

**HAMPTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM
March 22, 2004 7:00 PM**

PRESENT: Virginia Bridle, William Sullivan, James Workman
Cliff Pratt, Rick Griffin
James Barrington, Town Manager
Karen Anderson, Administrative Assistant

I. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Officer Laura Stoessel led the audience in the flag salute.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Pratt thanked all those that called him this week with their advice and suggestions on how to best handle the budgetary matters. Mr. Workman concurred, saying that he received many good suggestions.

Mr. Workman told the Board that he also received an anonymous piece of correspondence that was not constructive at all. And while he would not discuss the content of the letter, he wanted the sender to understand that he is the elected official and any material sent to him should be to him alone and not to any of the members of his family. Mr. Workman said that it has been his policy and he will continue to ignore all anonymous letters and calls. He stated that he is a responsible official and will not respect anyone that is so cowardly to state their name. No mail without a verifiable address will be delivered to his home.

Mr. Griffin also thanked the people that called him with input and advice and he will take all of their suggestions into consideration. Mr. Sullivan agreed, noting that he to received calls this week about the budget.

Drama Events

Mrs. Bridle announced that this is "Drama Weekend" in Hampton, with performances of Alice in Wonderland at the Hampton Academy Junior High and a WHS musical at the High School. All performances start at 7:00 PM on both Friday and Saturday.

III. OLD BUSINESS

Town Manager's Report

News Article Concerns

Mr. Barrington told the Board that he received a few phone calls about the article in Tuesday's *Hampton Union* relative to the fire station and the Chief's alleged comments. When Chief Lipe discussed the inaccuracies in the article with the reporter, she acknowledged that the article had been edited from what she had written to what appeared in print. Mr. Barrington said that the Chief recognizes that the \$60,000 appropriation proposed in Article 11 of this year's Town Warrant was defeated. Mr. Barrington explained that what that money would have funded was the development of floor plans and elevations of proposed buildings on specific sites that would have been tested for soils stability and traffic flow patterns as well. The contract that is currently in place is from 2003 funds. It's purpose is preliminary to the contract that would have been funded by Article 11. This contract is funding space needs analysis and a review of the relative value of building a new headquarters station at the beach versus building a new substation at the beach and moving the headquarters uptown with an addition and remodeling of the current Station 2. Mr. Barrington added that on Friday morning, he received a note from the reporter, Lara Bricker apologizing for the article. She told me that the story she had turned in correctly pointed out that the current architectural contract was from the 2003 budget, but that someone at the paper at "edited" it to say "current-year" budget. The reporter also assured him that the editor, Deb McDermott was speaking to the copy editors to prevent such changes in the future. A "correction" was printed next to the Hampton Cinema ad in the bottom left corner of page A3.

Police Facility

Mr. Barrington reported that the construction of the police station continues to make progress, but there were a few set-backs due to the weather. Most notably, the brick work that was done last week will have to be removed and redone because the mortar was allowed to freeze overnight when the temperatures dropped with the snow. Freezing the mortar before it had time to properly cure results in brittle mortar that would have a high likelihood of structural failure. When Dick Violette, our Clerk of the Works, pointed it out and required a sample for testing, the mason opted to remove the day's work and replace it when he found it to be difficult/impossible to take the sample due to crumbling mortar.

Commendation

Mr. Barrington reported that Finance Director Dawna Duhamel has been working in cooperation with Town Treasurer Ellen Lavin to automate the check reconciliation process. This will result in a significant savings of time for the Treasurer in doing the reconciliation. Mrs. Duhamel turned to our current vendor for a software solution to the problem and was told that a new software "patch" would have to be written to provide the capability. As it turned out, Paul Paquette, our Network Administrator, discovered that this "patch" consisted of entering an "E" in a field on the program to "enable" the check reconciliation function. This discovery, along with his persistent efforts that led to contacts with the President of the software company, saved the Town \$700 in "programming" expense.

Hampton Beach Commission

The Hampton Beach Commission will be meeting Thursday, March 26th 6:00 PM at the Ashworth Hotel for the Summary Meeting. Following the recommendations from the Commission, the summary will be presented to the Board of Selectmen.

Beach Fire Station

Mr. Pratt asked what the agreement was that the Town has with the Precinct in regard to the beach fire station. Mr. Barrington said that when the Board of Selectmen agreed to take over the fire service from the Precinct, the Precinct leased the station building to the Town for five years, with some conditions for extensions. The agreement was that the Board of Selectmen would put a warrant article forward for a new station on the 2005 warrant. The Board has an obligation within that parameter to put something forward in 2005 or work something out with the Precinct Commissioners.

Default Budget

Mr. Barrington said that following the voting of the default budget and the defeat of the private detail special revenue fund he met with the department heads and asked them to present proposals that were consistent with the default budget and then to propose additional cuts, deferrals and accommodations that would provide some level of funding for the private details.

