

Hampden Advisory Board
625 Main Street, Hampden, MA 01036

MEETING MINUTES
February 14, 2005, 6:30 P.M.

Present: Beth de Sousa, Peter Nossal, Timm Marini, Doug Boyd

**Guests: Library representatives: Ellen Bump, Beth Burger, Kathy Hutchinson;
Town Accountant - Cliff Bombard**

Ellen Bump submitted revised version of the Library budget with their FY 06 requests.

1. **Salaries** - Salary figure includes additional hours as well as step increases.
 - a. Library Director, Ellen Bump – requesting 3 additional hours. Historically, she was budgeted for 30 hours but has been working 35 hours a week.
 - b. Library Assistant – was budgeted for 11 hours but the workload cannot be handled with only 11 hours. Requesting to increase it to 15 hours.

The increase in hours for the above 2 positions will bring the number of full-time employees to 3. (Wilbraham has 12.7 FT's in their library). For the circulation that our library provides, we get the bang for our buck. Over the past 2 years, the following staffing cuts were made: 5 hrs from the children's librarian, 4 hrs from the library asst., and 3 hours from the page.

2. **Professional Development** - No request for professional development was made because the requested increase in salary is substantial. Normally, the budget request for professional development is for covering time that the staff would be going to workshops when they were not scheduled to work. Instead, the staff will attend workshops during their scheduled hours, as long as there is enough coverage. Professional Development budget was originally \$1,500, but every year, it gets cut.
3. **Library materials** – This covers books, videos, CDs, magazines, and anything that we purchase to circulate. Most videos and DVDs are purchased by the Friends of the Library. Ninety percent (90%) of the total appropriated budget should be spent on library materials in order to be certified by the state and be qualified for state aid. Other requirements for being certified are: being open for a minimum no. of hours a week, being open for a minimum no. of hours during the evenings and Saturdays. These numbers vary depending on population size.

Staffing. The library has a staff of 6 and there are always 2 people present during open hours. Between 2:15pm and 5:30pm, 3 people are needed: 1 to monitor the children in the homework center, 1 to monitor the children in the main room, and 1 has to be at the circulation desk.

The Library Hours: The library has been open for 35 hours a week since prior to 1998. Due to the budget cuts, the staff has been spreading themselves thin, with Ellen taking up the slack, to make sure that the library is kept open for 35 hours.

The town people have not felt any impact from the budget cuts. Now that we don't have a stabilization fund, we are so short on the budget.

Discussion about possibilities, thinking out of the box:

- ❖ **Use of Volunteers:** Ellen said that there are certain things that they can use volunteers for. The training involved does not make it worthwhile to use volunteers but they use them where we can. Currently, they have 4 regular volunteers to help with the homework center and do manual labor, and 2 of them are not reliable. Could more volunteers be used in the library? To a certain point. However, in the homework center, a librarian is still needed, who knows the database, what materials are available, and where to direct the kids to get their homework done. In the children's room, a librarian is needed for parents who ask what their children could read, and what books are recommended. At the circulation desk, the librarian has to multitask between handling the circulation, cataloging, and doing interlibrary loans. Nobody is dispensable. Paid staff bring skills that volunteers normally do not. Also, the pool of people who have the time to volunteer has shrunk. And although the senior population in town is mushrooming and with them come a great pool of knowledge that is growing and will continue to grow, they often travel. Even if they could get volunteers who are reliable, they still need paid staff.
- ❖ Merge with Wilbraham Library. Wilbraham has plans of adding on to their library.
- ❖ Merge the Hampden and Wilbraham libraries with the Minnechaug Library to have one centralized library. This idea was brought up during one of the Minnechaug Regional High School construction planning meetings and was wholeheartedly shut down by both libraries' representatives. Hampden and Wilbraham are two very different communities. Wilbraham's finance and operating structure is very different from ours. Even if we combine, we still have to pay...maybe even more.

Parks and Rec – Chris McDonald

Budget increase requests include:

1. \$10K to bring the Memorial Park pool back to where it was 2 years ago. If Parks and Rec does not get the money for the pool, they don't know what to do with it. They're hoping that the subcommittee will bring forth something that they can improve upon. There is talk going around but nothing has come back to the Parks and Rec yet.
2. Director's step increase.

Police Department: Chief Doug Mellis, Kathy Zanetti

Chief Mellis discussed the items on his budget request.

1. **Salary increases** – reflects 2.5% increase for non-bargaining staff, applied to the reserve officers, part-time dispatchers, and secretary
2. **Cruiser maintenance** – asking for \$3K more. The 2002 Chevy Tahoe has over 75K miles and has no extended warranty. Last December, they paid \$1K for a water pump and transmission transfer.

Approved Feb. 28, 2004

The 2 new cruisers that were purchased last year have 100K miles warranty.

3. **General Expenses**- up \$1K
4. **New Vehicles** – so the department will have a fleet of vehicles that have warranty coverage.
 - a. Replace the 2002 Chevy Tahoe and replace it with a Ford Explorer. A 4WD vehicle is necessary to get to difficult-to-get-to areas in town.
 - b. Replace the 10-year-old Crown Victoria (administrative car) with a Ford Taurus. The Crown Victoria has 103K miles on it. Under the state contract, the Ford Taurus will cost approximately \$17,600.

The figure in the budget request for this item may still change (buying Ford vehicles may result in a lower number). Chief will check into actual numbers.

5. **New Equipment** – reflects lease for 8 computers. Capital improvement last year provided for \$25K for the computer systems. The department went with a lease but did not factor in the cost of the lease. They have been eating this cost through their operating budget.

6. **Training** – Increase to \$25K from \$19.5K. Wilbraham and Hampden police departments would like to do more training together for school safety, in case something happens in the schools. There are 10 full time officers, including the Chief, and 12-13 reserve officers. Currently, only 4 or 5 between both ranks, have gone to the training. The actual training will be conducted by the state police and will not cost anything. The \$ requested is to cover shifts while the officers are in training.

More and more training are being mandated, but no additional funds are provided.

7. **Grants** –

- a. Community Policing – \$28.5K ... Hampden is an earmarked community so we're assured of getting that money until next year. The department used the funds for programs at the schools, other activities in town, purchase of radio, and laptop computers on the cruisers. This money will be gone in 2 to 3 years.

- b. Reimbursable Traffic Grant from the Governor's Highway Safety - They dictate times of the year when they want ticket enforcement for speeders, drunk driving, etc. The department pays overtime for this and is then reimbursed by the Commonwealth. A handheld radar unit was also purchased with this grant, which reimbursed a total of \$8,200.

8. **Copy machine** – The department needs to replace their existing copier (a refurbished machine that they've had for 7 years and is useless at this point), with a combination copier and fax machine that will cost \$2,500.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth M. Perkins