

Hampden Advisory Committee
625 Main Street, Hampden, MA 01036

MEETING MINUTES

May 23, 2005, 6:30 P.M.

Present: Doug Boyd, Timm Marini, Kathy Pessolano, Carol Fitzgerald

Guest: Bill Olmstead (resident), Duane Mosier (Selectman)

The group voted Doug Boyd as Acting Chair for tonight's meeting. The committee needs to vote for a new chairman. Since Michael Crowley was not present, reorganization was deferred to next meeting.

Current balance on the reserve fund is \$19,177.21.

The committee received and voted to approve the following requests for Transfer of Funds from the Reserve Fund:

☞ Law & Claims (Selectmen).....	2,040.00
☞ Election (Town Clerk).....	521.83
☞ ADP Payroll Service (Treasurer)	2,800.00
☞ Highway (oil, telephone, electric expenses)....	825.00
☞ Town House Maintenance.....	596.50

Above transfer requests bring the reserve fund balance down to **\$12,393.88.**

A transfer request from the Police Department for General Expenses in the amount of \$3,500 was not approved, pending approval signatures from the selectmen.

Minutes from prior meetings of March 28, April 11, and April 18 were reviewed by the committee but could not approve any without a quorum of members present during the dates the meetings were held. Approvals will be deferred to next meeting.

Mail Received:

- Letter from Dana addressed to the Board of Selectmen, with copies to the Accountant and Advisory Committee, requesting approval for a better and clearer method of organizing all the accounts for which he is responsible, as they appear in the Town Budget.
 - Likewise, Duane asked that Employee Benefits accounts, which include several items, be broken down into more defined accounts so it is more easily defined and explained.
- Memo from the Board of Selectmen regarding an invitation to a law seminar by Dave Martel on Wednesday, June 8, 5-7pm at the Longmeadow Community House.

Approved: June 13, 2005

- None of the committee members can attend.
- Memo from the Board of Selectmen regarding an informational meeting to discuss procedures for layoffs and budget impact on all departments, to be held on Tuesday, May 24, 6:30pm in the Town House Auditorium.
- Municipal Advocate, Volume 21, No.4. This particular issue was dedicated to Proposition 2 ½ Overrides. Clerk to keep this in the files for reference.

Budget, Override Defeat Fallout Discussion:

- Duane reported that based on his calculations, the amount of unemployment payout for those who will be laid off due to the failed override will be around \$70K. Total amount appropriated was \$90K.
- Duane said amounts to be saved in insurance payments the town used to pay for those who will be laid off will be eaten up by buyouts/payouts on vacation, personal time, comp time, sick time, longevity, etc.
- Regarding streetlights, residents can individually call the power company and pay for streetlights in front of their home, if they wish.
- According to Kathy, two years ago, Hampden's school assessment was reduced by \$50K because of an increase in state aid. During the same year, because the first override failed to pass, the district reduced our assessment by an additional 50K out of the goodness of their hearts, bringing the total reduction to close to half a million dollars. Last year, in order to keep the Parks and Rec and Senior Center directors employed for 30 hours a week, they reduced our assessment by \$30K, reducing the budget by \$100K. This year, they have to endure another \$200K cut. Luckily, funding from the state was increased this year by just about the same amount as what will be cut.
- Duane said next year, the override amount will be close to 1 million dollars just to be able to level fund and restore what we cut this year. Doug said since it is obvious another override will be needed next year, we should plan early.
- According to Kathy, the overall consensus out there, per her conversations with town residents is people really didn't think the library and senior center and park & rec will be closed. Timm said what he heard was that people thought this was another farce, and we will come up with the money.
- Regarding private donations: If someone wants to donate \$ in order to open one of the departments that were closed, the money will be gladly accepted but it will go to the general fund and then we have to go to town meeting. If at the town meeting it is voted that the funds be appropriated into some other need, so it shall

be. We cannot accept private donations to keep some of the services open because we don't have the rest of the \$ to support it on an ongoing basis, i.e. funds for health insurance, workmen's comp, vacation time, liability insurance, utilities, etc. Duane said he and Jim are not particularly interested in dealing with another attempt to vote on this and going to town meeting this year.

- The Parks and Recreation programs will continue to be held by RAH (Recreational Association of Hampden), which is a volunteer group. Most kids wishing to play, however, are being asked to sign up in Wilbraham.
- Regarding the library, after June 30, Wilbraham and East Longmeadow library boards voted not to allow Hampden residents to take books out because they don't want the additional burden. Springfield will soon be voting whether or not to allow Hampden residents to take books out, and if do they do, if they will charge a fee. With regards to the established library accounts, the amounts will stay as they are as long as the elected boards are maintained.

Other Topics

- Doug suggested the committee take a closer look at the general bylaws defining the Advisory Committee's functions, particularly regarding zoning bylaws. Any changes to the established bylaws will have to be taken to the Town Meeting.
- Duane asked the committee for their support on moving forward to bond for the Hampden's portion of the Green Meadow School. He wanted to know what the committee's recommendations are in terms of dollar amount to be used for the bond and how many years to bond for. Various bonding options were discussed.
 - Duane will get a hold of Steve Nembirkov of the school district for updated figures and will have them available by next meeting.

Next meeting will be held on June 13, 6:30 pm at the Melville Room.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth M. Perkins

Approved: June 13, 2005