

**HAMPDEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
January 15, 2018
Hampden Town House**

Approved January 22, 2018

Called to order at 6:10pm

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

Members Absent – - none

Invited Guests – Sandra Sheehan and Maura Ryan

Also Present – none

Minutes:

Carol made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 8th meeting as amended, Doug seconded, 4-0 in favor.

Discussions:

Sandra Sheehan came in to meet with the Advisory Committee to discuss her interest in being appointed. Carol asked Sandra why she was interested and added that she knows Sandra was on the Middle School Task force. She asked what drew Sandra to which she replied “I have something to contribute” and that she felt that this was “a good fit for me and for community.” She wants to volunteer in her community has experience in financial and project management with budgets of over 38 million dollars in both Harford and Springfield. Carol commented that Sandra was the co-chair of the MSTF and Sandra replied that she had been appointed by the HWRSC and feels she brought the members under control and was able to condense information and present it to the HWRSC. She added that she learned a lot about both communities. Matt asked why there was so much flack afterwards, why it was antagonistic. Where did that start? Sandra replied that “when they recommended children be educated at Wilbraham Middle School even though they liked TWB better, even Wilbraham people liked it better, but there was not enough space. People became tunnel vision” and it was clear to her that “we were trying to educate parents of middle schoolers.” She went on to answer that it was evident to her that the population is older and those are the voters and that people with younger kids don’t have sitters. She was very surprised at town meeting with the them versus us unexpected attitude. She feels it would’ve made us better, more competitive and added that a lot of parents have now moved to Wilbraham. Doug then offered that a narrative developed and sold the us & them and that to him it is disappointing. Sandra remarked that people don’t realize the fiscal constraints. Doug stated that ‘we’ spend a lot of time trying to strike a balance of taxes versus needs/wants. Matt added that there was an organized opposition to the school plan. Sandra said she spends time at the transit authority trying to find a balance being level funded with a 3.1 million deficit. Carol stated that we don’t spend a lot of time with school issues, we spend most of our time with town budgets. Doug shared financial statistics while Matt added that we have our discussions after the fact with no political motivation. Doug shared that we like to think that we’ve made an informed decision. Matt asked Sandra if she felt there were any conflicts with any other boards that she was on and Doug informed Sandra that there have been three people that have applied. Carol said we are trying to ‘nail down’ tonight.

Maura Ryan came in to meet with the Advisory Committee to discuss her interest in being appointed. She offered that this is her fourth year in town, she is married to one of the town firefighters and she is looking to establish roots and feel part of her community. She is employed by Smith & Wesson in procurement and reviewed her previous employment. Doug asked her if she had a sense of what we do? Maura replied receiving budgets from town departments, reviewing and suggesting and communicating to the town. Doug told Maura that we try and weigh all requests – they are an amalgamation of everyone's opinions, address concerns, and find answers. We advise on issues that come before town meeting. Maura asked if anything had ever been sent back? Carol responded that they have denied financial requests and voted against articles departments have brought forth. Matt then asked Maura if 'she could set aside her school feelings and fire department feelings?' Maura responded that she could separate herself. Carol asked if Maura had a sense of town meeting, and she replied that she felt it was neat to be a part of it and nice to be able to vote. She added that she feels that that town is fiscally responsible.

Doug interjected that the school has drawn a disproportionate amount of attention in his opinion. He asked 'how do we get more information out, more participation?' Maura thinks that it is tough for people with children and those taking care of the elderly. Doug let Maura know that three people had expressed interest and that they would make a decision tonight.

The committee members had a brief discussion on the merit of each person that had expressed interest and in the end voted 2-1 to appoint Alan Fritts as the newest Advisory Committee member.

With no further business Carol made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:50pm, Doug seconded, all in favor 3-0

Respectfully Submitted,
Cindi Connors,
Admin Asst.