

HAMPDEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting
February 22, 2016
Hampden Town House

Approved February 29, 2016

Meeting opened at 6:03pm.

Members Present – Carol Fitzgerald & Doug Boyd, Co-Chairs, Jeff Smith, Heather Turcotte & Matt Fisher

Members Absent – none-

Also Present – Hampden Volunteer Fire Department Chief Mike Gorski, Dana Pixley, Highway Department Superintendent, Jeff Farnsworth, Chief of Police, COA Director Becky Moriarty, Selectmen John Flynn, Vinnie Villamaino and Norman Charest, BOS Admin Pam Courtney, Town Moderator Bob Howarth, Tyler Witkop, Editor, Wilbraham - Hampden Times, and Nancy Ziebert, public

FY17 Budget Process –

School – Budget roundtable meeting discussion. Should school be scheduled separately from ATM? Matt said that pros & cons list should be developed and Heather added that it is subjective.

Doug made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 1, 2016 meeting as presented. Carol and Matt seconded, all in favor 5-0.

Fire Department:

Selectman Flynn stated that “it might be prudent to figure in and amount for unforeseen expenses rather than hitting the reserve fund every year.” Under the 01553.3 budget line Selectman Flynn would like the initially requested number of \$37,122 increased to \$40,000. This would bring the total department budget requested to \$96,500 for FY17.

Doug Boyd asked if there was a radio service agreement and if the department would be combining with the police. The Chief responded that there were two different vendors currently and that he has asked the PD building committee to look at that.

Selectman Flynn offered that the Chief has a “concern with staffing but that the BOS is not entertaining that in the current budget year.”

Highway Department:

Dana has agreed to remain as Tree Warden after his retirement. Negotiations have not started with his staff yet so as a placeholder, salaries were submitted using 2 ½% as a placeholder. There is no longer a bond or chapter 90 influences on the salary line, 100% of Chapter 90 funding now goes directly to roadwork

Selectman Flynn stated that there was no snow/ice increase this year, although the BOS is asking for more in the law and claims line item.

Doug asked how we are doing with snow & ice – Dana replied the salt shed is full

There is a street sweeping and basin cleaning increase request. Dana thinks this is a realistic increase. The bid process is opening the afternoon of February 29th.

Dana is anticipating the cost for a new dump body for the 1993 truck to cost the same as the 1996 did. He went on to say that the two pickup trucks may need to be replaced in a few years and looking at the equipment the loader has some rust in the door frame.

Doug asked about the condition of the buildings and Dana stated they were perfect, with the new roof and generator.

At the STM an extra \$20,000 was applied and Dana now has \$8000 left. He has taken down approximately 120 trees and is now working on the elective trees. They are trimming limbs below 14 feet when working in the area.

Police Department:

Jeff presented a level serviced budget with more defined numbers for the new station expenses based on the systems being installed at the new facility. Doug remarked that it could take a couple of years while Selectman Flynn added that the systems rely heavily on electric and that solar could help.

Doug asked if they were looking to replace two cruisers and Jeff replied that they will only be replacing one at a cost of around \$36,000. Jeff also added that there will be a shortfall on every line item since contracts weren't approved prior to FY16 ATM.

Doug asked about the radio systems and the fire department and Jeff remarked that he is trying to move the under the same company once the police department moves into their new facility.

Discussion followed in regards to how to utilize the Town House once the PD has moved to their new facility. A monitoring system where each department chair would have access was discussed as was software monitoring module with key card access.

Board of Selectmen:

Selectman Flynn reviewed line items on the BOS budget. The Board of Selectman has asked the treasurer to look into County retirement; Doug added that retirement is now 25% of salary. The Scantic Valley Regional Health Trust has not set the new rates yet, they have a meeting on Thursday. There is also an issue with Unemployment compensation. The town has contested this but is still accruing interest.

