

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

MINUTES

March 14, 2016
6:00 pm

625 Main Street
Hampden, MA 01036

Board Members: Vincent J. Villamaino John D. Flynn, Norman Charest
Vinnie Villamaino was unable to attend meeting due to recent surgery.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by John D. Flynn.

Guests: Tyler Witkop, The Wilbraham-Hampden Times, Town Moderator Robert Howarth

School Unification Discussion: The Board of Selectmen agreed to meet with School Committee members, School Superintendent and members of the Middle School Task Force at their request. Given the anticipated attendance, the board moved the meeting to the Town House auditorium. That following are comments from the meeting:

John Flynn welcomed the meeting attendees and explained to the residents in attendance why and how the meeting came to be.

Superintendent Marty O'Shea opened the discussion by stating that the School Committee wants to move at the pace that Hampden residents want. He understands that it is a challenging discussion; they people are passionate about their children and TWB remaining open, but wants everyone to understand that the Middle School Task Force (MSTF) worked with the best of intentions. They reviewed options and have a genuine interest in improving education options for all middle school students.

John Flynn stated that the many questions that have been asked, and continue to be asked are valid questions, not without merit and deserve to be answered by the SC and MSTF members. Board members were asked if there is a position of the Board of Selectmen at this time. John responded that the SC does not need the permission of the BOS to place an article on the ATM warrant.

John and Norman both applauded the work of the MSTF, but questioned why there weren't other options available for residents to review.

Marty responded that there was a matrix for other plans and many models had been reviewed by the MSTF. This option was the best choice as determined by the task force. Lisa Morace stated that this model for classes 6 through 8 was the optimal educational model. Sandra Sheehan stated that education was of the utmost importance to the task force.

There was discussion about how the ATM will be structured, whether it will be completed in one meeting or a separate meeting will be held to discuss only the school unification issue and warrant article. John stated that the Town Moderator, Robert Howarth will conduct it as he chooses.

There will be a public hearing to review all warrant articles on April 4th when the Advisory Board meets to conduct a mini run through of what will be discussed at Annual Town Meeting.

John stated that the question on the warrant will be subject to a positive referendum vote at annual town election which will allow the most people the opportunity to vote on the issue. To make the ballot question count, a vote will be need to be done at ATM by a show of hands or special paper vote.

Marty stated that he and Beth Regulbuto were working on a Statement of Interest now and will submit it to the Massachusetts School Building Authority by early April. They are reviewing long range plans for two schools that includes all repairs necessary to keep them up and running. John stated that he is interested in pursuing money from the state for TWB improvements. Norm Charest stated that he hears more support for keeping TWB open. He does not like having only one choice.

Lisa Morace said she would be more than happy to come to more meetings to help people understand the situation and the thought process used to come to this proposed solution.

Rita Vail asked when the warrant will be closed and John responded that the date was set for March 28th.

Paul Gagliarducci, former District Superintendent offered his experience with this matter. He said that many schools are facing the same enrollment issues that we are; that we would need another 3 to 3 1/2% increase in enrollment to keep the programs that we have now in the future. We might not like the choice, but change is inevitable because of enrollment numbers.

Warren Black spoke about the socialization of students; that he is not opposed to a merger and even thinks it should happen across the board for all grades. He also asked why our services and education are not the same as those provided in Wilbraham.

Marty spoke and assured everyone that all offerings are the same for TWB and WMS students. There was concern that the ballot question be understandable to voters; that at times questions are misleading and difficult to know exactly what a yes or no vote really means.

John Niemi thinks that enrollment is not the only issue here; that it is also a cultural one. People feel as though the identity of the town will change with our middle school closed. He also asked about the checks and balances to watch for increases in enrollment. Who will be tracking that? Other residents talked about the possibility of building a new middle school in Hampden and the response was that we are left to the decision for that from the MSBA; that after their review we will get their recommendation.

