calling the Administrations' salary increases 'raises', stating that the 10% is based on COLA and 6.5% Market Adjustment". Motion carried unanimously.

Motion: Kate Donnelly, seconded by Fran Gustavensen, to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of June 10, 2026. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion: Fran Gustavesen, seconded by Regina DeCesare, to approve the Public Hearing Minutes of May 13, 2026 with the following amendment under Citizen Comments: "Treasurer Ellen Rodriguez stated that the mill rate would be 21.81, a slight increase over the current 21.48.". Motion carried unanimously.

Motion: Kathy Donahue, seconded by Regina DeCesare, to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of May 13, 2026. Motion carried unanimously.

Kate Donnelly requested that "Colt" be removed from her name in all instances in all of the Minutes.

Reports/Actions

First Selectman: First Selectman Cahill was not present to report.

Tax Collector: none received.

Treasurer: Treasurer Rodriguez requested several transfers.

Motion: Ed Adelman, seconded by Regina DeCesare, to approve the following transfers: \$6,834.46 from #7000 Contingency to #6000-07 Selectman Computer; \$119.58 from #6003-03 Town Clerk Assistant to #6003-05 Town Clerk Mailing Costs; \$49.78 from #6006-02 Assessor Clerk to #6006-03 Assessor Mileage; \$117.77 from #6013-12 Street Light to #6013-03 Town Hall Electricity; \$217.35 from #6013-07 Town Garage Electricity to #6013-03 Town Hall Electricity; \$139.06 from #6201-01 Road Maintenance to #6201-07 Town Garage Maintenance; \$275.00 from #6201-01 Road Maintenance to #6201-08 Training and Testing; \$2,646.86 from #6201-01 Road Maintenance to #6201-09 Equipment Maintenance; \$1493.75 from #7000 Contingency to # 6300-00 Sanitation Transfer Station; \$495.79 from #7000 Contingency to # 6300-03 Sanitation Tipping Fees; \$4,129.74 from additional funds approved at the town meeting on 6-1-2026 to #6300-03 Sanitation Tipping Fees; \$2,083.63 to #6009-01 Election Registrar's Pay from #6009-08 Early Voting. Motion carried unanimously.

Boards of Education:

Hampton Elementary School: The school's budget will be discussed under New Business.

Regional District #11: Chairman Donahue did not attend the most recent meeting.

Policies and Procedures Committee: The committee did not meet.

Correspondence: Chairman Donahue reported receipt of the schools' financial records, information from the Office of Policy and Management on how funds disbursed may be used, and a correspondence from the Assessor reporting that tax loss from the Town of Hampton Local Option elderly homeowner tax relief is \$5,632,50, and tax loss from the state-mandated Homeowner Tax Credit program aka Circuit Breaker is currently \$12,994.22. Chairman Donahue also received a recommendation that the Fire Fighters' Length of Service Award Program increase the maximum service from 30 to 40-50 years, though the Town attorney needs to verify if this complies with Connecticut law.

Old Business

a. Update on Submissions for Town's Annual Report for FY2024-2025

Chairman Donahue reported that the Regional District #11 report is still missing.

b. Discussion and Possible Action on Board of Finance's Contribution to FY2024-2025 Annual Report

Motion: Fran Gustavesen, seconded by Regina DeCesare, to approve the Board of Finance's contribution to the FY2024-2025 Annual Report with the addition of the findings of the FY2024-2025 Audit. Motion carried unanimously.

New Business

a. Discussion and Possible Action on Hampton Elementary School FY2026-2027 Budget

Chairman Donahue distributed the school's revised budget, explaining that this version is \$35,420 less than the original which failed at the June referendum. She reviewed the changes as follows: the 10% increases for the principal, the business coordinator and the executive assistant have been reduced this year to 7% with the remainder of the market adjustment to be included in next year's budget; non-contracted staff raises increased from 3.5% to 4%, including the Superintendent's, the nurse's and the Special Education Director's; the \$50,418 in the non-lapsing account was used to reduce the budget and applied to the additional special education teacher's salary. School Board Chairman Mark Becker added that the position is budgeted for a Step 4 Master's level salary. He also noted that two special education paraprofessionals have been added as well as special education transportation for half of the year.

Motion: Regina De Cesare, seconded by Ed Adelman, to open discussion on the budget as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Joan Fox stated that the board of education did a good job in reducing the budget and advocated for the principal's salary increase, due to the multiple roles the principal serves at Hampton Elementary, noting that many schools have vice-principals; Chairman Donahue countered that schools with vice-principals typically have 500 students, many more than Hampton Elementary School's current enrollment, and questioned the comparisons used to determine the principal's salary, noting that the size of the school, enrollment, years of experience, and degrees form the basis for salary awards. She also stated that though the non-lapsing account was used for certified staff, additional raises were awarded at a rate of 4%, which is above the cost-of-living adjustment of 2.8% this year. Chairman Donahue also expressed concern that she has not received the information she has requested from the Superintendent and reminded members that the budget failed, and therefore it needs to be addressed.

Motion: Kate Donnelly, seconded by Joan Fox, to approve the budget as presented.

In Favor: Kate Donnelly, Joan Fox, Ed Adelman

Opposed: Kathy Donahue, Fran Gustavesen, Regina DeCesare

Motion failed, 3-3.

Kate Donnelly stated that it was disrespectful to vote against the board of education's proposal as they were the elected "experts". Chairman Donahue explained that the Board of Finance's statutory authority was limited to the bottom line, and that the way that funding is spent once the budget is approved is at the discretion of the administration and school board. Regina Decesare stated that she would like the budget reduced by the full \$50,418 removed from the school's non-lapsing account, instead of the \$35,000 reduction.

Motion: Regina DeCesare, seconded by Fran Gustavesen, to reduce the budget by another \$15,000.

In Favor: Kathy Donahue, Regina DeCesare, Fran Gustavesen.

Opposed: Kate Donnelly, Ed Adelman, Joan Fox.

Motion failed, 3-3.

By general consent it was decided to table approval of the budget.

Fran Gustavesen asked if it was possible to obtain more information on the Special Education needs. As a retired special education teacher, she said she understands the law regarding special education, however, she finds it alarming that approximately one-third of the students require services, in addition to the services provided by the current staffing, including a full time intervention teacher.

Chairman Donahue stated that she also would like to form a decision based on the additional information she has requested and will re-send that list to the Superintendent. Kate Donnelly said that such requests were insulting to the Board of Education, and cautioned that the town might be sued if needed services aren't provided. Ed Adelman agreed, stating that the Board of Finance should not make any decisions regarding special education services. Chairman Donahue again reminded members that the Town voted against the Board of Education's budget and explained again that the Board of Finance's statutory authority was limited to the bottom line, and that the way that funding is spent once the budget is approved is at the discretion of the administration and school board.

Citizen Comments: none.

Suggestions for Next Agenda: Reconsideration of the HES FY2024-25 budget proposal.

Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting: A meeting will be scheduled based on the availability of the members.

Adjournment: There being no further business to come before the Board, the Meeting adjourned at 7:45PM.

Dayna McDermott Arriola
Recording Secretary

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