

**HAMPDEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 1, 2017
Hampden Town House**

Approved May 8, 2017

Meeting opened at 6:03pm

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

Members Absent – none

Invited Guests - Cliff Bombard and Richard Patullo

Also Present – Serenity Greenwood, Ed & Jen Poulin, Caryn Paradis, Lisa Zeno, Lyn Langlois, Robert Moreau, Heather Zanetti, John Niemi, Mary Ellen Glover, Marty McQuade, Rita Vail, Ted Zebert and Bob Howarth

Transfer Requests:

A transfer request in the amount of \$750 from the reserve fund was received from the Treasurer's office for replacement of a computer \$566.50 and software \$244.36.

Doug made a motion to approve a transfer from the reserve fund to the Treasurers expense account 015163 in the amount of \$750. Carol seconded, all in favor 5 to 0.

A transfer request in the amount of \$7000 from the reserve fund was received from the Board of Selectmen for a shortfall in Law & Claims. The actual balance of Law & Claims at this time is -\$7053.63. Doug feels that this is not a sudden and unforeseen expense and questions if the transfer is appropriate as these expenditures have not been approved by the town and referred to it as surreptitious spending. Cliff recommended to deny the transfer for now. Doug went on to say that the average tax bill is now around \$5000 and we're spending money that we don't have as others are going without to pay their real estate taxes. He added that we need to spend carefully, that we are spending money without a vote. Cliff stated that we are using money that people have already been taxed for and that eventually could roll into free cash to help reduce the tax rate.

Doug made a motion to deny the transfer request from the reserve fund to Law & Claim account 015081, Jeff seconded, all in favor 5-0

FY18 Budget Process:

Richard told the Advisory Committee that tax rate estimates are not usually done in the spring.

He estimated that the tax rate would move from \$19.29 to \$20.78, with no free cash to apply and no appropriations.

This would move the tax on a median priced home, (\$260,000) from approximately \$5015 to approximately \$5402.

Richard added that the Police department note kicks in 2019 with about a \$.50 increase and that there are two years left on the infrastructure loan. If the Fire department article passes, in FY19 there would be an approximate additional expense to retirement of \$38,000

The purpose of the Public Hearing is to clarify and receive public input on the warrant articles and budget prior to Town Meeting. There will be an informational Special Town Meeting within the Annual Town Meeting and a hearing on the STM on April 24th at 7pm.

Richard suggested getting loader out of the way this year and to pay the dump truck off in the fall to wipe out as much short term debt as possible. Carol asked about the Police department and Richard told her that the cost would be \$300,000 for 20 years.

Cliff explained that free cash would be determined in July and that is everything on the warrant passes we would only have \$160,000 of excess levy capacity.

The Board of Selectmen has decided to defer the request for an addition to the Fire Department until the fall as they have no firm number at this time and the \$200,000 was only a place holder on the warrant. Doug answered with that the STM is usually a housekeeping meeting while Carol added that it should be pushed until next spring

Snow & ice deficit is currently \$114,000. Doug asked if snow and ice should be increased to \$90,000 to more accurately reflect the cost. Cliff is ok with this as snow & ice and interest are the only items that we can deficit spend. The green sheets erroneously reflect \$114,000 as the requested snow & ice figure for FY19. This will be amended to \$90,000 at ATM.

Review of Warrant Articles and Recommendations from Advisory Committee:

The ATM will be called to order then recessed in order for the STM to be called to order.

STM articles total \$61,000 and will be funded from the overlay account so that the money is available to spend the next day.

Article 1: Police Department Video Camera System for Cruisers; approximately \$31,000
Doug recommended taking favorable action, Carol seconded, 5-0 in favor

Article 2: Law and Claims Funding; approximately \$20,000
Doug recommended holding off until more information was received from the Board of Selectmen. Carol supported deferring action.

