

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

January 31, 2011
6:30 pm

625 Main Street
Town House

Board Members: John D. Flynn, Richard R. Green, Vincent J. Villamaino
Guests: Tyler Witkop, Wilbraham/Hampden Times

Cliff Bombard, Town Accountant Brief Overview: The board reviewed the current status of our funds at this point and was told that until numbers come out from the state it is difficult to project where we are going to be.

Budget Review with Highway Superintendent: The board started the discussion with Dana Pixley by complimenting him on the job he and his department are doing with handling the snow storms. The volume of snow we have gotten has increased their burden of handling the storms as well as pushing back the existing snow. The conversation moved to the Highway budget and it was noted that most of the increases are contractual as well as increases for some materials. He also included 2.5% increase for seasonal workers in the event those from the last year continue in the positions this year.

The discussion turned to the Snow and Ice account and how it should be funded and it was agreed by the board to add \$10,000 to the account for this year. They talked about the possibility of reimbursement from the state as a result of the storms and Dana suggested that all departments should jump at that opportunity, including Police, Fire and Highway.

There was discussion about the line item for traffic control and at what amount it should be funded to cover all road projects. It was determined that the line would be raised to \$10,000.

Next was discussion about the need for new sanders, but Dana stated that he could get through this winter season with what he has, but will put in a request for two new sanders in the spring.

Warrant articles were discussed and Dana had two; one of which is of a higher priority and is for the replacement of a 2001 pick-up truck which has an estimated cost of \$30,000. The other item was for a Brush Chipper which is a lesser needed item, and can be replaced at a later date. Although the chipper is used year round, he thinks he can get some more time out of it.

Next year the department will be seeking a new Mack truck.

The next item discussed was the issue of barrels left in the road and how they should be handled. Dana was told that another CTY announcement would be made telling residents that all barrels should be out of the roadway or risk being hit. Under no circumstances should the highway department workers get out of their trucks to move barrels.

The other item was the ongoing issue of sidewalk clearing by residents. Some residents are diligent about clearing, while others don't bother at all. There is no town bylaw that states they must be cleared and the board is going to review this further as it poses a real hazard to those using the walks.

Next was an issue with the trimming of trees at Connie Witt's property. National Grid considers these a hazard as they interfere with high voltage wires, but Connie does not want the work done. Dana has opinions from two arborists who agree on the need.

The subject of Emergency Management came up in regards to snow/storm emergencies in getting to residents that town vehicles cannot reach and Dana asked about a list of residents who might be put into service using their own snowmobiles, etc. This will be discussed at a later date.

The board also agreed that another meeting should be scheduled with the Capital Committee to discuss capital expenditures/warrant articles.

National Grid Hearing Continued: The hearing from January 10th was continued tonight. In part, the residents who returned were here to get answers about the devaluation to their property as a result of the raising of the towers. Dena Champy, project manager for National Grid had been told that the residents had been contacted by her real estate group, but the residents stated that they had not. Given that the residents were not contacted, a motion was made by Vinnie Villamaino to continue the hearing until February 22nd at 7:00 pm, seconded by Rick Green. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Budget Review with Police Chief: The board started by asking that the Chief put out another CTY announcement regarding the trash barrels and making sure residents keep them at the end of their driveway and out of the street, as highway will not be responsible for what happens to them during plowing.

The Chief presented his budget which shows salary increases as dictated by contract negotiations. There are also costs associated with new training requirements. The budget currently shows a good sum of money in this year's account but that is due to much of the coming training to occur in the spring. It was also stated that the training occurs in a fiscal year rather than a calendar year.

The new cruiser will be at a lesser cost than those in the past as many manufacturers are coming out with a new model so the competition will be great.

One thing the Chief would like to see increased is the clothing allowance for Reserve Officers. The board discussed the amount of hours these officers work and Jeff's response was that they must work a minimum of 16 hours a month and if they cannot do that, the Chief does not need them. Start with \$100 clothing allowance to start, and move up from there.

DARE line item: Chief and Sgt. Joy suggested that the DARE line item should be shown as zero for this budget cycle, as it has been funded through other means, but it should remain on the warrant for future years when additional funds will be needed.

School Resource Officer was next on the agenda and it was reported by the Chief that the cost remains at \$10,000.

Jeff has talked with Monson and Palmer regarding regional dispatching.

He also discussed the decrease in his original estimate for the new dispatch control/desk going from the original estimate of \$100,000 to \$50,000 (which may be further reduced if grant funds are available).

Dog Hearing: A hearing was scheduled for two owners whose dogs continue to be a nuisance to a resident. They were asked to appear for a hearing but given that neither of them contacted this office to explain that they would not be here, a letter will go out with the next steps that will be taken. The owners will be put on notice that when the dogs are loose again, they will be picked up and held at Penny Peck's at a cost the owner.

Voting Machine Discussion: The board received a report from the voting machine study group who did a fact finding study. What was determined was the amount of money for this equipment is far above what we could afford at this time. In addition, ballots would have to be purchased through the manufacturer at an additional cost. The idea will be tabled at this point, and may be reviewed again at a later date.

Hampden Country Club Liquor License: The board has still not received a response from Town Counsel as to the validity of the liquor license issued to the Country Club as they stated they do not pour the liquor, that it is done by the Catering Business,

Federally Subsidized Solar Panels: There is an informational meeting on February 8 and 9 and the information will be forwarded to Dave Hayward for his review.

Minutes of January 3, 2011: The minutes were reviewed and a motion was made by Vinnie Villamaino to approve the minutes of January 3, 2011 as presented, seconded by Rick Green. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Minutes of January 10, 2011: The minutes were reviewed and a motion was made by Vinnie Villamaino to approve the minutes of January 10, 2011 as presented, seconded by Rick Green. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Minutes of January 24, 2011: The minutes were reviewed and a motion was made by Vinnie Villamaino to approve the minutes of January 24, 2011 as presented, seconded by Rick Green. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Minutes of December 13, 2010: The minutes were reviewed again, to correct the summary of the meeting of the Cultural Council as they failed to include two new members to be appointed. The correct version is now in the minutes. A motion was made by Vinnie Villamaino to accept the corrections, seconded by Rick Green. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Water Quality Report: The board reviewed the report generated by our licensed water operator on the quality of the Town House, which passes in good standing.

Dates:

PVPC Meeting on February 1 @ 3pm in BOS office

Regional Selectmen Meeting February 3, 7:00 pm in Wilbraham

Advisory Budget Schedule, February 28

- 6:10 to 6:30 pm Selectmen
- 6:30 to 6:50 pm COA
- 6:50 to 7:10 pm Police
- 7:10 to 7:20 pm Fire
- 7:20 to 7:40 pm Highway

Seeing no further business, a motion was made by Vinnie Villamaino to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 pm, seconded by Rick Green. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

/pbc