Nick Fyntrilakis from MSTF that he and all members had worked diligently on this topic and stressed that merging is the best solution and residents should approve the merge.

Police Station Building Committee: Project update. Servers are the first issue. FF&E servers were 32.5.

Close to the end of the construction. Still have second alternate which is back car port where cruisers will be under cover.

Waiting for DEP for final approval regarding the well connection. Water costs should come in at the cost estimated. Septic is still up for discussion.

Think second car port can be done, but they may need the server money back in the budget.

Jeff said use part of the furniture money and use it for maintenance and equipment and utilities.

Servers were \$32,500. Ask Cliff if the monies can be shifted from utilities to pay for the servers.

John suggested they check with Cliff – find line item in original budget and show that to Cliff.

Work needs to be done at Senior Center. The pipe coming into senior center will be reduced.

They don't need backflow preventer now, but move a pipe a short distance.

Time frame for construction: 3 dates, this weekend, April 15, but not Easter,

2:00 the plumber will arrive, Saturday do their work, Sunday clean up. Gomes is now looking at the 22nd for the work to be done.

Work schedule has been finalized with Becky. Police Committee will determine how Cliff Bombard wants to handle the money.

Senior Center: There are monitoring wells that need to be drilled on the property as a result of GreatHorse Country Club wishing to increase their water usage. Those doing the work will put red flags where the wells will be located. The wells will be drilled with minimal disturbance to the center and will be tested afterwards as required by certified consultants.

Police Policy: The Chief submitted a new Domestic Violence Policy for the board's review. Norman will follow up with the Chief to get a copy with the changes highlighted so the board can see those changes.

ZBA Applicant: After the resignation, the zoning board would like to fill that position. There is a gentleman who showed interest some time ago. The board would like a recommendation from the Zoning Board and suggest that Chairman Jed Berliner come to a meeting with Tom Addicks so the board can meet him.

Minutes of March 7, 2016: The minutes will be held until Vinnie's return.

Middle School Questions and Answers: There are notes available from the Middle School Unification meeting held at the Town House on Saturday. Those notes will be forwarded to the board for their information so they know where the attendants stand on the issue.

Academy Hall: Vinnie met with Dave Markham on site and Dave will proceed with ordering gutters to start with, to help with water retention and runoff. Other repairs are needed in the basement to prevent the water seepage.

Water Issue: CT Valley Well has submitted four options to remediate concerns that residents have regarding water quality. Exploring another option for remediation. We have two quotes for the Federated Church and will take the lowest quote and add that number to the warrant. Advisory will be given the number as well.

COA Liquor License Requests: Becky Moriarty, Director of Council on Aging requested a number of liquor licenses, as follows:

- April 8, Women's Retreat from 6:00-11:00 pm
- April 14, Volunteer Recognition Dinner from 5:00-10:00 pm
- May 21, Aloha Dinner Dance, from 5:00-10:00 pm
- June 25, Under the Boardwalk Dinner Dance from 5:00-10:00 pm
- July 23, Strawberry Fields Dinner Dance from 5:00-10:00 pm
- August 20, Happy Days Dinner Dance from 5:00-10:00 pm
- October 22, Oktoberfest Dinner Dance from 5:00-10:00 pm

A motion was made by Norman Charest to approve all licenses as requested, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

School Assessment Letter: The assessment from the HWRSD was received in the amount of \$8,063,954.

Fire House Cupola and Weathervane: A storm blew the Fire House cupola and weathervane off of the roof and it landed on a lower roof. The insurance adjuster as viewed the damage after receiving the claim and forwarded information on a new cupola and weathervane. We are in the process of making the renovations.

Solar Status: The contract is in final stage of negotiations.

NOTE: Highway Negotiations: Schedule time with department members. Check for next week.

Review resumes at next meeting.

A motion was made by Norman Charest to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 pm, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela B. Courtney
Administrative Assistant

/pbc