

HAMPTON BUDGET COMMITTEE
MINUTES
October 15, 2013

Budget Committee Members Present

Eileen Latimer, Chairman
Richard Reniere, Vice-Chairman
Mary-Louise Woolsey, Selectman Representative
Ginny Bridle, School Board Representative
Robert Ladd, Hampton Beach Village District Representative
Pat Collins
Richard Desrosiers
Joe Grzybowski
Timothy Citizen Jones
Sunny Kravitz
Brian Lapham
Mark McFarlin
Sandra Nickerson

Excused

Stephen LaBranche

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Members of the Committee provided self-introductions

Chairman Latimer said this was the last meeting before actual work begins on the budget.

Chairman Latimer introduced Ed Tinker, Town Assessor. Mr. Tinker said values are based on an April 1st date. What is not completed is based on a percentage of what is complete. The MS1 is sent to the State on September 1st showing gross taxable value. Elderly exemptions must be subtracted from the gross value. Veterans credits are not an exemption. Last year there was an increase of about 2/10 of 1%. This year there is a lot of development in process so there should be an increase to a full 1% for 2014.

Mr. Tinker discussed the Land Use Change Tax which has contributed significantly this year. Taxes are also derived from public right of ways and cell towers. Mr. Tinker said they are always looking for new value and always verifying data.

Mr. Kravitz asked how values break out between commercial and residential. Mr. Tinker said it is approximately 13% commercial and 82% residential. Ms. Woolsey noted that there were other means of income such as permit fees.

Mr. Tinker said the Planning Board is going to construct a warrant article to rezone the area between A Block and F Street. If this passes, building will accelerate in this area at the beach.

Chairman Latimer introduced Dave Wood who has expressed interest in filling the seat on the Committee vacated by Vic DeMarco. Mr. Wood said he has lived in Hampton for 14 years. He worked for a major utility for 30 years and is now retired and currently serves on the Coastal Commission studying sea rise issues. Mr. Wood said his approach would be to balance spending and savings. It is important to save as much money as possible, but it is also important to spend for what must be done.

Chairman Latimer thanked Mr. Wood. This position has been posted until October 28th, so a selection will be made at the October 29th meeting.

Chairman Latimer presented a Town of Hampton Analysis of Insurance Refunds prepared by Mike Schwotzer. This analysis showed an analysis of where the refunds go – Town, Library, Employees and Retirees. Chairman Latimer said Mike Schwotzer informed her that the Town portion of the refund should go to reduce the tax rate on the MS4. Ms. Woolsey said the BOS have not made a decision on that. Chairman Latimer said Attorney Gearreald informed her that the State Supreme Court has ruled it must be returned to the taxpayers.

Chairman Latimer then presented an Analysis of the highlights of the Revenues for 2013. Revenues total approximately \$1,063,000. Ms. Woolsey said the money from the insurance refund will stay in the unreserved fund until the BOS designate what amount will go to reduce the tax rate. Chairman Latimer took exception with this position saying that all of this money needs to go back to the taxpayers.

Mr. McFarlin said all insurance refund money should go back to the taxpayers. Mr. Reniere said members of the Committee should express their opinions to the BOS.

Ms. Nickerson said during her 18 years on the School Board all unused money was sent back to the taxpayers and this should be the same. Mr. Jones said Article 38 in the NH Constitution covers this. Frugality and moderation needs to take place. When you take too much money, it should go back.

Mr. Desrosiers gave a presentation on utilities and discussed the forecast for 2014. He was requested to do this by the BOS and to present it to the Budget Committee. He said there will be approximately a 10% increase in natural gas utilities for 2014. Mr. Desrosiers said most of the generators that provide electricity to New England are powered by natural gas so gas pricing will dictate electricity pricing.

Chairman Latimer said the budget recommendations from the BOS are now done and they have come up with a final figure. Chairman Latimer asked how the BOS figured in utilities without having met with Mr. Desrosiers prior to finalizing their recommendations. Ms. Woolsey said she didn't know. Ms. Woolsey said the BOS provides the Budget Committee with recommendations and the Budget Committee makes the budget. Chairman Latimer asked that the figure used for utilities in the BOS recommendation be provided to the Committee at the next meeting.

Board of Selectman Report

Ms. Woolsey discussed other fees that come to the Town. There are Motor Vehicle fees. The Town Clerk has been training for other permits that will bring in fees. The Town Clerk has made a great effort towards expanding revenue out of the Town Clerk's office. Ms. Woolsey said one-fourth of franchise fees is set to go into the cable revolving fund.

Ms. Woolsey said we are now looking at insurance refunds for 2010, 2011 and 2012. The problem actually goes back to 2003 so it may be possible to obtain refunds for those prior years.

Chairman Latimer said there is an invitation from Ms. Woolsey (attached) for the Committee to go as a group to tour the Department of Public Works. It was suggested the tour take place on Saturday, October 26th, at 10:00 a.m. Ms. Nickerson said she had a concern that anybody who visits the DPW must be cognizant of safety because there could be great liability for the Town. Mr. Collins said he was not sure if it was appropriate for the Committee to go on this tour. This tour was tabled.

SAU 90 Report

Ms. Bridle said SAU 90 is returning to the taxpayers the money they received in the LGC refund. Ms. Bridle said there will be a Safety Forum on October 17th at 6:30 p.m. at Hampton Academy and it will be repeated on October 18th at 8:30 a.m. at Marston. Ms. Bridle said the School Board is starting the budget process on November 1st.

Hampton Beach Village District Report

Mr. Ladd said the beach had a very successful year. Attendance at the beach was much higher than in the past. The Sea Spray business is great and has created a spillover to other businesses.

Parking issues are being looked at. People who work at the beach are paying big percentages of their pay for parking. There is also a spillover of parking on some of the

side streets and residents can't find parking. There is a possibility that the District may ask the Planning Board to create resident parking. As it is now, there are no restrictions.

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Mr. Lapham, seconded by Mr. Collins, to approve the Minutes of September 17, 2013 as amended.

Vote: 11 yes, 0 no, 2 abstentions (Nickerson, Woolsey). Motion passed.

Mr. Jones requested that his full name as it appeared on the ballot (Timothy Citizen Jones) be noted under Members Present in the Minutes. Chairman Latimer asked if that is his legal name. Mr. Jones replied that it is.

Chairman Latimer handed out a schedule of meetings for the budget process.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, October 29, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at which time General Government Part 1 will be addressed.

Adjournment

Moved by Mr. Jones, seconded by Mr. Collins, to adjourn the meeting at 9:09 p.m.

Vote: 13 yes, 0 no. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Rice
Secretary