

Approved 11/2/17

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

September 25, 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 D Flynn.

Guests: Cindi Connors, Eva Wiseman, Rita Vail, Pam Rogers, Phill Schneider, Jeff Daley (Consultant for Water/Sewer Group), Mary Ellen Glover, Jack Arute, Bob Moreau, Heather Zanetti, Doug Boyd, Carol Fitzgerald, Ted Zebert, Nancy Zebert, Cliff Bombard, Heather Turcotte and Tyler Witkop, Editor, Wilbraham Hampden Times

Financial Discussion: The board welcomed Carol Fitzgerald and Doug Boyd, members of the Advisory Board and Town Accountant, Cliff Bombard to the meeting to discuss our current financial status and what upcoming expenses we should expect as well as tax rate projections for 2018.

Cliff Bombard remarked that if we transferred no money into the tax rate, it would rise to \$20.35 (up 6.2%).

Free cash has been certified at \$516,203.

Dick Patullo submitted a warrant article for STM to pay off the dump truck and would need approval for a \$50k advance. This will be discussed further at a later date as Dick is on vacation and not in attendance.

\$300,000 will be due for the new Police Station.

Norm will check on the amount in the Assessor's Overlay Account to see if some of those funds might be available to help with costs at STM.

Stabilization was \$1,050k at time of Annual Town Meeting.

Phill Schneider was asked about the questions posed by the Deregionalization Study Committee; the first is to hear the report of the group and the second is to fund further research into how the SC District Agreement can be amended. They have an opinion from our Town Counsel, Mike Schneider and have sought an opinion from another source, Attorney Miranda. It is the opinion of Attorney Miranda's that a member of the School Committee may bring an amendment forward to the entire committee which would then be voted on. The study group would like to support an amendment to deregionalize the K-8 grades.

John asked whether the group will be ready for STM with a proposed amount they anticipate needing to do further research. Phill responded that the group only started meeting in August, but have been meeting every week to try and get things finalized.

They have looked into proposing changes to the transportation and the model used in East Longmeadow where you pay for busing if you use it, but residents can also opt out.

The report presentation from the study group at STM will be approximately 5-10 minutes. Phill believes the town should set aside \$50k for anticipated legal fees, and of course if the money isn't needed, it wouldn't be spent.

The group is also exploring using a facilitator to bring the two groups together and perhaps having a slide show presentation such as the one presented for the BOS. The facilitator estimates a cost of approximately \$8-10,000.

The board stated that we don't need a hard number until the Advisory Hearing scheduled for October 16th at 7:00 pm, which is two weeks prior to STM.

Fire department added 2% at ATM; that increases the tax rate 2% alone.

Now how do we treat the other departments?

If we wanted to settle at 4% increase, we could put 300k in from free cash.

Leaves \$216k for stabilization (warrant articles).

Or take \$200k out of free cash and put it towards the tax rate.

Every \$100k brings the tax rate down by 16 cents.

Advisory Hearing is 10/16; the board would like to meet with the group again on 10/10.

Town House Improvements: The board will seek funds from CPC to rehab the main floor of the town house. John will work on the application.

Chief Gorski: Fire Department EMT's. The EMT's have been responding to all medical calls, but need to have a medical officer who is also an Emergency Room Physician (to oversee the calls). They have talked with Dr. Beltran from Baystate Medical who would do the work at a cost of \$3k a year. The EMT's would not be transporting patients, but responding to calls and checking in with Dr. Beltran while doing so.

The Chief also asked about the Fire House addition, estimating that \$200k would be more than enough to cover the costs, and allow them to upgrade electrical service, and maybe take care of some asbestos if funds allow.

The board agreed to support the building addition at ATM, but not at Special Town Meeting.

That is not the time that such an expenditure would be presented.

The Chief asked if the tanker can be put out to bid to sell and the board agreed.

Transfer Station Issues: BOH Coordinator Jane Budynkiewicz will come in at a later date to discuss.

Resident Jack Arute: Jack Arute came before the board with concerns regarding the changes to the former Keddy property on Wilbraham Road that also abuts a home owned by his wife, Michelle Blain on Oak Knoll. He stated that he is voicing other resident's concerns as well as his own. He claims that misinformation has come from Town House staff; that the noise level due to tree cutting has exceeded the legal limits, that bylaws have been broken, and that it has been impossible to enjoy his property with 220 tons of equipment working within 25 feet from his property line. He claims that GreatHorse (new owners of the Keddy property) are pushing

for a Recreational Overlay District with the Planning Board, for their own means, that they have bullied their way into town, that they don't heed environmental laws, given the fines they had to pay as a result of disregarding the DEP regulations, and have a flagrant disregard for the residents of Hampden, citing Raymond Drive residents as a prime example. Arute referenced the development known as Sonny's Place in Somers CT which is a family entertainment facility with lots of attractions and suggests that this is in the works for the former Keddy property. Jack claims that the Planning Board can require an Environmental Impact Study to review the work being done at the Keddy property. Arute stated that he was born in CT, has raised horses and doesn't believe that GreatHorse has the right to put in a horse farm without going through a permitting process.

