

**HAMPTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM
July 11, 2005 8:00 PM**

PRESENT: James Workman, Chairman, Cliff Pratt, Vice Chairman
Rick Griffin, Virginia Bridle-Russell
James Barrington, Town Manager
Karen Anderson, Administrative Assistant

I. SALUTE TO THE FLAG - Mr. Joe Hurley led the audience in the flag salute.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mrs. Bridle-Russell thanked everyone involved for their efforts in rescuing the victims of the recent tragedy at the ocean on July 4th.

III. APPOINTMENTS

1. Mr. Robert Estey, Assessor, Re: Elderly Exemptions

Mr. Pratt asked if the applicant qualifies for the exemption and if it would have been granted if it had been filed in a timely manner and if the extenuating circumstances should be considered. Mr. Estey explained that he is only allowed by statute to grant the exemption if it is filed in a timely manner. The Board of Selectmen has the ability to grant some relief through the abatement process for filings that are late, due to various reasons. He explained that a few elderly people have been turned away because of late filings. Mr. Estey said that efforts were made to inform as many people as possible of the deadline date, including a notation on the back of the tax bill. Mr. Estey said that this particular case does have some circumstances to consider, however there was still time for the application to be filed. Mr. Estey said that he has to base his decision on statutes and thus is the "machine" whereas the Board of Selectmen can be the "heart". He did caution the Board that granting an exemption to the filing date can open that up for many others. Mr. Griffin asked if this is a permanent application that once approved does not have to be renewed each year. Mr. Estey said that the elderly exemption has financial qualifications that can change each year; if their assets and/or income have not changed than they will still qualify.

Mr. Estey explained that prior to this year people were supposed to file prior to April 15th but if they didn't the exemption was handled as an abatement. The State legislation changed this year to require the deadline of April 15th. Mr. Estey said other applicants for the elderly exemption have been turned away since the deadline has passed but applications for veterans credits are being accepted and held for next year since the qualification is not based on income or assets. Mr. Estey said that a resident has suggested that the elderly receive a letter about the exemption when they first qualify, but he explained that he does not have age information on taxpayers. Mr. Griffin commended Mr. Estey on the way he deals with the people fairly.

Mr. Pratt MOTIONED that the exemption be denied.

Mr. Griffin SECONDED

VOTE: UNANIMOUS FOR

2. Mr. Joe Hurley, Re: Platypus Tours

Mr. Hurley commended the lifeguards at Hampton Beach for the marvelous job that they do.

Mr. Hurley told the Board that he runs Platypus Tours, which is an amphibious vehicle that tours through the beach, driving by businesses that have bought advertising on the boat. During the past week he has had some problems accessing particular areas due to the electric utility vehicles working on Ashworth Avenue. He noted that one day last week two trucks were parked across from each other with stabilizers, further narrowing the road and there were no police traffic controls present. The flaggers supplied by the utility were not effective. He could not get the boat through the road until the trucks adjusted a stabilizer so he could get through. Mr. Hurley said that Comcast is now doing work on Ashworth Avenue and while they are using a police detail, it is still a problem getting through. The continuing construction work and addition of sidewalk "bump-outs" have made it impossible for the boat to make the turn on A or C Street.

Mr. Hurley said that he needs access to C Street in order to support the advertisers he has. Mr. Hurley asked that the Board of Selectmen direct the Town Manager to order all the work being done on the beach to cease and desist immediately. Mr. Hurley said that Hampton Beach has been operating as it is for 100 years and has got along fine, he feels this is work that no one wants and suggested that the funds be used on the west side of town. He noted that the residents of Greene Street are not able to enjoy their properties this summer and the residents of Hampton are not able to park at the beach with the construction vehicles using the Church Street and High Street parking lots. This whole business has upset Hampton and he does not know what the answer is, but he would like to see all the construction permits pulled until after the Seafood Festival.

