

Approved 4/24/17

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

January 23, 2017  
6:00 pm

625 Main Street  
Hampden MA

Board Members: John D. Flynn, Norman Charest, Vincent J. Villamaino  
The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by John Flynn.

Middle School Update: Mary Ellen Glover and Rita Vail came before the board to discuss recent activity with the middle school changes. At this point, 47 children have requested transfers to WMS. It was noted that in 20 years, very few transfers were done and now 47 are being considered. Questions arise as to who pays for the transportation of these students, what if the students want to go back to TWB in a month, 3 months, etc.?

The Concerned citizens want to hold a meeting to invite residents to hear the facts about what the school committee is doing and what may be coming in the future.

Mary Ellen noted that even though Hampden voted against merging with Wilbraham, the school committee is effectively working against Hampden's wishes. The school committee intends to do what it wants to do, without the consent of the town.

This group would like to develop a list of concerns to be brought forward by the BOS to Town Counsel to see how the maneuvers of the school committee might be stopped.

The group is considering seeking an injunction against the school committee which would require a Superior Court appearance.

They feel as though there is a power struggle going on and want to make sure we follow whatever course we need to in order to get some action. They stated that the Board of Selectmen is the voice of the people and the people voted overwhelmingly to not unify the middle schools and yet the school committee persists in undermining the wishes of the town. Norman stated that he has no problem going forward with this approach, but he needs to see what exactly the group will bring forward for the basis of their complaints.

The board has no problem with going forward at this.

Revolving Fund Amounts: Eva Wiseman, Tax Collector came before the board to discuss changes to be made to the revolving fund warrant articles that need to be changed for this year's Annual Town Meeting. The board explained that we don't have all of the details at this point but they will keep Eva in the know, once the board knows.

Police Budget Review: Chief Farnsworth and Admin. Asst., Kathy Zanetti came before the board to present the FY18 budget and answer any questions the board might have. The first question

asked by the board was if this budget includes a new officer. Jeff responded that it did not and that approach was taken as a result of an earlier conversation with the board.

One real issue for the department is the training required for Reserve Officers. There are requirements being added and added that increase the cost for the training for these reserves. The question came up as to whether there are officers in the department ready to step into a Sgt.'s position? Jeff said there will be a good amount of those will take the test when it becomes available.

At this point, the staffing remains as is until Sgt. Joy retires. When he retires, a new Sgt. will be appointed for his vacant position.

At this time, the Chief explained the plan for the Reserve Officer ready to come on board and go through the Academy training. There is an upcoming class that Jeff would like to have Reserve Officer, Jeff Beattie attend so he will have the training necessary to replace an officer who will move to the position of Sgt. when Sgt. Joy retires.

Vinnie participated in the interview process and thinks Beattie will make a terrific officer and be an asset to the department and a good replacement for the soon to be open position.

To that end, the Chief wants Beattie appointed now and he will still continue to be paid at the Reserve rate. The question of the funds available for this and the Chief stated the salary money is typically given back at the end of the fiscal year, so he does not anticipate any problems with funds.

There was then discussion of the debt incurred for the new Police Station and it was noted that there will be a 2-3 year overlap of the debt for the station and the Green Meadows debt. Also noted was that the career incentive does not drop off until the following fiscal year as Sgt. Joy will collect his money prior to his day of retirement.

John asked about the cost of electricity at the station and the board learned that the building is entirely electric and costs approximately \$3k/month. Jeff stated that it is new and improved and energy efficient. John mentioned that we are working on getting LED lights, for better and less expensive lighting and perhaps due to that the poles that the department could be added to our roster, as identified by the officers.

The officer on light duty will be going on maternity leave in about three weeks and some of the salary overage that is normally returned to the coffers will be used for increased costs in staffing. She will have twelve weeks of FMLA time after using whatever vacation/sick time that she has available.

The new clerical position is paying for itself, but John noted that it still shows an increase in his budget. Jeff can speak to that at the budget review with Advisory.

The board then discussed the purchase of a new cruiser in this budget cycle and the thought is to push the purchase off to the Fall Town Meeting.

The need for a new video camera system for the cruiser is really a server issue. The number Jeff got from the state contract is \$31k and the best way to handle this will be discussed with Advisory and the Capital Planning Committee.

The Chief was asked about some recent accident reports and what the outcome has been with our insurance provider. He will gather information and submit it to this office.

Police Station Financing: Jeff was asked about the money remaining in the Police Station Building Account and he responded that he is not sure what else needs to be completed before the building is finished in its entirety.

