

**HAMPDEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
PUBLIC HEARING MEETING MINUTES  
October 16, 2017  
Hampden Town House**

Approved November 6, 2017

Called to order at 7:09pm

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

**Members Absent** – Jeff Smith

**Also Present** – public

Doug informed the public that the Advisory committee will be meeting immediately prior to STM to vote their recommendations. He went on to explain that there is \$516,203 in free cash, which is revenue that was received in excess of what the town had planned on. He told the attendees that there were \$160,000 in warrant articles and that the money for those would come out of free cash, it would also be used to reduce the tax rate and also would be put into stabilization which was like the town's "long term savings" He also informed the public that not all of the articles have money associated with them

**STM** – Articles discussed

Article 1, \$20,000 for upgrade to software in Board of Assessor's Office, (favorable) The BOA wants to get ahead and have this done asap using overlay reserve which is the money set aside for tax abatements; this had not impact on the tax rate.

Article 2, To hear the report of the School Deregional Study Committee, (favorable to hear) Phil Schneider addressed this and state that in October of 2017, the town voted not to allow children to cross town lines and in April at ATM voters approved a study committee to be formed to investigate deregionalizing. The committee feels that since the five-year plan has been presented that will close TWB as of July 1, 2018, and deregionalizing can take one to two years, they want to investigate an injunction to keep TWB open and are asking for an appropriation up to \$50,000 to be used for legal fees if needed. Carrie Gray and Sandra Sheehan requested copies of the report and Phil replied that they would provide them – Dick Patullo interjected that the report doesn't exist yet therefor it is not a permanent document. Serenity Greenwood inquired as to the charge of the committee and Phil responded that there were not charged with what but with how. Chris Dowd – you want us to fund legal battle, contemplating putting forward and injunction forward - Phil – this was from town meeting, if this is the will of the town. Rick Green stated that this was a directive that came from town meeting, arose from ATM, the majority of voters agreed with this – to do due diligence for all of us. Serenity asked if it was the will of town meeting to pay for it? Phil responded that was what article three was for.

Article 3, Raise and appropriate \$50,000 for legal and professional fees. Chris Dow asked if the October 30<sup>th</sup> meeting will present this and asked what the point of article two was. Dick Patullo stated this was strictly procedural and Chris responded with the hope that the presentation would include the cost. Doug addressed the discussion, stating we will not address the merits tonight and advised speaking with Phil & Dick privately about procedural questions. Serenity claimed many people were not in favor of this, she wants to be part of the solution and "doesn't want her money funneled into this." Doug stated just to be clear that Advisory had not taken an opinion on this. Dick explained that any action taken due to the report will be by the BOS not the study committee. Al Ganem added that the five-year plan was his proposal and the School Committee will approve it or not, that it can still be tweaked and he "absolutely does not agree with deregionalization." John Flynn explained that \$55,000 was originally placed into law and claims at ATM and it is inappropriate to use that money when townsfolk not informed of it. The BOS have asked the town attorney for an opinion (no violation), the study committee wants a second opinion. Doug explained that the ATM budgeted \$45,000 for all legal for town. Mary Ellen Glover added that money will be put in a special account if needed, to safeguard ourselves and so that there are options. Norman Charest added that these are focused monies specifically identified for a purpose; a source of money is needed to fund rather than out of the general line. Dick Patullo added that the study committee is s process committee not a policy committee. Jen Poulin asked what the first opinion cost, (\$600-\$700.) Cliff added that any number for any expense could be gotten from him with a phone call. Jim Smith asked if the money has a sunset provision – explanation is that the warrant article funds stay until expended or no longer needed. Al Ganem added

that money is coming out of the school budget, too and that they school committee has to put aside what is being requested to be able to respond.

Article 4. Regional Dispatch Facility, advisory and non-binding, brought by citizen petition. Doug explained that the Police Department is exploring regional dispatch. Rita Vail asked if there were funds attached to this article and was told no. Jim commented on the non-neutrality of the petition and Dick Patullo replied that you cannot change a word of a citizen petition. Don Collins remarked that it is a self-serving article, and could potentially limit our ability to take advantage of regional dispatch in the future. Dick asked if there was a document of regional financial pros and cons. Jeff Farnsworth stated "this could be good or this could be bad."

Article 5. Air conditioning for the Senior Center for kitchen area

Article 6. Additional \$100,000 for dump truck to pay off balance of loan, interest rates have risen, cost to refinance increases, better to pay off now and complete the last of the short-term debt.

Article 7. DIF, John Flynn explained that this defines the district only, proposed water and sewer for Allen St, Somers Rd, Wilbraham Rd were initially started by Great Horse. John stated the town could benefit and gave examples such as Village Food Mart, the mini mall, Mary Lyon, Great Horse and Centennial Commons which currently has a 40 person wait list. The district needs to be defined first, application for a 2 million grant from the state needed. We could grow elderly housing by removing leach field/septic system and using that land to build more units. There will be a presentation tomorrow (10/17/17) night. Ann Marie Noel asked if there would be a requirement to tie in and John Flynn responded there would not. John Matthews added that the planning board was never involved with this. John Flynn added that the grants were not capped and that we could keep expanding, Stony Hill Road, Sessions Drive area are challenged areas.

Article 8. CPC, \$18,000 legal & expenses for land purchase of old Cumberland Farms building under greenspace/recreation, \$75,000 for Town House renovations, reconfigure old PD space, add restrooms. Maura Ryan asked how much tax revenue would be lost, (approximately \$1,000 per year.) Rick Green added that Charlie Arment had donated the demolition of the building.

Article 9. Reserve Fund deposit of \$25,000, Advisory can vote to spend from this fund

Article 10. Reducing tax rate, plan for 4 ½ % with the possibility of increase in new growth over estimate, growth through building permits more than expected.

Article 11. Free Cash is \$516,203, applying \$338,000 to lower tax rate, leaves \$178,203 balance of which \$160,000 may go towards warrant articles leaving a balance of \$18,203 to transfer into the stabilization account.

*With no further business Doug made a motion to adjourn the regular meeting to Public Hearing at 8:14pm, Carol seconded, all in favor 4-0*

Respectfully Submitted,  
Cindi Connors, Admin