Article 3: Reserve Account -To see if the town will vote to transfer from available funds a sum of money to the Reserve account, or take any other action relative thereto. Current balance is \$9700, two requests within the past few weeks have depleted \$10,000.
Carol made a motion to recommend favorable action, Doug seconded, all in favor 5-0

Article 4: Authorize Lease of Land for Ground Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installation
Matt recommended favorable action, Doug seconded, all in favor 5-0

Article 5: Authorize PILOT, (payment in lieu of taxes), for Ground Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installation
Doug recommended taking favorable action, Carol seconded, 5-0 in favor

ATM

Article 1 Town Reports - *Doug recommended taking favorable action, Heather seconded, 5-0 in favor*

Article 2 Budget – Discussion ensued,
\$43,000 will be removed from exempt debt as the fire truck has been paid off
Clarification requested on 51.5 traffic control
Richard asked if Advisory had seen a plan to detail the bump in zoning enforcement budget, Doug remarked that oversight should come out of the BOS office. Ricard replied that it was the Advisory charge to be prudent. Cliff asked how the bylaws were to be enforced. Bob replied that there was a bylaw to deal with violating current bylaws already. Cliff questioned if there was a penalty and what we were paying a person to do. Bob said there was a fine schedule but a penalty provision needs to be added to the bylaw.

Skip to Articles 19 & 20, both are citizen petitions

Article 19 Hampden Wilbraham Regional Agreement
Heather is in favor of these articles and feels that the town viewed the vote as to keep TWB open
Carol disagrees stating this is not the wording from the vote
Doug added that this is an erroneous understanding of the vote and he cannot support. He feels the article is imprecise and that it doesn't deserve the support of the town
Heather replied that the voters should decide
Bob stated that it is the opinion of town council that the articles are unenforceable and the articles are non-binding.
Richard added that there is no appropriation in the article.
The prior vote was a no vote to crossing town lines and an opportunity to express to the BOS how the majority at the meeting felt.
Matt replied that there were no numbers in front of us and he had no idea of what this was going to cost.
Jeff recommended unfavorable action, Carol seconded, voting in favor 4, 1 opposed to unfavorable action

Article 20 Withdrawal from Formation of A Regional School District As Amended
Matt stated that as well intentioned as it may be, he highly doubts the study would be free.
Doug added that in his sense, exploring withdrawal should expend the requestors time and effort and not direct others to.
Heather replied that the Board of Selectmen are supposed to listen to what people have to say and they need a vote from the townspeople to guide them, (BOS)
Doug interjected that this was not the BOS
Heather responded that the citizens were under guidance from the BOS to put the question on the warrant
Carol is adamantly opposed to withdrawing from the regional school district.
Cliff asked if the sponsors can amend the wording at ATM and Bob replied that the articles are amendable but not enforceable – you cannot tell an elected body what to do. Carol also added that the BOS has not control over the School Committee. Cliff then asked if these article can be discussed and voted on and Bob replied yes, they could but he hoped it would not be a delayed discussion.
Carol made a motion to recommend unfavorable action, Jeff seconded, voting in favor 4, 1 opposed to unfavorable action

Article 3 Fire Department Change to Call Department, cost is approximately \$226,000 for one supervisor and two fire fighters. Expected reimbursement of \$65,000, associated cost of \$20,000 for benefits and FY19 retirement (29%) estimated at \$38,000 Richard remarked that the numbers are soft, there is no economic argument to support the article only an emotional one, Carol is conflicted due to the cost implications and risk management, Doug is of two minds and is now leaning towards supporting. Richard added that there are two separate issues, one a full-time fire department, the other a paid call department. Cliff asked if we can contract with other towns. Doug replied that eventually other towns will stop coming to mutual aid if it doesn't go both ways and that this is a very difficult issue.

Carol added that the numbers don't work for what looks to be a tough, (financially) FY19

Doug remarked that half-way change to a call department to pay those who respond. Article is drafted as an all or nothing.

Advisory al so informed that there is now a 20,000-gallon reservoir tank at the electrical substation.