Town Message System: The Chief had a new company come in to do a presentation of what the RAVE system has to offer. There are some additional features that our current system does not have and the cost would be \$2k more for the first year, but after year one, the number remains what we currently pay for the system we have.

Public Records Officer: Jeff has scheduled training on the laws related to Public Records requests from the Attorney General's office and has invited other communities departments to the training. John will request that our town counsel get us in the queue for those in the town house who need training as well.

Regional Dispatch: Jeff noted that there is another meeting scheduled for discussion of regional dispatching. He will let the board know when the meeting will be.

Officer Appointment: Chief Farnsworth came before the board to recommend the appointment of Jeffrey Beattie, currently a Reserve Officer who has proven to be a good fit for our Police Department. He will have to go to the Academy which will be scheduled for, but he needs to be appointed before he can do so.

Based on interviews that Vinnie Villamaino was part of, Jeff Beattie rose to the top of those interviewed. With the pending retirement of Sgt. Bill Joy, the Chief needs to ensure a full roster will be in place. Officer Beattie will come in full time after the Academy and officers will test for the position of sergeant left vacant with Sgt. Joy's retirement.

A motion was made by Vinnie Villamaino to appoint Jeffrey Beattie to the position of full time police officer, effective February 10, 2017, contingent upon successful completion of Academy training, seconded by John Flynn. Norman Charest abstained from the vote. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

A letter of appointment will be completed for Officer Beattie which will allow him to enroll in the academy.

Fire Department Appointments: Chief Gorski came before the board to introduce three applicants for the position of Provisional Firefighters. They are Cameron Servantez, Chris Ayala and Daniel Berg. Mike stated that all have been vetted, have had drug tests, meet all qualifications and he recommends that the board appoint them.

Based on the recommendation made by Chief Gorski that all requirements are in place, and due diligence has been done, Norman Charest made a motion to approve the three applicants as provisional firefighters for a probationary period of one year, seconded by Vinnie Villamaino. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Fire Department: John talked of the grant application that the town will submit with the hope that funding may be available to fund Monday through Friday firehouse staff. Mike responded

that he spent many hours on the last grant application. John responded that he has been seeking help from other grant writers and will continue to seek their help.

There was then discussion about the two recent house fires in town and the Chief stated that one fire was caused by an Atari Play Station and the other has not yet been fully investigated.

Gerrish House: Will D'Angelo, town resident came before the board to plea for help in saving the home from the 1880's, known as the Gerrish House. The property and home have been sold and the house is set to be demolished. Will is passionate about the history that will be lost if the town allows it to be torn down, says that Hampden must retain its history; that the home is an architectural masterpiece, that he has seen diaries and historical documents describing life in Hampden at that time. Will has approached the property owner/developer with hopes of negotiating with him to save what remains. He has not received a response from the owner. Will has received help from a number of people in town and is now here before the board to ask that they make an attempt to contact the owner for some discussion. The board members assured Will that they will reach out to the owner, but that there is not much more that the board can do, as there are no restrictions about historic homes in the bylaws. Will has approached and left requests for Joyce to reconsider, but has not gotten a response.

Town Treasurer: Dick Patullo left documents for the board to sign to allow financing for the third and final year for the Fire Department Scott Air Packs, in the amount of \$43,000.

Property and Liability Insurance Projections: The projected cost for Property and Liability Insurance has gone from \$65.6k to \$69-70k for the coming budget cycle, which includes workman's comp. The Police and Fire McNamara policy will cost approximately \$30k.

LED Lighting Request: National Grid is working to retrofit street lights in the near future and the board sent a letter of interest to ensure the town is in the queue for the program.

Water Test: Note is made of a water sampling that must be done at the time of the tie in from the Town's well to the home at 593-595 Main Street.

Warrant review and closing date: The board will review in more depth at their next meeting.

Solar Agreement with Ameresco: The board waits while Ameresco gets their final approvals. This is the array to be located at the Transfer Station.

Building Issues: The condition of the Town House was discussed. There are issues with the heat, and questions about what to do with the space vacated by the Police Department. The board needs to find a funding source to have the building assessed. They asked members of Advisory if some funds might be used from Reserve Fund and the answer was yes. A formal request will have to be made by the Board.

Rock-A-Dundee status: Still no update from Beth Regulbuto regarding the bus issue for a resident on Rock-A-Dundee.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela B. Courtney  
Administrative Assistant

/pbc