Mr. Barrington said that Zoppo is out of the area and it is the utilities that are completing their work to move the utility lines. Mrs. Bridle-Russell said that she did not know that the utilities would be continuing through the summer, she thought that "no work" meant "no work" and she feels this is unfair to the businesses. Mr. Griffin said that he agreed with Mrs. Bridle-Russell and he does not understand why the work is continuing. He noted that he received a complaint today about a pole laying across the sidewalk on Ashworth Avenue by the fire station that prevented a person in a wheel chair from getting by. Mr. Barrington asked the Board for some direction saying that he has been encouraging the utilities to get the work done so that they are out of the way in time for Zoppo to return to the project in the fall. If the Board wants to stop the utilities, he can try, but it will cause delays in the project and additional costs. Mr. Barrington said that he was assured by the utilities that they would try to be as innocuous as possible. Mrs. Bridle-Russell said that the town needs to be honest with the residents and if the utility work was going to continue the residents should have been told that. This is putting the beach full of inconveniences, but she does not know what the answer is. Mr. Griffin said that he remembers the Board being told that the utility work would be done during the summer, but it appears that the work crews are being uncooperative with the local businesses. Mr. Hurley said that if only one truck is working on the road the traffic can get by, but if two trucks are opposite each other the traffic is blocked. Some efforts are being made to do the work from the inside of parking lots, but Mr. Hurley suggested that the work be done at night as is done in Boston. Mr. Barrington said that night work would result in complaints from the hotels being bothered by the noise. Mr. Barrington said that if Zoppo is to stay on schedule, the utilities must get their work completed.

Mr. Griffin said that there are all sorts of improvements being made and private construction taking place in the beach area according to the Building Inspector. Mr. Hurley said that there is some private work being done on Ashworth Avenue, inside Mr. Blondeau's parking lot and there is construction on I and J Street. He does not believe that the town should issue a private contractor a building permit to do construction during this time of year. Mr. Griffin asked if the town issues building permits during the summer. Mr. Barrington said that permits are issued all year. Mr. Griffin said that even though there are some problems, people are glad to see the improvements being made. Mr. Griffin said that there are a lot of improvements needed in the beach and this is the impetus to do that. He said that the sidewalks look wonderful and the public needs to look at the bigger picture. Mr. Pratt said that the Town Manager could ask the utilities to try to be more user friendly.

Mrs. Bridle-Russell asked for an update on the financials for the infrastructure project.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

Town Manager's Report

Retirements

The retirement buy-out for Fire Alarm Operator Mike Murray was \$24,426.12, and for Fire Alarm Operator Tom Andrews was \$28,010.78. Three new fire alarm operators are in place.

NH Coastal Program

Mr. Barrington reported that he received a call from Chris Wallace, with the NH Coastal program last week regarding a meeting of a Coastal Task Force on Thursday, July 21 at the Pease Field Office of DES. Among other things, they are going to discuss a new product that they believe may have some positive applications in helping prevent erosion behind the half tide jetty on the south side of the entrance to Hampton Harbor. They expect to have a field visit to the site at 8:00 that morning during low tide to examine the situation first hand along with the vendors of the product they are considering.

Storm Damage

A lightning strike during some of the severe storms over the past couple of weeks did some significant damage to the electronics voice recording systems at the fire station. With insurance coverage, Paul Paquette was able to upgrade some technology and get us operating in relatively short order.

Engine II

Mr. Barrington noted that on July 6th there was an accident involving Engine 2. The engine had been parking in the lot across from the fire station while training was being conducted in the apparatus bay. In responding to an emergency call, the engine struck the corner post of the fence and did significant damage to the compartment doors. The engine has been sent for repairs and a claim has been filed with our insurance. Engine 2 is expected to be out of service for approximately a month.

Health Agency Funding - 2006

The Board was given a copy of a letter that was mailed to the health agencies suggesting deadlines for submitting budget requests and/or warrant articles.

No Parking Signs

The poles for the street signs on the lettered streets have been delivered today and the signs are expected in the next day or two. Public Works will work on getting them up as soon as they arrive.

Surplus Auction

Administrative Assistant Karen Anderson reported that the town made \$1,801 in the surplus property auction this weekend. \$525 was the high bid on the baseball cards.

Kings Highway Infrastructure Project

Mr. Violette reported this morning that sewer construction work on King's Highway will be going by Greene Street this week. He expects that next Monday they will begin construction of the line down Greene Street.

School Resource Officers

Mr. Barrington told the Board that he has spoken with SAU 21 Superintendent Jim Gaylord about the School Resource Officers for WHS and HAJH. Mr. Gaylord will be meeting with both of these school boards in the next two nights, and they would be discussing that topic. Mr. Barrington said that it is Mr. Gaylord's current understanding that both schools wish to continue the program and both are willing to financially support it.

