

**HAMPDEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
March 5, 2018
Hampden Town House**

Approved March 12, 2018
Called to order at 6:10pm

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

Members Absent – none

Also Present – Cliff Bombard, Town Accountant, Jeff Farnsworth, Police Chief, Board of Selectmen and Administrative Asst.

FY19 Budget Process:

Cliff explained that there is now an issue with the assistant accountant and the assistant treasurer being the same employee so he will need to update his clerical line to \$6,000. We are in an interim audit year. Alan asked about revolving accounts and if instructions had been given to departments – Cliff has a template but hasn't formulated the exact wording yet. This will be an extensive article and he is working on the motion. Doug asked Cliff if there were any new growth numbers, (no).

Police Jeff is still in negotiations with the two unions and will adjust his budget with the increases once contracts are settled. Carol inquired about placeholders and Jeff responded that the attorney viewed those as deceptive bargaining. He has added \$800 for septic pumping every two years. Doug asked about cruisers and Jeff responded that by adding the extra car it allows the disbursement of extra mileage. Doug asked about the empty defibrillator case in the town house. Discussion on whether or not to replace. Doug added that either a defibrillator should be put into the box or the box taken down and Jeff responded that is a BOS issue. Carol asked Jeff for a list of the non-bargained staff along with their grade, step and position name. She also asked if he had added a position and Jeff responded that he had a part time admin part time dispatch position. Jeff relayed that the career incentive is decreasing, which is ongoing with retirements. Discussion of tower space – Matt asked if it should be renovated and Jeff said there is a good likelihood that they will lease space off of a new tower rather than having to buy a new tower. Carol asked Jeff to articulate how adding more employees would be a benefit to Hampden. Jeff responded that a joint dispatch is now a "best practice" and a "single dispatch" is not. They now have fire medical emergencies and a next gen system with text and video 911 on the horizon. When there is a single dispatcher they are not able to handle. There are between 255 and 258 next gen answer points in Massachusetts, partially funded by a \$1.25 charge on cell phone bills. He added that 24/7/365 live support is needed on these machines. Doug asked what little towns like Holland and Wales do and Jeff responded that they have already regionalized. Jeff added that his salary line increase is negligible, less than \$1,000. Jeff went on to say that he has a signed letter from dispatcher's union endorsing joint dispatch. He relayed that there are incentive grants and that he is looking at funding model that accounts for zero reimbursement. Doug asked the chances of fruition and Jeff responded that it is "looking pretty good". Carol asked about barriers and Jeff explained that Cliff is working with the East Longmeadow Town Accountant and Jim Podolak from the Division of Local Services on how to take in and account for monies. Richard and East Longmeadow Town Treasurer are working together to take in the correct amount of monies down to the minutiae of cutting paychecks. Alan asked if either Hampden or East Longmeadow currently have two dispatchers? Jeff replied that East Longmeadow has no dispatchers, they use patrolmen and that they only have 600 more calls per year that Hampden does. Doug asked when Jeff was looking at starting and Jeff would like to have in place by July 1st, he added that this may or may not require a town vote. Carol asked about the process and Jeff said that it may be a separate line item outside of theirs. Cliff interjected that it would be tracked separately and Carol asked ...if we have to bill East Longmeadow for every dollar – Jeff said he would need definitive parameters by town meeting. Carol said that with a new expense and new revenue, even if it washed there needs to be transparency so that citizens understand. Jeff will attempt to have a separate line item once concrete, with public meetings. He is not sure if the BOS can make the decision. Jeff expounded upon the benefits to Hampden: an increased level of service, long term benefits, integration of service into one and multi-million-dollar expenditures could go away or be cut by 1/3, East Longmeadow has also promised full time IT services. Carol asked if East Longmeadow had a process and Jeff responded that the Town Manager and seven-member board had already approved this. Alan asked how all of our dispatchers would be able to make quick and intelligent decisions – Jeff said training would be needed and he added that East Longmeadow was prepared to have civilian dispatchers one way or another. Cliff informed the committee that we use 29% as a factor in our benefit calculations and that no retirement will be paid until 2020.

Cliff is interested in the reconciliation and said that it should be a third-party auditor. Jeff asked Cliff if he wanted this added and Cliff responded, "yes". Jeff went on to explain that we use the same phone vendors with similar phones and the same door access, camera systems and pc systems and that both towns also use AMR. When asked about the biggest downside, Jeff responded that was unknown.

Board of Selectmen Review of budget accounts, four hour requested increase in Board of Health hours from 30/wk to 34/wk. John Flynn informed the committee that employee also work five hours per week in the Fire Department. The BOS admin will be getting quotes for property & liability insurance. Doug asked if the insurance on the schools is also carried by the town and John replied that it was. Question of who's paying mothball costs and insurance during such time. Unemployment issue is still not resolved. Law & Claims, Carol asked if that was a real number and John said he will have costs broken down and sent to Carol. The BOS is not in favor of the planning board having their own law & claims line. Law and Claims balance – Doug asked if that was enough to get through to the end of the (fiscal) year and John answered that it should get us to STM. Carol responded that it is tough to take, \$10,000 last week leaves only \$15,000 in the reserve fund to last until the end of the year. John informed the committee that \$10,000 will not get them to the end of the (fiscal) year but that they should be much more settled next year. Thirty to forty percent of the legal bills were from planning and solar issues. Town house maintenance, \$11,000 on a building needing \$700,000 worth of repairs. Street lighting, electric rates increased 20% our savings with Syncarpha kept our billing level avoiding the increase in rates, although it is an administrative burden. Building department shows an increase including moving the admin into a line item. Doug asked if the fees are covering the salary and John replied that it seems to be tracking okay.

General:

We need to compile a list of line items needed for Cliff to create.

Alan advocating for informational sessions to be held prior to ATM

Are inspector expenses removed from his salary?

Doug is willing to participate in informational sessions – even if held on Saturday

Alan asked if BOH revolving could be used to buy defibrillators, (\$13,000 balance)

School budgets by March 15th

PD negotiations

Doug – challenge with dispatch language with reconciliation

Updated debt schedule

Updated ZBA/planning and Concom budget sheets

Discussion of moving PH for ATM back a week to 04/23/2018

New growth numbers and debt schedule

Next meetings 03/12 & 03/19

Minutes

Doug made a motion to accept the 02/12/18 meeting minutes as prepared, Alan seconded, all in favor, 5-0

Doug made a motion to accept the 02/26/18 meeting minutes as prepared, Heather seconded, all in favor, 5-0

Next meeting scheduled for 6pm on March 5, 2018

With no further business, Doug made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:08pm, Carol seconded, all in favor 5-0

Respectfully Submitted,
Cindi Connors, Clerk