

**Hampden Advisory Committee**  
625 Main Street, Hampden, MA 01036

**MEETING MINUTES**

September 12, 2005, 6:30 P.M.

Present: Kathy Pessolano, Carol Fitzgerald, Michael Crowley

**Guest: John D. Flynn (Selectman), Tracy Sicbaldi (Town Treasurer), Richard Jones (Resident), Bill Olmstead (Resident)**

Kathy Pessolano introduced the boards' new clerk, Ann Murphy, to the rest of the members.

Minutes from the Meeting of August 8, 2005 were reviewed and approved unanimously.

**A Better Hampden Discussion:**

- Kathy Pessolano introduced Mr. Richard Jones who is one of several residents who have organized a committee for "A Better Hampden". He is here to give an overview as to what the purpose of the committee is.
- Dick said that the committees' purpose is to bring a budget sense to all of the towns people, so that when it comes to a Town Meeting, the people in the room will understand what the Selectmen are trying to do. He said that we are not going to try to prejudge whether an override would be necessary, although some people just think it's automatic. He is not convinced of that. He said we need to find a way to produce the most frugal budget we can, and then compare that to the revenue stream and see we we're at.
- Dick announced that there is going to be a forum on Wednesday, September 21, 2005, in the hopes of getting input from people as to what they want the town to look like. The members of the committee would then present the Advisory Board and the Board of Selectmen with the information that is gathered so that these boards would have a sense of what the towns people think the town should look like. When alls said and done, if the towns people participate in the process, and the process looks something like they have been asking for, then they sort of own it at that point. Then if an override is needed to support what they want, the boards can say to the people that this is what you wanted and this is what it's going to cost to have that happen.
- This committee consists of many residents, such as, Cliff Bombard, Rita Vail, Kathy Pessolano, Richard Jones, George Stone, Bill Olmstead, and a few others.

We have a great cross section of people who are willing to do what they can for this town.

- Kathy stated that the Advisory Board spends a lot of time in discussions trying to figure out exactly what the citizenry of Hampden wants. She is hopeful that this is going to take a lot of the guess work out of our budget process, by having this information available. She feels this committee is doing an invaluable service to the town.
- Michael Crowley asked what the committee will do if no one shows up for the forum on September 21. Dick said that he has been interviewed by 3 papers and he gave a notice to 2 smaller papers today, a letter was sent to Suzanne McLaughlin today, a letter was sent to both television stations today asking them to cover this forum. He said he didn't know what would happen if no one shows up, maybe just go along on our own basis as to what we think it should look like because we are not going to give it up.
- Kathy said hopefully that there is enough information circulated around that people who do take an interest in what's happened to the town will come out to the meeting.
- Carol Fitzgerald asked what the format of the forum was going to be. Dick said there is no format. It's going to be very open to people to say what they want to say. There are going to be sign up sheets for people who would like to work on a fund raising committee for capital and fund raising to support this committee.
- Bill Olmstead wanted to know if Richard Jones was going to preside over the forum. Dick said that he was. Bill thought that Dick should let people know that this isn't a grip session because that doesn't solve anything; it doesn't get the answers that you're looking for. Dick disagreed. He felt that if people come to the meeting that they should be able to speak their mind whether it is positive or negative.
- Dick Jones asked if there is going to be a Fall Town Meeting. Kathy said that one has been set for November 7, 2005 but that she didn't know if there is any reason yet to have one. We don't have any money, so unless there are some general issues, such as any warrant articles.
- John Flynn said that there are a couple of potential articles regarding CPA, a rezoning issue that was not done at the annual Town meeting because a public hearing had not been held. Also Mr. Flynn let the board know that the Department head hearings are going to happen in October this year instead of December, because we have a monetary crisis and we need to know what departments are thinking about for their budgets for FY2007.

- Michael wanted to know if the library, senior center, and parks&rec were going to be included in the meetings. John said that those departments that were cut were being sent letters to assess their budget needs. John said it will be good to see the figures from all departments.
- Michael wanted to know if we could apply for the Homeland Security grant to help defray the cost of a new fire truck. John said that every idea has to be on the table Michael also wanted to know if the departments were being asked only for a bare bones budget. John said that they were asking for a 3 tiered budget, same as they always do, one to replace what they were last year, a bare boned budget, and a preferred budget.
- Michael asked Dick Jones, regarding the meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup>, how he was going to lead the people at the meeting and keep it from becoming an angry situation. Dick said he was hoping that the people who come will have something civil to say and some ideas as to what we can do to make Hampden a better place to live. But people will have the right to disagree. We have never done this before, but we don't feel we can continue to go to Town Meeting like we have in the past, because the same thing will probably happen again. What we hope will happen is that the people who care about this, will understand what it's all about when Town Meeting comes, and that the override will meet the shortfall.

The Board tabled a vote on outstanding minutes from a few months ago because there were not enough members for a quorum.

Next meeting is scheduled for Monday September 26, 2005 at 6:30 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 7:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Murphy