

Approved 3/27/06

TOWN OF HAMPDEN, MASSACHUSETTS
BOARD OF SELECTMEN/BOARD OF HEALTH

March 20, 2006
6:00 pm

625 Main Street
Town House

Present: James Smith, Duane Mosier, John Flynn
The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm.

The Board discussed their positions on the budget allocations.

Duane Mosier is convinced that an override vote must be presented to correct the current financial situation.

John Flynn does not disagree with James Smith's position, relative to the need for a correction for our financial standing. He agrees that revenues and expenses have grown further and further apart, but doesn't believe this is the year for another override vote. He does not believe it will be successful given the failed vote of the last three years. He would prefer an override vote be held for capital improvements which he thinks has a better chance of being successful, given what history has shown. He thinks the prognosis for next year is good with a jump in real estate taxes, and if we address capital needs now. Historically, capital improvement overrides pass, but operating expense overrides have not.

James thinks the financial problems are more pervasive than anyone thinks. The Town will be asked to vote for a 4 million dollar bond to improve infrastructure that has been long neglected. Once that work is done, we'll need to bond for additional money for other improvements. There are serious needs at TWB, the highway department needs a new pickup and sander. The Police are driving cruisers with mileage over 100,000. He also believes that many don't distinguish between override purposes, operational versus capital needs.

John thinks it's the Board's responsibility to educate the public, as he does agree with James, that the general public does not see the problems that exist in town. He believes that the Board needs to take a stand on the school budget, rather than the town's needs.

James stated that in the past we have always had money to roll over into the next year, but we are no longer funding those accounts.

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Duane feels the public wants the Board to review the way in which the budget is allocated. Instead of creating a strong reserve when the economy was good, the Town spent money on “specials”.

The Board discussed the need for a continuous funding for a stabilization account.

James went onto the DOR website and found that all surrounding communities have substantial money in a stabilization fund as well as free cash available.

James is not advocating putting all the money we have into stabilization, but does see a need to add funds to the highway department.

John would like to see any additional funding (coming in later this year) from the State go into a stabilization fund.

7:00 pm Advisory Hearing: The Board attended the hearing in the Auditorium which Kathy Pessolano conducted. Advisory will meet on Saturday, March 25th to come up with final recommendations for funding.

The Board returned to Board of Selectmen’s office at 9:10 to discuss the rest of the agenda.

1. Infrastructure Plan and Presentation – James will work with Dana Pixley on a power point presentation for Town Meeting so those attending will get an education on what the infrastructure needs are in Town.
2. IBPO vote: Duane reported that the IBPO voted and ratified the contract (with a few changes). The Board will need to sign once the document has been revised by the IBPO. A motion was made by Duane Mosier to accept the contract as ratified by the IBPO effective March 17, 2006, contingent upon any minor modifications brought forward by legal counsel, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: All in favor and so voted. Numbers will be forwarded to Advisory for budgeting purposes.
3. Ballot Question: The Board must draft any ballot question and get to Town Clerk on Monday, March 27 to get it on the ballot.
4. Sergeant’s Exam Scoring: The question was asked by Police Chief, Jeff Farnsworth what the Board will consider a passing grade. The Board would like to hear recommendations from the testing company first.

A motion was made by Duane Mosier to adjourn at 10:15 pm, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: all in favor and so voted.

Respectfully submitted:

Pamela B. Courtney
Administrative Assistant