

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

**MINUTES**

February 29, 2016  
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 at 6:00 pm by Vinnie Villamaino.

A motion was made by Norman Charest to go into Executive Session at 6:00 pm with return to Open Session to discuss contract negotiations with Lauren Comstock and John Ouellette, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: Norm Charest yes, John Flynn yes, Vinnie Villamaino yes.

A motion was made by Norman Charest to leave Executive Session at 6:20 pm and return to Open Session, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: Norman Charest yes, John Flynn yes, Vinnie Villamaino yes.

Nancy Zebert and Tyler Witkop arrived at the meeting at 6:30 pm.

The board reviewed various agenda items as follows:

Health Insurance Cost Sharing: The Town currently pays ½ of the most expensive health insurance plan for all staff members. Instead of splitting the other plans 50/50, the town contributes that dollar amount they pay for the more expensive plan, and put that amount towards staff members who have chosen the less expensive plan.

The board would like the question to go to Personnel to see what they think of re-doing those numbers.

It has become known that the rates for the SVRHT will go up this coming year; we are just not sure how the rates will increase. Any information will be forwarded to the Advisory Board.

Community Preservation Committee: An application for the Community Preservation Community has been completed by Connie Witt seeking funds to restore the WWI monument on the town common. The Friends of the Seniors have raised \$5,000 towards the cleaning of the monument and with luck, the additional money needed for the restoration will be granted by the CPC. Connie came to the meeting to discuss her request for \$9,250 for restoration of the monument and has contacted the gentleman who did the grave restoration in town to work on this project.

Sr. Tax Abatement Applicant: The board reviewed the request made by Eva Wiseman to appoint Betty Sutcliffe to the Sr. Citizen Property Tax Work Off Program. She will work for the Town Town Clerk as needs require. A motion was made by John Flynn to appoint Betty Sutcliffe to the tax abatement program, working for the Town Clerk and/or Town Treasurer, as needed, seconded by Norman Charest. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Resignation: Chrissy Cesan, board member for Historical Commission and ZBA submitted her letter of resignation to the Board of Selectmen. The board will send a letter of appreciation for her many years of service.

Minimum Wage Clarification: John Flynn spoke to the Wilbraham Rec Dept. If the Town did not formally accept following the federal wage standard, municipal employees follow the state minimum wage guidelines.

Berry Insurance: The cupola on the Fire House was blown off the top of the house and landed on the back roof. A claim has been filed with Berry Insurance. This may negate the need for a warrant article to repair the cupola.

Highway Material Bid Opening: The board reviewed the recommendations made by Dana Pixley for the bids for the following materials and services. They are as follows:

- Palmer Paving for Asphalt at the plant and rolled in place
- Palmer Paving for 3/8" trap rock
- All States Asphalt for Full Depth Pavement Reclamation
- All States Asphalt for Rubber Surface Treatment and MC3000 asphalt
- JR Sweeping for Catch Basin Cleaning

A motion to award all bids as recommended was made by John Flynn and seconded by Norman Charest. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

There was an error in the posting for the deadline to bid. One notice stated 1:00 and another stated 1:30. Two companies submitted bids for the street sweeping work; one at 1:00 and one at 1:30 pm. Due to the confusion, town counsel will be contacted to find out how best to proceed.

Residents' Concerns re: Middle School Unification: John Niemi, Ann Marie Noel and others came before the board to discuss their concerns about the middle school unification proposal. Below is a list of comments and concerns voiced:

The question of town meeting going long and if the meeting is recessed, when does the next meeting have to be called? Can it be held on a Saturday?

The question of whether this article will be determined at town meeting by a vote or whether it will go on a paper ballot was asked. The board assured those present that there would be language in the question itself that states that the vote will be "contingent upon a positive referendum vote on the ballot".

Is there any chance that the question to be placed on the warrant by the School Committee be tabled until a new superintendent is hired?

TWB will be filled to capacity and there will be a need for microphone and live feed for those who cannot fit in the “cafetorium”. The capacity of the building will be verified.

There are people who wish to hold signs the night of ATM. The question of the legality of their assembly will be asked.

The consequence that closing TWB will have on real estate values was voiced.

The argument of declining enrollment was challenged with the news that there are a lot of new cellar holes being dug on Chapin Road as well as other locations.

The point was made that Hampden has the lowest tax rates of surrounding communities, making it an attractive choice for home buyers.

There is concern that Hampden voters are being “pushed” to make a decision without the benefit of the School Committee investigating other options.

Who will pay the expenses that will come with a closed school? What will the cost be?

Wilbraham Middle School needs a new roof and other improvements. How will those costs be divided between towns?

The expenses that exist with the current condition of the schools will be the town where the school is located.

Ann Marie Noel has reserved the Senior Center with Becky Moriarty to hold an informational meeting on April 4<sup>th</sup> to discuss these issues.

The board will seek answers to these questions and get that information out to attendees of this meeting. They will also schedule a meeting to be held to allow residents a chance to hear what the Selectmen know about this proposal and to voice their opinions as well.

SVRHT Rates: See funding scenarios. The board will be getting hard numbers from the group in the near future; in time for budget preparation.

Water Updates: The board is waiting to hear of possible solutions to address property owner’s concern with levels of manganese at 601 Main Street.

Solar Updates: The board is waiting for the \$25,000 deposit from Amaresco. Rose Crowley of Doherty is working to complete the contract with the Amaresco people.

Budget and Warrant Review/Status: Placeholder made for possible change of date for future Annual Town Meetings.

GreatHorse DEP Extension: Lorri talked with BOS. If GreatHorse drills an extra monitoring well on their property as part of the DEP pump analysis, does it reduce the number of test wells required on our property.

Middle School Unification/Amendment to Regional Agreement: How will this question be handled? Will there be two separate meetings? Will there be one meeting to handle the middle school issue and another for all other warrant articles?

With no further business a motion was made by Norman Charest to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 pm, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela B. Courtney  
Administrative Assistant

/pbc