Mr. Barrington said that in order to meet the default budget, the recommendations for reductions he is suggesting include elimination of the four new police officer positions reduces the budget by over \$89,000 when backing out salaries and start-up costs of the new positions. In addition he recommends a reduction of \$6,750 from special officer training as a result of only 10 new replacement specials passing the selection process, rather than the full staffing level of 15 that was budgeted. The reduction in the projected Selectmen's stipend to the prior level reduces the budget by \$8,500. A reduction of \$36,000 in retirement liabilities can be made based on more current information than was available during the budget process. Mr. Barrington explained that when an employee indicates that they will be retiring during the upcoming year, their payout of unused sick and vacation time is budgeted at 100%, if they are eligible to retire but not sure if they will, their costs are budgeted at 50%. During this process to meet the default budget, the department heads spoke with the employees eligible to retire for more definitive answers and that account has been adjusted accordingly. Mr. Barrington told the Board that reductions totaling almost \$97,000 were made in various payroll benefit expenses (e.g. workers' comp, retirement, FICA, Medicare, life & health insurance, etc.) that resulted from reductions in positions and reducing estimates based on more current information than what was available during the budget preparation process. The health agencies were funded at 2003 levels resulting in a \$6,750 reduction.

General fund highway resurfacing was reduced by \$100,000, leaving the \$350,000 approved from the Highway Capital Improvement Fund as the total available for road projects. Mr. Barrington told the Board that there were two significant drainage projects planned and one of two, Hobbs Road to Mace Road at Five Corners, was removed, reducing the budget by \$59,500. The \$3,500 that had been added to the budget for the Christmas parade was removed since it was funded by Article 13. Tax Anticipation Note interest was reduced by \$6,000. The legal accounts for the Planning Board and Zoning Board were reduced by a total of \$3,000 and \$6,000 was removed from police station building maintenance. Mr. Barrington stated that these recommendations result in a balanced default budget.

The Town Manager told the Board that without the off setting revenues to fund the private details, this will be the first year that the costs of providing private details are being borne by the taxpayers. The actual expenditures for private details since the inception of the special revenue fund were \$150,000 the first year, \$180,000 the second year and \$230,000 the last year. The union officers do not feel that there will be as many details as there was last year, based on the amount of construction anticipated. Mr. Barrington said that one of his goals in identifying funds that can be used to fund private details was to recognize that without offsetting revenues to reduce the tax rate, the level of private details have to be curtailed from prior years with priorities being assigned to determine the highest priority details that must be funded for public safety. SEA leadership has indicated that they were comfortable with qualified flaggers from among their own membership handling internal details. School details will need to be examined for priority to determine which can be adequately covered by school personnel and parents volunteering as chaperones. Mr. Barrington said that we will be working with the police department to create some priorities that may reduce the number of private details that we will have to fund.

Consequently, in reviewing the suggestions offered by the various departments he has identified an additional \$170,000, almost 75% of the 2003 actual funding level, as reductions in services that can be used to fund private details. These savings are largely a result of deferred equipment purchases, deferred maintenance, deferred GASB 34 implementation costs, and reductions in overtime and costs associated with non-mandatory training. Mr. Barrington stressed that this proposal does not include elimination or reduction of the "spring cleanup" and he is making that recommendation after careful consideration of various factors. He said that in the past, the town has found that reductions in our cleanup efforts have resulted in accumulations of trash and unsightly "junk" being left at curbside for weeks. Since the voters two years ago approved a warrant article specifically funding the spring cleanup, and that was included in the 2003 budget, he believes that this reduction would be counter-productive to the Board's goal of maintaining a beautiful community that will be attractive to tourists and guests that drive our local economy.

This proposal does include closing the transfer station on Sundays and limiting our summer schedule to an 8-hour day. Both of these proposals reduce public works overtime. By contract, the work on Sunday at the transfer station is paid at time-and-one-half. The extra hour during weekdays during the summer also creates overtime situations. These two changes make almost \$30,000 available for police private details.

Mr. Barrington told the Board that these adjustments total \$170,000, which will likely be sufficient to fund the high priority private details this year. There are other projected expenditures that he believes should not be reduced except as a last resort (such as some vehicle purchases, maintenance, etc.). However, some of these may be deferred to a time near the end of the year when there is a better picture of how successful the town has been at managing the private details. If the private detail needs exceed the current projections, he would then recommend elimination of those "contingency" items to provide the funding necessary. Additionally, the current budget uncertainty has led the police department to temporarily reduce its operation to minimum staffing levels. If continued budgetary pressures necessitate, then police management will be forced to evaluate the relative risks of reducing staffing levels to provide funds for high impact private details.

