

Approved 12/8/15

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

November 30, 2015  
6:00 pm

625 Main Street  
Hampden, MA 01036

Board Members: Vincent J. Villamaino John D. Flynn, Norman Charest  
The meeting was called to order by Vinnie Villamaino at 6:00 pm.  
Guest: Tyler Witkop, The Wilbraham-Hampden Times

Planning Board: The Planning Board has requested the presence of board members to attend their meeting on Wednesday, December 9<sup>th</sup> to discuss a pending application for a used car dealer's license by Country Auto. The discussion is planned for 7:45 pm.

Five Town Chamber of Commerce: The board received an invitation to a Holiday Reception by the Five Town Chamber.

Conflict of Interest Seminar: The board hopes to hold a seminar for the Conflict of Interest Law in conjunction with two other communities. It is scheduled for December 14<sup>th</sup> at Senior Center 4:00 – 5:30. Given limited responses, it may have to be postponed.

Highway Superintendent: Dana Pixley asked to come before the board to discuss his decision to retire at the end of his contract cycle, June 30, 2016. John asked about a conversation some time ago when Dana committed to working with the board, and was asked to keep an eye out for possible replacements, but Dana had no real information regarding a replacement. He doesn't feel that the board will have a lack of candidates interested in the position. Dana explained that he has begun lists to help with the transition; daily scheduling, weekly scheduling, and monthly scheduling. The board acknowledged the great job that Dana has done, along with the work done by Homer Fuller for so many years. They all agreed that Dana has run the department exceptionally well, even with a reduced staff that he never replaced after losing the position in a budget cycle. He managed the department; got the work done, always on a timely basis, and watched the budget as if it was his own. He also worked hard to keep the equipment running, for longer than its "useful" life and does not agree that "throwing money" at a problem is the best solution.

Given that Dana's contract allows for buyback of sick leave, etc., and he has vacation leave coming to him, he may work only through mid-May. He committed to the board that he will mentor his replacement through the process, and will do everything he can to help the new superintendent succeed.

Dana also announced that Bob Richards would be retiring shortly as well.

Vinnie would like to advertise for the position immediately and John would like someone to come in through the winter months. Dana has a rough draft of requirements for the job, and

although he thinks that residency is important for all town jobs, he does not think it is critical as far as response time goes.

He would like to stay on as Tree Warden and the board has agreed to allow that.

Vinnie remarked that he would have free time within the next few weeks and could spend time with Dana working on a job description.

At this time, Dave Martel and Mike Callan arrived at the request of the board to be introduced at the budget meeting later in the evening but to discuss an ongoing legal issue immediately.

A motion was made by Norman Charest to enter into Executive Session at 6:37 pm for the purposes of discussing pending litigation with return to Open Session, seconded by John Flynn.

VOTE: Norman Charest yes, John Flynn yes and Vincent Villamaino yes.

With no further business, a motion was made by Norman Charest to leave Executive Session at 6:57 pm and return to Open Session, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: Norman Charest yes, John Flynn yes, Vincent Villamaino yes.

The board left their meeting room to reconvene in the Auditorium for the Annual Budget Kick-Off Meeting with Department heads and Elected Officials at 7:00 pm.

John introduced Dave Martel to the group, thanked him for his years of service and introduced Mike Callan as our new Town Counsel.

Carol Fitzgerald started the meeting by talking about the Personnel Audit we had done recently and the results of that audit. She handed out a new “standardized” application to be used by all departments and noted that all applications need to be held for two years. In addition, she distributed a set of questions that could be used by those conducting an interview. Chief Farnsworth stated that he had a particular application for Police Officers that he used and would continue to do so. Carol concluded the portion of the meeting regarding the audit by saying there would be further information coming from the Personnel Committee in the coming year; such as record keeping, CORI process, etc.

Doug Boyd, representing the Advisory Committee talked about the budget process for the year. He advised that departments provide for a level service, and should a variation be necessary, that the budget clearly state what the need is. The salary chart will be distributed at a later date via email as will the budget worksheets.

There was discussion about CPA funds and how Academy Hall was recently granted monies for improvements to be started in the near future.

John Matthews, Chairman of the Planning Board stated that the board would work on the language in zoning bylaws to emphasize that no commercial or residential buildings are allowed to tie into the town’s drainage system without approval of the Planning Board and the Highway Superintendent.

Wendel Hulburt stated that things are going well in the Building Department and that he will be reviewing fees for commercial buildings in upcoming months.

Marty O'Shea, Superintendent of HWRSD stated that the district recognizes that they are stewards of the town's coffers and they continually work to keep costs down. One path they took was to review the retiree's health insurance costs and to require a more equitable cost sharing between retiree and the district. He also spoke of the possible Middle School merging that has been the topic of much discussion in recent months. This is another way in which the district could save money as well as alleviate the enrollment issues that threaten the programs available for middle school students. He also stated that the district challenges are shared by the State as well and funding for the district has been cut significantly. He also applauded Dana Pixley's service over the years while working as Highway Superintendent and ensuring safe travels for school buses.

Eva Wiseman, Town Clerk and Tax Collector said things are going smoothly in her departments.

Chief Farnsworth spoke of the progress on the new police station and said they hoped to have it closed up within two weeks or so to allow them to work through the winter. He also mentioned that there is continued interest by a group of towns regarding a Regional Dispatch Center which would save money for the communities involved.

Bob Makuch, Assessor spoke of the continuing education going on in their department. Carolyn Reed is now the Principal Assessor and Mary Ann Wilkinson is continuing her education as well.

Carolyn Reed remarked that the better educated they are allows them to do more assessor functions in house, and therefore to save money for the town.

Dick Patullo, Treasurer mentioned the work that has to be done for the Affordable Care Act and that he will do the work in house, whereas other towns have to spend considerable money to outsource the work.

Cliff Bombard, Town Accountant recognized the people who worked on setting the tax rate; he mentioned how smoothly the process went and thanked those who participated. He also gave an overview of where the town stands financially and that every year we start with debt that has to be recognized as part of the budget preparation. He stated that although our free cash has been good in recent years, that we must remain vigilant with our spending. He added that revenue from excise taxes has not been as high as in past years.

Becky Moriarty, Director of the Senior Center noted that the usage at the center has increased this year. She also stated that the center is now in its 15<sup>th</sup> year and there are some maintenance issues that must be addressed. There were roof and duct work repairs done due to winter conditions last year. The flooring in the bathrooms need to be replaced and the rugs are showing wear and will need to be replaced as well.

Dana Pixley, Highway Superintendent announced to the group that he would be retiring in June 2016. He stated that the roads are in good condition as is the equipment. A decision had been

made to keep the oldest dump truck as a back-up, as the money offered in trade was very low. Dana is expecting the new truck in mid-December and after equipment additions, should be ready to go the end of February or early March.

John Flynn then spoke of the good work that is done by those who work for the town and thanked the group.

The meeting concluded and Vinnie and Norman returned to the office. A motion was made by Norman Charest to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 pm, seconded by Vinnie Villamaino. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela B. Courtney  
Administrative Assistant

/pbc