

HAMPTON BUDGET COMMITTEE
MINUTES
EMERGENCY MEETING
May 28, 2007

Budget Committee Members Present

Mary-Louise Woolsey, Chairman
Michael Plouffe, Vice-Chairman
Rick Griffin, Selectman Representative
Gary Kubik, Precinct Representative
Victor DeMarco
Maury Friedman
Jack Lessard
Richard Nichols
Michael Pierce
Norman Silberdick

Absent

Russ Bernstein
Pat Collins
Dick Hansen
Eileen Latimer

Chairman Woolsey called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Chairman Woolsey introduced the members of the Committee.

Moved by Mr. Plouffe, seconded by Mr. Pierce, to allow the Chairman to petition Superior Court on behalf of the Municipal Budget Committee for injunctive relief from the Board of Selectmen actions under RSA32:16II.

Chairman Woolsey presented an explanation for this motion. She said that the motion made by the Board of Selectmen on May 21st regarding department heads coming before the Budget Committee had a section in it that is unacceptable. Ginny Russell moved, seconded by William Lally, to allow the Town Manager and Finance Director to attend the Budget Committee meeting, but not the department heads. The motion passed 4 to 1. Mr. Griffin inquired about the RSA's at this time and this is the key question. Chairman Woolsey said that it was her opinion that if the Committee ignored the context of the Selectmen's motion and met with the Town Manager and Finance Director, the public perception and Board of Selectmen perception would be that the Committee has accepted the terms of the entire motion. The Committee cannot do this. Chairman Woolsey said the Committee is here to protect the public interest and has no right to surrender prerogatives belonging to the Committee. She said she felt the time had come to seek relief from the court and the Board of Selectmen needs to understand the limits of their authority.

Chairman Woolsey discussed a letter presented at this meeting from three members of the Board of Selectmen. Chairman Woolsey asked for comments from the Committee members.

Mr. Silberdick said he would prefer to see a meeting between the Committee and the Board of Selectmen to resolve this issue without going to court.

Mr. Griffin said there was no need for any of this. The Board of Selectmen would like to go forward. He said he did believe the public wants any kind of a lawsuit. The Committee and the Board should simply go forward from here.

Mr. Nichols said he believes the Board of Selectmen's policy to restrict department heads from Budget Committee meeting is illegal. Mr. Nichols said written communication from the Board of Selectmen saying that they have rescinded this policy would suffice.

Mr. Griffin said that departments are going to be able to meet with the Committee.

Mr. Pierce said he felt the matter should be taken to court.

Mr. Friedman said he supported Mr. Griffin's statement and was willing to move forward.

Mr. Plouffe stated that the Committee needs the department heads to come before them in order to make reasonable decisions on the budget. Mr. Plouffe said that until he sees in writing that the Board of Selectmen have rescinded their decision regarding department heads, he would support going to court.

Mr. DeMarco said he felt this issue should end now, but that he would agree that there should be a rescinding of the Board of Selectmen's vote. He said he would like to postpone this motion to the June 19th meeting and if the Committee is not satisfied at that time, action can be reconsidered.

Mr. Kubik said he agreed with Mr. Griffin that the issue is resolved and everyone should go forward. Mr. Lessard said he also agreed.

Moved by Mr. Plouffe, seconded by Mr. DeMarco, to table the previous motion until the June 19th meeting.

Vote: 10 yes, 0 no. Motion passed unanimously.

Moved by Mr. Nichols, seconded by Mr. Pierce, that the Committee ask the Board of Selectmen to agree to comply with RSA32:16II and confirm that they have rescinded the policy of not allowing department heads to attend Budget Committee meetings.

Vote: 10 yes, 0 no. Motion passed unanimously.

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Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Mr. Lessard **moved**, seconded by Mr. Kubik, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Rice
Secretary

Mary-Louise Woolsey, Chairman