Mr. Barrington said that he recommends that the Board adopt these adjustments to meet the default budget and the needs for high priority private details for 2004.

Mr. Sullivan asked if the Board of Selectmen has had any official response to the request for the school to assist in the funding of the School Resource Officers. Mr. Barrington told the Board that Tuesday morning, following the Board's last meeting, he had a visit from Superintendent Gaylord. He reported that the Hampton School Board feels the School Resource Officer at the Junior High is very important and they want to keep the officer in place. Mr. Gaylord said that he has the commitment from the Hampton School Board that they will fund half of the position, and he will be requesting the same amount from the WHS School Board as well. Mr. Workman asked if historically, Hampton has paid all of the cost of the Winnacunnet School Resource Officer. Mr. Barrington said that Hampton has paid 100% based on the fact that the high school is in Hampton. He said that it is feasible that the other towns could assist with that cost this year.

Mr. Pratt said that he would like to see the Winnacunnet School Resource Officer be fully funded by the high school, even though it is on Hampton's beat, it benefits four towns. He added that he would be willing to say that if the high school does not fully fund it, we withdraw the SRO. Mr. Pratt said that he would like to see the Junior High SRO funded 50% by the school. In regard to the Transfer Station being closed on Sunday, he stated that he would prefer to see it open 4 hours on Saturday and 4 hours on Sunday. Mr. Pratt said that it looks like DPW is being asked to sacrifice overtime in order to provide police over time. Mr. Barrington said that he discussed this with the SEA leadership and they did not have a problem with closing the Transfer Station on Sunday's and noted that overtime within the SEA contract is largely written as voluntary, unless it is a mandatory emergency situation. Mr. Barrington said that like most departments, there are some employees who work as much overtime as they can while others avoid any overtime. Mr. Sullivan said that he spoke with Public Works employees who said that the 8 hour days during the summer at the Transfer Station would not be a problem. Mr. Pratt said that he does not see much input from the Fire department. Mr. Barrington said that the reduction in non-mandatory training is the major contribution from the fire department. Mr. Barrington said that each of the unions offered sacrifices in their own way. Mr. Sullivan said that there are a lot of shifts that will be covered with minimum manning at the police department, so if a resident calls for a routine report or other non-emergency matter, it may take longer for the response.

Mr. Workman said that Fire and Recreation Departments appear to be absent from the reduction recommendations. Mr. Workman agreed that the 4 hours each day on the weekend at Transfer Station would be better than closing all day on Sunday's. He added that it may not be cost effective to cut the highway resurfacing because that is a cost that will increase year to year.

Mrs. Bridle said that the Recreation Department could take half of the Program Coordinator's salary from the Recreation Special Revenue Fund as that position runs programs. Mrs. Bridle said that she has a real concern with removing that additional \$5,000 from Sea Care in these difficult times. She noted that the agency assists many Hampton residents with medical needs.

Mr. Griffin asked if the elimination of the four police officers will affect the overtime in the future. Mr. Barrington said that it is hard to determine that at this point, but he does not anticipate an impact. Mr. Griffin said that he agrees with maintaining the funding for Sea Care and disagrees with the closing of the transfer station on the weekends. He noted that during the summer many people are only in town a limited time on the weekends and need to use the Transfer Station. Mr. Barrington said that they looked at the weekend hours because of the overtime involved. Closing on a week day would not result in the same amount of savings. Mr. Griffin asked if people can be hired with the understanding that they work weekends. Mr. Barrington said that full-time employees are under a contract, although there are seasonal workers that will work on weekends. Mr. Sullivan said that if the Transfer Station is only to be open half-days; the afternoon hours would be the best option. The Board agreed that afternoons were more desirable.

Mr. Pratt said that he is trying to understand what the voters voted. He said that the vote indicates that they don't want to fund private details. Now, the Board is telling the voters they are going to fund the details by cutting other services. He said that he is torn by this decision because the Board sits to serve the people, but also realizes there is a safety concern with not funding the details.

Mr. Sullivan asked what would happen if people had voted not to approve the emergency medical services special revenue fund, would the Board not fund the ambulance? Mr. Pratt said that he agrees with the concerns, but said that it seems that a message was sent to the Board and he has a hard time balancing that. Mr. Sullivan said that the Board can speculate why this article did not pass, he feels that the large voter turnout and the passage of the WHS addition did not go well for the town. He added that the revaluation of properties last Fall and the salaries that were posted in the town report in some cases were in the minds of the voters. Mr. Sullivan said that there were a lot of reasons this did not pass, adding that the information that was distributed a day or two before the election did not help either. Mr. Sullivan said it is reckless to say that the town is not going to do any private details. Mr. Barrington said that this year we can look at the details and decide which are necessary as public safety issues to be staffed with police officers. Mr. Barrington said that the town gets a higher level of safety with a police officer at a detail than with a flagger..

