

**HAMPDEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
January 22, 2018
Hampden Town House**

Approved January 29, 2018

Called to order at 6:00pm

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

Members Absent – none

Also Present – Board of Assessors Norm Charest, Library Director Ellen Moriarty, Trustee Kathy Hutchison, Planning Board Members Bob Howarth and John Matthews and Richard Patullo, Treasurer, ZBA

FY19 Budget Process:

Board of Assessors reviewed their FY19 budget request. Elected officials request a 2.5% increase, Principal assessor and clerk positions increased per Advisory Committee request of 2.5%. No additional hours are being requested. Schooling had been paid out of their revolving account with this 'going away' they have increased their expense line by \$1,000 but could get by this year with only a \$500 increase if need be. Total overall budget is approximately 3.5% increase over FY18.

Doug asked if there was any sense of new growth and Norm commented that it was too early, but he would provide the committee a number to work with.

Library Ellen Moriarty and Kathleen Hutchison presented a level serviced budget with the requested 2.5% salary increases. Doug commented that there was no increase in CWMars and Kathy replied that sometimes they have 'a little to play with'. They are operating at 25 hours per week but would like to move back towards the hours they were open before the library itself closed several years ago. The state aid they receive can vary and any excess state aid is applied to the MEG account to use for technology, (currently approximately 15,000 balance). Doug asked Kathy what it would take to re-open on Mondays and she replied they would like to hire a young adult librarian for 8-10 hours which would allow them to shift staff around and cost around \$9,000.

Planning Board John Matthews presented three different budgets. The first budget is level serviced with a 2.5% increase for clerical. The second budget asks for \$15,000 for legal services, the third asks for both legal services and a 7% salary increase for clerical. John went on to detail that this year they've already spent \$6,000 on legal fees and he believes that it won't stop with solar farms being challenged. Doug asked whether those cases would be heard in land court and Bob said that even supreme court was possible. Carol stated that if the money comes out of the BOS legal account now why is planning asking for a distinct account for their purposes only? John feels things are not being expedited through the BOS and he is "looking for advice." Doug asked if other towns use separate line items. Bob added that applicants are now paying legal fees associated with their projects. Alan asked if this was a one-off kind of thing. John feels that more people will want to challenge and that social media causes problems and puts everything under a microscope. John touched on new regulations and upcoming changes and said that planning makes the decision, but that decision can be appealed to the ZBA. Carol said the BOS controls the general legal fund and that she wasn't sure parsing it out to departments was the answer and asked if John had talked about the process changes. Doug added that rather than break it into departments, expand law and claims and detail spending in the annual town report. Richard added by parsing it out you lose the ability to transfer. Alan asked if lawsuits had been filed against the town, the board or any member's and Bob replied with all of them.

Heather asked about the increase in salary – John replied that he has to review Joanne's job description with her and that there has been an increase in activity. Carol suggested John come to the personnel committee meeting on January 31, talk there, and then bring that number back to advisory. Dick added that it's ludicrous to have different salaries and that her ZBA salary should be the same as planning.

ZBA \$50 added to expense line, Richard would like to see parity between the ZBA clerk and Planning Admin hourly salary. He again added that salary needs to be consistent with planning.

Treasurer Payroll expense increased to cover increase in employees and senior tax work off program. He added a 2 ½% increase to salary lines. Richard remarked that he is frustrated by salary handling and that the personnel committee does not have a lot of credibility – he asked Carol if she was aware that there were now two civilian employees at the PD and another that received longevity pay. He feels there is a need for a town manager and HR and that the BOS is managing emergencies. An example he gave was the payroll form that the Personnel Committee asked departments to use two years ago – only two employees are using it. He mentioned that other towns he had spoken with are using town managers and finance directors. He feels that we might be able to get someone in the \$80,000 range hopefully with some HR experience and if the BOS give enough authority to this person they could manage administration at a high level, ensuring policies and procedures are followed as well as managing town offices.

FY19 debt reviewed. Final debt schedule for MRHS not yet ready. GM has a balance of \$205,200 and drops \$7000/yr with a pay off in 2021. We are in the last year of a highway override and the first year of the PD is \$256,375 with 18 months of interest. Richard suggested speaking with Cliff and Mark in regard to helping to find a way to fund paving within 2 ½.

Heather asked what we were going to do in regard to revolving accounts and Doug replied they may be added to budget lines.

Alan suggested that the Scantic Scribe would be a great way to get information out to residents.

Carol mentioned that the Town Report is due to Pam. She will email members and then to Pam once reviewed.

Next meeting scheduled for 6pm on January 29, 2018

With no further business, Doug made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:49pm, Carol seconded, all in favor 5-0

Respectfully Submitted,
Cindi Connors, Clerk