USS HAMPTON Change of Command

The Board of Selectmen as well as Sandy Buck, Chairman of the *USS Hampton* Committee, has received an invitation to the Change of Command ceremony. Commander Robert Burke will be relieved of command by Commander Michael Portland at 10:00 AM on August 3. The Board of Selectmen signed a proclamation to be sent to the USS HAMPTON.

School Funding Legislation

Mr. Barrington reported that he received a note from Pat Remick on the new school funding plan. If it is not vetoed by the governor, Hampton will no longer be a donor community.

Questions for the Manager

Mr. Griffin asked how much damage was done to the fire truck. Mr. Barrington said that he does not have an estimate at this time; the damage has affected the ability to open and close the compartments. Mr. Griffin asked what fence it hit. Mr. Barrington said that corner post where the old police station used to be.

Mrs. Bridle said that if Hampton is no longer a donor town it will save about \$1 million next year. Mr. Barrington said that there will be a savings, but the education tax payment has been coming down over the past few years and this year just over \$200,000 was "donated".

Mr. Griffin asked how the budget is going. Mr. Barrington said at this point departments are working on their 2006 submissions which are due during the last week of July. The 2005 budget is right on target, although the summer is a troubling time with a lot of expenses. Mr. Barrington said that as we enter the fall he will be able to see how close the departments are to staying within the budget.

Mr. Griffin asked if there is anything Mr. Tortorice should know about for the Insurance Review Committee. Mr. Barrington said that at this time there really isn't anything to review. The last review was regarding the discount for combining of all the town's insurance products with the Trust.

Mrs. Bridle-Russell noted that the legal expenses are not as bad as she anticipated. Mr. Barrington said that last week there was a bill for \$16,000 that will show up on the next report. Mrs. Bridle asked how the tax collections were. Mr. Barrington said that Mrs. Sheehan reported Friday that the collection was at 90%.

V. NEW BUSINESS1. Bond Resolution – Infrastructure Project

Mr. Barrington told the Board that the remaining bond for the infrastructure project in the amount of \$725,000 is going to be sold this week and the Board needs to execute the bond resolution.

Mr. Pratt MOTIONED that the Board of Selectmen execute the resolution for the Town's General Obligation Bonds in the aggregate amount not to exceed \$725,000.

Mr. Griffin SECONDED

VOTE: UNANIMOUS FOR

2. Hurd Farm Baseline Document

Mr. Barrington explained to the Board that the baseline documents related to the easement that describes the Hurd Farm property and it exists today have been prepared by the Rockingham County Conservation District. The document will be used to compare the use of the property for compliance with the terms of the conservation easements over the years. Mr. Hurd has already signed the document and the Board of Selectmen needs to authorize the form to be signed.

Mr. Pratt MOTIONED that Mr. Barrington be authorized to sign the Hurd Farm baseline documents for the Rockingham County Conservation District.

Mrs. Bridle-Russell SECONDED

VOTE: UNANIMOUS FOR

Mr. Pratt letter about planting a tree at the beach. Mr. Barrington said that he wants to check with Mr. Howe when he returns from vacation about the landscaping plan. Mr. Howe will be asked to get in touch with him. It was nice of Mr. Angold to make the offer.

VI. MINUTES

The minutes of June 27, 2005 were reviewed.

Mr. Griffin MOTIONED that the Board of Selectmen accept the minutes of June 27, 2005 as prepared.

Mrs. Bridle-Russell SECONDED

VOTE: UNANIMOUS FOR

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Coin Operated Amusement Permits
2. Dance Hall Permits
3. Pool Table Permit
4. Theater Permits
5. Cemetery Deeds
6. Hardship Lien

Mr. Griffin MOTIONED that the consent agenda be approved.

Mrs. Bridle-Russell SECONDED

VOTE: UNANIMOUS FOR

Mr. Barrington reported that the Chamber of Commerce is requesting use of the Town Office parking lots for the Seafood Festival shuttle on September 9-11th. He has granted that permission as has been done in the past.

Mr. Griffin asked if it is possible for the Board of Selectmen to talk with the Precinct Commissioners about the infrastructure. He said that it is important that the Board of Selectmen hear their comments and concerns as a whole rather dealing with the new commission to hear their comments and concerns. The Board agreed to invite the Commissioners to the meeting on July 25th.

III. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pratt MOTIONED that the meeting be adjourned. (9:18 PM)

Mr. Griffin SECONDED

VOTE: UNANIMOUS FOR

Chairman