Jack asked what the impact will be to our water sources and claims that there is a negative impact to the terrain; that a natural slope has been disturbed and that a large amount of vegetation has been removed which will certainly have an impact on erosion. He went on to say that a lot of natural habitat has been disturbed as a result of the clearing that has been done. Ted Zebert, from the Conservation Commission was present at the meeting and said that he has no way of knowing if wetlands are impacted, or if they are being protected. Ted has not seen a forestry plan, but believes one has been filed with the forester for this region.

Arute asked why code enforcement has not been done. Why isn't a town department doing anything about the clearing that has taken place, why is there no dust suppression, no silt fences, and no containment?

Jack then asked about the planning board and their lack of response, and claims that the building inspector has ignored his requests as well.

Arute complained about the website, that it is out of date, that the town needs to be brought into the 21st century.

He would like a cease and desist ordered against the work on the former Keddy property until some answers are forthcoming.

Jack will be invited back to our meeting on October 10th.

Police Department: Chief Farnsworth came before the board to discuss a small amount of money (\$3-4k) that he needs for new software. Given the small amount, the board suggests that he pay for it out of his budget and if needed later, a transfer can always be made.

The Regional Dispatch proposal is being driven by an effort to save money. Jeff stated that the costs for the dispatchers will be paid for by the regional center. Vinnie and Norm have gone to some of the meetings. We will only go forward if the financial expectations are met by the State and it does not appear that the money from the state will be forthcoming as promised. There will be another regional meeting in 2 weeks and even if the state comes in with a total commitment for costs, the project will take 2 year's minimum to get established.

If we don't go forward with this proposal, the capital costs coming down the road could be as much as \$500-100k. The radio system currently used is on its last legs and when it goes down the replacement parts are bought on Ebay. The department is keeping it going as long as possible. When will the radio system have to be replaced? Jeff doesn't know the answer, but did state that police and fire have good radio people who help them with repairs as well as advise them about products, etc.

When asked by attendees about regional dispatch, Jeff responded that regionalization has been on the radar in one iteration or another for many years. The State keeps talking about it, and this has been the best proposal yet. Jeff said we are not bound to any agreement unless the financials are exactly what we need.

Mary Ellen Glover remarked that we should learn from the school regionalization and the State's promise to pay for transportation as an enticement. The first year the State came through, but subsequent payments have been reduced with every passing year.

Pamela Rogers asked if there is a moral responsibility to bring this question to the town's people.

Jeff Daley, Consultant for DIF: Jeff Daley, who is working with the Water and Sewer Committee through the application process came to the board with the proposed warrant article for Special Town meeting on October 30th. The DIF will allow the town to improve its infrastructure at a low cost, and after the DIF is established, any improvements in value will go to service the debt. Once the debt is paid off, those taxes will go to the general fund.

Jeff Daley just finished this process in East Longmeadow and Longmeadow.

After review of the warrant article, and subject to Town Counsel's approval, a motion was made by Vinnie Villamaino to approve the article, seconded by Norman Charest. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Deregionalization Study Group: The group presented the warrant articles for Special Town Meeting, as follows:

- School Deregionalization
To see if the town will vote to hear the report of the School Deregionalization Study Committee, or take any other action relative thereto.
- School Deregionalization
To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds a sum of money for legal and/or professional fees for the purpose of modifying the regional school agreement or resolving other outstanding regional school issues, or take any action relative thereto.

Draft STM Warrant: The board reviewed the upcoming warrant articles.

Minutes: February 23, March 27, May 15, May 30, July 10, July 24, August 21, August 29, September 5 and September 11: Minutes will be reviewed at a later date.

Water and Sewer Update: The group will meet on October 11th for a "dry run" for the Public Forum scheduled for Tuesday, October 17th at TWB.

Town Wide Survey Status: John is working with WNEU to design a survey which the school will orchestrate for the town.

Staff Meeting: John will meet with staff members on Wednesday, September 27 at noon to discuss ongoing issues.

Department Head Mtg. September 28th at 6:30

Correspondence:

- Planning Board Minutes
- Grant Opportunity

With no further business, a motion was made by Norman Charest to adjourn at 8:10 pm, seconded by Vinnie Villamaino. VOTE: All in favor and so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela B Courtney
Administrative Assistant

/pbc