

Approved 1/14/14

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

December 16, 2013
6:30 pm

625 Main Street
Hampden, MA 01036

Board Members: John D. Flynn, Norman Charest, Vincent J. Villamaino
Vinnie Villamaino was unable to attend the meeting.
The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by John Flynn.

Guest: Tyler Witkop, The Wilbraham-Hampden Times

Sgt. Mike Cooney: Mike came before the board and introduced Jeffrey Beattie as an applicant for a Reserve position in the police department. Mike stated that a background check has been done on Jeffrey; and that he is a graduate of Franklin Pierce University where he graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice. He is currently employed at Whip's Sporting Goods in Springfield and working as a Granby Auxiliary Officer, while living in Longmeadow. He wishes to pursue law enforcement career. John mentioned that community policing is of utmost importance in town, that getting out and meeting people is the best way to start on the job. He is highly recommended by Chief Farnsworth. Given the recommendation, a motion was made by Norman Charest to appoint Jeffrey Beattie to the position of Reserve Officer, subject to completion of training for a probationary period of six months, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

South Road Property: Russ Morton dropped paperwork at this office relative to a sale of property that is currently classified in the tax rolls as Chapter 61B. The purchaser of the property (Edward Muska) and his father in law (Rick Kosakowski) were here as they have a vested interest in the board signing a release of the town's Right of First Refusal on the property. John was familiar with the properties as he had worked on them when he was on the Planning Board. The Mr. Kosakowski stated that the lot was approved as an estate lot in January and then received additional approvals from the Conservation Commission and National Heritage. The minimal acreage for a recreational land designation is 5 acres. It was noted that the conveyance tax on this property must be paid by Russ Morton. After the board reviewed the plan and purchase and sale agreement, Norman made a motion to release the Town's Right of First Refusal on property shown on plan dated April 24, 2013 of Lot 51 on South Road by Paul S. Smith Land Surveying, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Chief Gorski: Chief Gorski introduced Colin Rogers to the board and stated that his background check, the CORI check has been done and came back clean. He also has documentation from his doctor that he is capable of doing the job of a firefighter. Given that the Chief recommends

Colin Rogers, a motion was made by Norman Charest that Colin Rogers be appointed as a Provisional Firefighter, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Mike also mentioned the addition of a gentleman who will come on board to act as a Certified Safety Hygienist for the department. The gentleman's name is Robert Rusczek, CIH, CSP.

Personnel Committee: Don Collins, Carol Fitzgerald and Bill Gouzounis came before the board to discuss the pay scale for the coming fiscal year.

Don presented two scenarios for review; one with a COLA increase and the other showing employees taking a step increase. The COLA increase amounts to about 1% and the step increase amounts to about 2.1%.

Carol noted that two years ago the chart was adjusted to bring the town positions current with those positions in the general public and don't feel the need to make further adjustments to that. They don't feel like they need to raise the base pay.

The group discussed that employee's longevity was rewarded in the past with step increases. Norm would like to use the step increase which COLA and longevity combined.

The question was asked how many employees are covered by this chart. A very small group and that most of the town's employees are union members.

John remarked that with the COLA the starting salary stays the same, from one year to the next. Norman remarked that the Assessor's did a performance review for Carolyn Reed, Assistant Assessor at six months (as was part of the deal they agreed on with her) and will do a review of MaryAnn Wilkinson in the near future.

The question was raised as to who has the final say as to what rates are used? Carol and the group stated that Personnel recommends that the step chart be used and will recommend to the Advisory Board that this chart is used for budget purposes.

Carol will suggest a meeting date with Advisory so the chart can be distributed.

John noted that a recommendation was needed for those people are capped out. Personnel will determine that number.

John wants people denoted as capped plus one year, two years, 3 years.

Senior tax abatement program: After some discussion about other communities and how they work the program, it was suggested that the department heads be polled again to see if there are any job positions that might be filled by having a senior work the position. Once done, the information will be forwarded to the Personnel Committee.

Don Collins also noted that Tom Argenio is no longer a town resident and therefore cannot be on the board, and time is extremely limited for Dick Ayers. Don asked that Tyler Witkop put something in the paper advertising the vacancies. John also mentioned that our Capital Committee needs members and we are still looking for Town House Building Committee members as well.

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission: PVPC sent a model bylaw for town's to use for a Medical Marijuana Dispensary. Noted by the board.

The board asked that an email be sent to Tim Brennan to follow up as to whether Hampden will be considered as a community that might be affected by the MGM development.

Letter of Thanks: The board received a letter from a resident extolling the professionalism and courtesy displayed by Officer Jason Roath and Officer Tom Yvon. John Scavotto, Jr. praised the officers and commended the department for the work it does.

Minutes: The minutes of December 9th will be held for review until the next meeting when Vinnie Villamaino is in attendance.

Police Department Job Description: The board asked Chief Farnsworth to make a few changes to the job description for the newly created position of Detective/Utility Officer. The funds for this position are already in the budget and the board approves the position.

MMA Invitation: The board received an invitation to the Annual Trade Show for the MMA held in Boston on January 24th and 25th.

Charter Cable Renewal: Tom Cohan sent a letter to the board with new rates for internet access in all town buildings that is a big increase over what we now spend. John asked that Tom be contacted to get in touch with John to discuss.

Hampden Country Club: The board discussed the pending case with the country club and the recommendation of Town Counsel to stay removed from the discussion.

Main Street Water: John mentioned the drilling of a well for the Federated Church that would allow the pipe to be encased and therefore able to prevent any salt infiltration into it. John will forward that drilling information so bids for the job could be sought.

Town House Building Committee: The board discussed the need to reestablish this group and noted that Betty Howarth had expressed a desire to help the study committee. Norman Charest made a motion to appoint Betty Howarth to the Town House Building Committee, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Administrative Assistant: Pamela Courtney requested the 26th of December as a vacation day.

With no further business, a motion was made by Norm Charest to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 pm, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela B. Courtney
Administrative Assistant