

Town of Hampton
Board of Finance
Special Meeting
April 23, 2026
7PM

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

Roll Call: Kathy Donahue, Ed Adelman, Nick Brown, Kate Donnelly Colt, Regina DeCesare, Fran Gustavesen, Selectman John Tillinghast, Superintendent of Regional District #11 and Hampton Elementary Schools Andrew Skarzynski, Hampton Elementary School Board of Education Chairman Mark Becker and members Maryellen Donnelly and Juan Arriola, Recording Secretary Dayna McDermott-Arriola.

Motion: Nick Brown, seconded by Kate Donnelly Colt, to seat alternates Regina DeCesare and Fran Gustavesen for members Judy Buell and Joan Fox. Motion carried unanimously.

Citizen Comments: none.

Budget Presentations

Hampton Elementary School: Superintendent Skarzynski presented the school's FY2026-2027 adopted budget proposal of \$2,393,238, a \$130,635, or 5.77%, increase over the current year. He explained that the increase is largely due to special education needs, which will require an additional special education teacher, additional paraprofessionals to meet Individualized Education Program (IEP) requirements, and an increase in the contracted Psychological Services, and a Behavioral Interventionist, noting that this was less expensive than the alternative option of out-placing students. Mr. Skarzynski also explained that there were minimal cost savings in hiring part-time, rather than full-time paraprofessionals, which also resulted in additional service hours, and a part time facility manager; other increases included contracted and market adjustment salary increases and transportation. He reported that 70 students attend the Pre-K – 6 grade school, though he did not yet have a projection for the 2026-2027 year, and that 22 of those students receive special education services. He also reported that Hampton Elementary was named a "School of Distinction" for an improvement in mathematics test scores, noting there was still room for improvement. The school developed a multi-tiered system of support, an increase from a part-time to a full-time counselor, a grant funded after school program, and increased involvement in the community, primarily with students at Parish Hill Middle/High School.

Chairman Donahue asked what the projected surplus was, noting that last year the school ended with a \$102,000 surplus and that many of the actuals to date show underspent items. Mr. Skarzynski said he would report the anticipated surplus after looking into the remaining amounts as well as facility issues. Ms. Donahue also questioned the 10% market adjustments for the Principal, the Business Coordinator, and the Executive Assistant, reminding members that this year's cost-of-living (COLA) adjustment is 2.8%, and that an approximate third of our residents are senior citizens with fixed incomes. She also stated that town and school officials were seeking additional information with respect to types of special education services provided and number of IEP hours and had not yet received the requested information. Ed Adelman noted that IEP hours can fluctuate throughout the year. Fran Gustavesen asked if the State had indicated concern over the amount of students, an approximate third, requiring special education services. Mr. Skarzynski answered that the State has not, and when asked for comparisons, noted that 22% of students in Chaplin Elementary, and 26% of students at Parish Hill Middle/High School require special education services.

Superintendent Skarzynski noted that with the significant decrease in Hampton's assessment for the RD#11 budget, Hampton's overall expenditures for education will decrease even with the elementary school's proposed increase. Chairman Donahue countered that the circumstance only applied to this year, as the assessment is dependent on student attendance at RD#11. Nick Brown reminded members that Senate Bill 7 might increase State funding for public schools, but Ms. Donahue reminded members that the Educational Cost Sharing schedule, which has been on hold since the Covid pandemic, is slated for initiation in 2028 with an \$82,000 reduction to the town per year for a cumulative total of \$579,423. To her question regarding this year's Minimum Budget Requirement, Mr. Skarzynski replied that the Business Coordinator has not yet obtained the current MBR.

Regional District #11: Superintendent Skarzynski presented the FY2026-2027 RD#11 adopted budget of \$7,508,150, a 3.19% increase over the current year, largely due to contracted salary increases and special education needs. Due to a drop in the number of students from Hampton attending the regional school, our town's assessment will realize a \$270,000 decrease. He reported that there are 42 students from Hampton in grades 7 – 12 at Parish Hill, and that enrollment at large is trending downward, with 185 students currently in attendance. However, the number of students tuitioning to Parish Hill from other towns has increased. Nick Brown encouraged a rise in the tuition rate, currently \$8,600, much lower than the rates of surrounding towns and even lower than the ECS grant amount the sending towns are receiving, suggesting that the rate be at least that much. Ed Adelman asked if the tuitioning students were attracted to the special education services provided at the school, and Mr. Skarzynski said that special education needs require additional fees for tuitioning students.

Chairman Donahue inquired as to the unrestricted fund balance in the Central Office budget, which was \$87,796 last year, and asked if the surplus from this and last year could be applied to each town's assessment. Mr. Skarzynski said he would look into it.

Citizen Comments:

Juan Arriola stated that three of the elementary school board members voted against the school's proposal because it was too high and would jeopardize the school's sustainability. He also criticized the 10% raises for administrators, the Superintendent's 1.5 full time equivalent position when he's only at the elementary school one day per week, and the lack of information provided regarding special education services, noting that the State average is 16% as opposed to Hampton's approximate third.

Chelsey Guilmette stated that she wished more elementary school parents were present to witness the discussions regarding special education services.

Adjournment: There being no further business to come before the Board, the Meeting adjourned at 8:30PM.

Dayna McDermott Arriola
Recording Secretary

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