Mr. Barrington said that if the Board is satisfied with what he has presented, with the noted changes, the MS 2 can be put together so that it can be sent to DRA by the April 1st deadline. Mr. Barrington confirmed that the changes include keeping the Transfer Station open half-days on weekends, no more than 8-hour days during the summer, retaining the \$5,000 increase to Sea Care and having the school fund the Junior High School Resource Officer 50% and the high school officer 100%. Mrs. Bridle said that the funds that have been spent out of the Special Revenue Fund for details to this point have to be reimbursed from the General Fund. Mr. Barrington said that just over \$19,000 has been returned to the Special Revenue Fund. Mr. Barrington explained that the request to the School Boards has been worded for the SRO funds to be a grant to the town, so that those funds can be deposited to the general fund. Mr. Griffin asked about the \$6,000 recommended to be removed from police station maintenance. Mr. Barrington said that expense had been for a contractual cleaning service for the new building, and Chief Wrenn has determined that the cleaning will be done in the same manner that it is now.

Mr. Sullivan asked if the Board would like the Town Manager to look into what it will take to change the town's budget year to a fiscal year of July 1 to June 30. He said that it would put an entire winter in the budget and allow the budget to be approved prior to the beginning of the fiscal year. Mr. Sullivan said that he is not sure what is involved in the change, but would like it looked into. The Board agreed that Mr. Barrington should research the matter.

Mr. Barrington said that the MS 2 form will be presented next week for the Board's signature.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

1. Grant Acceptances – Emergency Performance Grant (Fire), Police Wellness Grant, Highway Safety Grant (Police) – Public Hearings Needed

Mr. Workman MOTIONED that the Board hold public hearings on the acceptance of the above named grants on April 5, 2004.

Mr. Pratt SECONDED

VOTE: UNANIMOUS FOR

Mrs. Bridle commended Police Captain Tim Crofts for his success as a grant writer. She suggested that Captain Crofts give some tips to other departments that are for grants. Mr. Sullivan noted that historically there have been more grants available for law enforcement than for other areas.

2. Appointment of Health Officer / Deputy Health Officer

Mr. Barrington explained that this is the annual renewal of the Building Inspector and Assistant Building Inspector required by the State for the Health Officer positions.

Mr. Pratt MOTIONED that Kevin Schultz be appointed as Health Officer and Milan Marsden be appointed as Deputy Health Officer.

Mrs. Bridle SECONDED

VOTE: UNANIMOUS FOR

3. Acceptance of Easements – Playhouse Circle – RSA 41:14-a process

Mr. Pratt MOTIONED that the Board schedule the required public hearings to accept easements on Playhouse Circle for April 5th, April 19th with the vote scheduled for May 3rd.

Mr. Workman SECONDED

VOTE: UNANIMOUS FOR

Concession Stands

Mrs. Bridle noted that Mrs. Martin wrote a very nice summary of the leasing of the concession stands last year in the town report. She asked if that was being planned again this year. Mr. Barrington said that it turned out to be a good arrangement, with little risk to the town and Mrs. Martin is looking to do that again.

Budget Committee

Mr. Sullivan said told the Board that the Budget Committee has requested that the Board and the Town Manager attend their meeting of April 20th. Mr. Barrington said that he will attend. Mr. Sullivan told the Board that the Budget Committee has requested the Department Heads attend as well which will be up to the Town Manager to determine.

One-Way Tolls

Mr. Sullivan noted that there has been a lot of discussion lately about the one-way tolls being reinstated on Route 95. There will be a hearing on April 7th in Hampton Falls and April 8 in Portsmouth.. Mr. Sullivan said he does not know why the State does not wait until the EZ Pass program comes on line and then determine if the one-way toll is necessary.

Mr. Pratt MOTIONED that the Board of Selectmen write a letter stating that they are not in favor of the one- way toll in Hampton.

Mrs. Bridle SECONDED

VOTE: UNANIMOUS FOR

The Town Manager will write a letter informing the State of the Board’s position.

IV. MINUTES

The minutes of March 15, 2004 were accepted as written.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

1. MS 4
2. Parade Permit – Cystic Fibrosis Race 8/7/04
3. Parade Permit – Reach the Beach Relay 9/17/04
4. Deed, Real Estate Transfer Declaration, Termination of Lease – 173 Kings Highway
5. Coin Operated Amusement Permits

Mr. Workman MOTIONED that the Board of Selectmen approve the consent agenda.

Mrs. Bridle SECONDED

VOTE: UNANIMOUS FOR

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Workman MOTIONED that the meeting be adjourned. (8:08 PM)

Mr. Pratt SECONDED

VOTE: UNANIMOUS FOR

Chairman