Jeff made a motion to recommend unfavorable action, Matt seconded, voting in favor 3, 2 opposed to unfavorable action

Article 4 Previous Bills

Carol made a motion to recommend favorable action on no action, Doug seconded, all in favor 5-0

Article 5 Revolving Funds for FY2018

Richard opened the discussion stating that there is a transparency issue, Cliff added that revolving funds should be demand accounts. Upcoming legislation will give us the opportunity to do a top to bottom review and come up with a plan October ~ November timeframe for FY19

Carol motioned to recommend favorable action, Doug seconded, all in favor 5-0

Article 6 Revolving Fund reports

Doug motioned to recommend favorable action, Carol seconded all in favor 5-0

Article 7 Enterprise Fund transfer station \$15,000 for bags

Doug made a motion to recommend favorable action, Jeff seconded, all in favor 5-0

Article 8 Community Preservation Committee – There are three items; a request for \$15,000 to resurface the tennis courts at MRHS, an encumbrance of 10% of the balance for affordable housing, and \$300 in Community Preservation dues.

Carol made a motion to recommend favorable action, Doug seconded, all in favor 5-0

Article 9 Conservation Fund - \$1000

Carol motioned to recommend favorable action, Matt seconded, all in favor 5-0

Article 10 Highway State Aid - \$257,000

Doug made a motion to recommend favorable action, Carol seconded, all in favor 5-0

Article 11 Highway Equipment Replacement – loader ~ \$165,000

Jeff made a motion to recommend favorable action, Doug seconded and added raise and appropriate, all in favor 5-0

Article 12 Highway Equipment Replacement – pickup truck with plow ~ \$39,645

Jeff motioned to recommend favorable action, Matt seconded, all in favor 5-0

Article 13 Commercial Bond Rating for Police Station Financing \$20,000

Matt made a motion to recommend favor action, Doug seconded, all in favor 5-0

Article 14 Library Additional State Aid

Doug made a motion to recommend favorable action, Jeff seconded, all in favor 5-0

Article 15 Assessors- transfer into their stabilization account \$12,500

Doug recommended favorable action, Carol seconded, all in favor 5-0

Article 16 Assessors - transfer out of their stabilization account \$9950

Doug recommended favorable action, Jeff seconded, all in favor 5-0

Article 17 Intermunicipal Agreement for Paratransit

Doug made a recommendation to take no action, carol seconded favorable action on no action, all in favor 5-0

Article 18 Fire Department Article – Raise and appropriate and/or transfer a sum of money to build an addition (\$200,000) to deferred

Article 21 Amendment Zoning Bylaw – Auto sales in residential areas

Heather made a motion to recommend favorable action, Matt seconded, all in favor 5-0

Article 22 General Bylaw, Demolition Delay

Carol made a motion to recommend unfavorable action, Jeff seconded, voting in favor 4, 1 opposed

Article 23 School Resource Officer \$11,376

Jeff made a motion to recommend favorable action, Heather seconded, all in favor 5-0

Article 24 Reserve Fund - \$25,000

Matt recommended favorable action, Carol seconded, all in favor 5-0

Article 25 General Stabilization Fund – no action will be taken on this now; action will be taken in the fall

Carol made a motion to take no action, Matt seconded, all in favor 5-0

Article 26 Reducing Tax Rate – no action will be taken on this now; action will be taken in the fall

Carol made a motion to take no action, Matt seconded, all in favor 5-0

Doug made a motion to approve the April 10, 2017 regular meeting minutes, Carol seconded, all in favor 5-0

Carol made a motion to approve the April 10, 2017 public hearing meeting minutes as corrected, Matt seconded, all in favor 5-0

Doug made a motion to approve the April 24, 2017 public hearing minutes, Carol seconded, all in favor 5-0

Next meeting will be 6pm on May 8th prior to the ATM.

With no further business, *Doug made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:15pm, Heather seconded, all in favor 5-0*

Respectfully Submitted,
Cindi Connors, Clerk