

Approved 8/8/17

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

October 3, 2016  
6:00 pm

625 Main Street  
Hampden MA

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

Guests: MaryEllen Glover, Mark Casey, Caryn Paradis, Tyler Witkop, The Wilbraham-Hampden Times, John Niemi

Town residents came before the board to discuss the upcoming Special Town Meeting and more specifically, the amendments to the Regional Agreement proposed by the HWRSD School Committee. The amendments will include the language: "Students in grades six through eight may be assigned to the unified middle school located in Wilbraham, irrespective of their residence, during school years beginning in 2017 and ending in 2022".

Mary Ellen Glover asked that a "robo-call" be made to alert people to specific dates and deadlines with the upcoming STM, voter registration and the Advisory Hearing prior to STM. The board is fine with doing so, but suggested that any voter information should come from the Town Clerk's office and not from this office.

Mark Casey, former Selectmen came before the board with a question as to how the vote would be handled. He asked if the warrant article would be subject to the outcome of a referendum vote. John explained that the issue had not been decided yet; that we had to get an opinion from our town counsel. Mark Casey asked that a warrant article be added to request a ballot question, and unless the town counsel prohibits it due to a legality, John Flynn stated that the board could agree to that. Mark was very emphatic that he thinks the topic is far too important not to allow as many voters as possible the right to vote.

A motion was made by Norman Charest to add an article to the end of the warrant, to make the SC Amendment subject to a ballot vote, with the election date to be determined by the Town Clerk, and contingent upon Town Counsel approval, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: All in favor and so voted. The question will be posed to Town Counsel, Mike Callan tomorrow.

Residents asked about teachers teaching outside of their discipline Mark Casey stated that there are plenty of other schools that run with very few students. The response was that they might not be fully accredited by the State.

Jon Niemi talked about ongoing inequities in the schools and that TWB had band taken away last year, but they brought it back once enough parents complained about it. John Flynn's

BOS 161003

response was that the situation has gone on for years, with parents applying pressure to the school to ensure certain programs and/or classes are offered.

MaryEllen believes that the School Committee has looked into only one option, and refuse to offer any other solutions. MaryEllen continued that maybe the SC thinks it will be easier, but she wonders about what's next for regionalization? Will it be Green Meadows, the Fire Department; economies of scale can be argued for all of these examples. No one ever thought our middle school would be threatened in this way, so really anything is possible in the future. John Niemi asked out the procedures at Special Town Meeting and John responded that the entire meeting is run by the Town Moderator and he may run it in any fashion allowed by law. John Niemi wondered about the presentation that will be made by the School Committee in favor of merging and asked if those opposed to the merge would have time to speak against the merge.

John Flynn restated that the Town Moderator has all authority at the meeting.

John Niemi wondered why there are no opinions in opposition publicized so the negative effects could be clearly stated.

Judge Howarth, Town Moderator is currently discussing a few issues with Town Counsel relative to the proceedings of the meeting; may amendments be made from the floor to a warrant article?

The question was raised; if there can be a motion to "take no action" or to "take action" and that's a question for Town Counsel.

MaryEllen wondered about asking to take the articles out of order? Would that be allowed? The residents were satisfied and left the meeting at 6:35 pm.

Highway Superintendent: Mark Langone came before the board to give an update on the projects currently underway by him and his department.

- DOT Bridge Program: He told the board about the DOT's Bridge Program that might result in the town getting some funds for repair work. The bridge at Laughing Brook is the one that he is focusing on now, but he will continue to look at the condition of others.
- Salt Bids: The bids came in and the price per ton is very low at \$60.25/ton. This is for untreated rock salt.
- Main Street Road and Sidewalks: Progress has been slower than expected and Mark has talked with the Supervisor from Lane Construction about this. The sidewalks will require some gravel in places as the depths vary to quite a degree.
- The water on Main Street will be directed into a basin and all pitched towards the river.
- Steepleview: The progress has been good on Steepleview and it should be paved by next Tuesday.
- Bennett Road: This project is almost complete; the berms need to be backed up and trees have been planted.
- Kibbe Lane: Mark will work with Ed Speight's contractor, Norm Turnberg as to preparations for the road before winter plowing starts.
- Traffic control account: \$6,200 remains in the account and we should have funding to last through the Main and North Road project.

- Public Safety Night Out: Lauren Comstock will attend the event sponsored by the Police Department and bring one of the dump trucks for people to see.

Chief Farnsworth: Jeff Farnsworth came before the board with a candidate for administrative work. He introduced Michele L Moorhouse who will work as part time dispatcher and handle administrative tasks as well. The interview process went well and the Chief recommends that she be hired for this position. Funding for the position will come partially from the 911 grant, some from pistol permit money, and she will work 24 hours per week.

The board will allow that \$5,000 from the pistol permit money be used towards this salary, but want assurance from our Town Accountant that this is okay to do so in coming years.

The Chief was asked to let Personnel know about the new hire and step and grade for their records.

A motion was made by Vinnie Villamaino to appoint Michele L Moorhouse to the Police Department as a part time dispatcher, for a probationary period of 60 days, seconded by Norman Charest. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Police Station: Jeff met with our insurance agent and did a walk-through of the station to ensure our property and equipment is properly covered. We received an endorsement from Berry Insurance showing the appropriate coverage.

Special Town Meeting: John suggested that Mike Callan, Town Counsel will draft language for the school unification warrant article and make it subject to a ballot question. In addition, it was noted that Moderator, Judge Howarth will allow literature to be available for residents, prior to their entering the meeting itself. Mary Ellen Glover stated that she believes that the Advisory Board should recuse themselves from making a recommendation on this article.

Estimated Tax Rate: The board is working with the Assessors, Town Accountant and Advisory to try to keep the tax rate down.

Academy Hall Painting Project: There are funds available for the start of this project from the CPA funds granted last year. There is approximately \$10-15k remaining.

Minutes September 26, 2016: Minutes were held for review by full board.

Tax Work Off Program: The board asked how many volunteers were allowed last year for the program and the assessors had recommended 5 positions to the selectmen. The number may be raised this year.

Historical Commission: Betty Howarth expressed an interest in serving on the commission. A motion was made by Norman Charest to appoint Elizabeth Howarth to the Historical Commission for a three year term, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Rock-A-Dundee Bus Pick-up: The board continues to work towards a solution to this problem and were reminded by Mary Ellen Glover, former SC member that transportation issues were to be resolved by the SC.

Community Development Strategy Required Element: The board reviewed information from PVPC regarding the elements needed to be incorporated into the grant proposal.

Sidewalk Fund: John mentioned that he recalled a fund, established as part of a site plan approval for Mr. Gruber from East Longmeadow for a development in town. John asked that Cliff Bombard be contacted to see if he has any information on the subject.

With no further business, a motion was made by Norman Charest to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 pm, seconded by John Flynn. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela B Courtney  
Administrative Assistant

/pbc