Longevity has decreased by 50% and the BOS would like another \$5,000 for Law and Claims. Doug asked if the issues with the Country Club have been settled and Bob Howarth responded that there still may be one property. Mapping maintenance is new, and John Cumerford's numbers for VA benefits are good, Academy Hall maintenance is increased by \$5,000 due to increased utility costs with the new well pump. School building repairs are up \$5,000, Doug remarked that it's best to maintain rather than repair. Office equipment maintenance may go to \$9,000 and Townhouse maintenance has increased by \$1,500. Utilities should go down once the police relocate. There is anticipation that the transfer station solar may negate the Townhouse electric bill. Street lighting is increased by \$2,000. LED street lighting is being rolled out by National Grid. The Historical Commission has an increase of \$150.

Matt asked what the difference between the two gas lines was. It was explained that one is for fuel and the other for state mandated testing.

Selectman Flynn stated that the back stairs from the Melville room may be repaired if the number comes in under \$10,000

COA:

Becky presented a budget that included increases to both the director and receptionist positions. While the requested director increase was 2 ½ hours per week, the receptionist increase request was 5 hours per week which would make the position benefits eligible. Carol asked is the position was added to the employee benefit line.

Carol went on to say that there is a need to come up with a number to use when a person/position becomes benefitted.

The BOS appointed Becky to the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority as a board member; part of the additional hours requested for the director would be used for this.

Doug asked what other groups use the Senior Center and Becky replied that the Lions club use it for their pancake breakfast and there are usually five to six private rentals per year.

The BOS would like to increase the building maintenance number.

Capital improvements: The women's room issue has been remedied but the carpet still need to be replaced.

Matt questioned why capital improvements were not planned for and Doug explained that it is not fair to tax people to put money into a saving account.

Doug asked Becky if she has a cost yet and what the area is that needs to be replaced. Becky does not have a cost yet and said that the entire carpeted area needs to be replaced, (the library, the hallway, and office areas). Doug replied that this should be looked at this for a fall meeting project to take as free cash as a warrant article so it won't expire.

Becky explained that the copier is unrepairable and was bought outright as part of a \$100,000 earmark when Brian Lees left office. She is looking at a 5 year lease to replace it. John Flynn suggested that she look at who the PD is using as a vendor.

Becky told the committee that a new van is on hold for now as well. They are working on expanding the regional program with East Longmeadow and the PVTA with service incentive grant money from the state

John asked if we should be zeroing the GSSSI line. Becky told him yes, that there is no need for matching funds at this time. John asked if the line item should be left and Becky said it should be. Both Carol and Doug said the line item will be left with \$0 funding.

Carol asked if the food pantry was still active and Becky replied that on average 55 bags of groceries go out. She also mentioned that the Hampden Emergency Fuel Fund has no age limit to apply but applicants must have less than ¼ of a tank of fuel oil or have received a shut off notice. Once they apply they must also apply for fuel assistance.

Nancy Ziebert interjected that she and Sandy Gray had originally set the fund up and then turned it over to Carolyn Brennan and that she was thrilled to see that the fund still continued.

Lastly Becky added that 26% of the population of Hampden are seniors.

Warrant review:

There will be no transfer needed into the Enterprise fund this year.

Doug stated that the CPC has not received requests from affordable housing.

Article 15 is a placeholder. We can make paper ballot vote part of the article; this is still in a state of flux. Heather asked at what point language is needed. Town Moderator Bob Howarth stated that he will move the school article to the end of the warrant as he wants to get through town business first and that if it gets too late he will call the meeting and have the school article vote rescheduled.

Doug stated change the bylaw to change the date of the town meeting to the middle of May. We would have more definitive anticipated revenue numbers from the state at that time.

Nancy Ziebert added that the Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration, which is paid for with state dollars was called in by the Amherst Pelham school district, they are neutral facilitators.

Discussion:

With no other business Carol motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:16pm, Doug seconded, all in favor 5-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Cindi Connors, Clerk