

**HAMPTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM
OCTOBER 22, 2007 – 7:00 PM**

PRESENT: Ben Moore, Chairman
Bill Lally, Vice Chairman
James Workman
Virginia Bridle-Russell
Rick Griffin
Fred Welch, Town Manager
Barbara Renaud, Acting Administrative Assistant

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Chairman Moore called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and introduced those in attendance.

I. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Mr. Workman announced that “trick or treating” for Halloween is next Wednesday from 5:30 – 8:00 PM.

II. APPOINTMENTS

1. TRACY EMERICK – AD HOC BENCHMARKING COMMITTEE REPORT

Dr. Emerick talked about the mission of the Ad Hoc Committee, the methodology used and the conclusions drawn. The mission was to determine if the Town of Hampton’s budget, comparatively, is one of the highest in the State. He described the methodology used. There were 8 findings. The findings included the following:

- Town of Hampton Fire and Police Departments and the Department of Public Works are the highest or 2nd highest in the State.
- The population reported for Hampton doesn’t reflect the needs in Town because of our seasonality.
- When we have default budgets it doesn’t do anything to help the Town.
- To reduce the budget, it will be necessary to either reduce services, use 3rd party services, or privatize services

Recommendations included the following:

- Overtime versus increased staffing should be analyzed, particularly in the Fire Department.

Mr. Lally asked about the default budget finding. Dr. Emerick clarified this point.

He reported that the New Hampshire Center for Public Policy is trying to put together a similar report that is scheduled to be released this fall and should be out in November. He then stated that the Ad Hoc Committee will take a look at New Hampshire Public Policy Report. Other than that, he considers the committee’s work done.

2. FIRE CHIEF LIPE – UPDATE AND POTENTIAL WARRANT ARTICLES

Operations:

Chief Lipe introduced Rich Landry who had worked on the fire station proposal. He then recited Fire Department activity for the month. EMS calls were at 1608 – essentially the same as last year. Fire service and rescue calls are at 1193. He noted that total structure fires are up to 35. There has been \$1.9 million in fire loss this year. The Fire Prevention Bureau has been busy with training in the schools. The Open House held had about 500 people attend. He thanked people for coming out. Insurance has issued payment for the mold remediation at Station 1 and that project has begun. There are still 3 staff members out sick. State radio upgrades have been completed. Capability is now at 100%.

Chief Lipe then went on to correct misconceptions about overtime for private details. He said the accurate number is \$20,426.70, as follows:

Seafood Festival – \$9,900.68
 13 Fireworks shoots - \$8,157.26
 Penguin Plunge– \$670.33
 Little Warriors Football- \$1,698.43

He indicated that these are straight wages and do not account for benefits and overtime. The Chief stated that the Board of Selectmen has not set policy for private details for the Fire Department. He believes it's time for the Board to re-address whether these costs should be recouped.

Ms. Bridle – Russell asked how long the Fire Department had been providing EMT's for the Little Warriors' football games. It is new this year. She asked how they'd done it in the past. A volunteer from one of the other communities would come in. The play rules require an EMT and the team does not have the funds to hire someone. Mr. Lally asked for clarification of the sponsors for the various events. The Chief responded.

Chairman Moore asked about fire prevention at the Seafood Festival. They are there during setup for the prior week. In response to Chairman Moore's question, the Chief indicated there would be increased staff at the beach on any heavy weekend. The Chief stated he believes the Police Department bills out for the Seafood Festival. Chief Lipe said the reason for bring this up now was to give the Chamber of Commerce and the Village Precinct, as well as the other organizations, a heads up that this is a topic of discussion. Chairman Moore asked if an ambulance is stationed at Winnacunnet football games.

Deputy Chief Silver described the services provided to Little Warriors. He said they didn't have funding to higher someone or liability coverage to get a volunteer. The Fire Department told them they would do it for this year only. The Department has absorbed the cost for 5 games. Winnacunnet has an EMT trained person. The Little Warriors do not.

Warrant Articles:

Proposed Warrant Article - Fire Stations – The projected cost of a rebuild of Station 1 (8300 square feet @ \$220 per square foot) is \$2,545,200. He described what this would include. The project cost for the addition to Station 2 (22,500 square feet @ \$175 per square foot) is a total \$4,888,188. He described what this cost includes.

Ms. Bridle-Russell-Russell asked who's idea it was to put the Building & Planning Departments in the Fire Department. This was a joint decision of the Town Manager and the Fire Chief. It was also recommended by the Plan NH Design Charrette conducted recently. Mr. Workman asked if this plan adds cost to the project because the public goes to the Building & Planning Departments. Chief Lipe explained the rationale for this proposal. Passive security is built into the design.

Mr. Workman asked if the \$250,000 communications figure includes moving Station 1 equipment up to Station 2. Chief Lipe said it represents consoles, antennas etc to make Station 2 the primary dispatch center. The Police Department could be the secondary dispatch center, since two are needed. Chief Lipe said a lot of cost is for an antenna system.

Mr. Workman asked how many spaces of the Ashworth parking lot would be needed. Chief Lipe said putting the Fire Station next to the Police station chews up a lot of parking. But it was determined to be the only available adequate space. Mr. Lally asked about the dimensions of the beach station in relation to the Fire Station Committee's recommendations. The original request was for 14,000 square feet. This was reduced to 6,800 square feet. The current 9,300 square feet is a blend of both the original proposal and the committee's recommendation. The Chief noted that the design is intended to be expandable in the future.

Mr. Lally asked if the 24,200 square feet for Station 2 is based on elimination of the old town offices. Yes, it is. Mr. Lally then asked if the recommendations from the Plan NH Charrette included demolition of the old town hall. It did. Mr. Lally stated he believes that the Building and Planning Departments are appropriate for the fire station space. He thinks it is a good idea.

Chairman Moore asked if the existing Station 2 would be demolished. No, the two apparatus bays will stay. The (administrative) support building will be demolished to make room for the 2 additional bays planned. A new administrative building space will be built. Chairman Moore asked how staff would operate during construction. He also asked how many parking spaces will be used by Station 1. Chief Lipe described the rationale for the location of Station 1 on the lot. He also explained the construction plan for Station 2 which will allow for continuity of operations. HMs. Bridle-Russell asked why fire dispatch can't be in the same location as police dispatch. Chief Lipe said he didn't believe the room is big enough, and you don't want the communications center in a high hazard area. There are three dispatch centers now (Fire, Police and EOC). They are proposing to go to 2 dispatch centers. He is not familiar with the Police station's capabilities.

Proposed Warrant Article – SAFER – Deputy Chief Silver described the SAFER program. It is a grant program that provides funding to communities to train and staff Fire Departments. It is a cost share arrangement that has been funded 2005 through 2007. He described the current status of 2008 funding that is pending. He expects it will be funded. The Fire Department investigated whether the Town could pursue the grant this year and it can. The grant provides funding over a 5-year period. Funding can be requested for any number of firefighters. The cost share gradually increases over 5 years. To apply, the governing body needs to acknowledge the commitments under the grant. He described what costs estimates would be over the 5-year period. The estimated cost over 5 years for four firefighters would be \$1.7 million. The federal government would fund about \$400,000 of this and the Town would pay \$1.3 million. Over the total period the Town would bear about 75% of the cost of employing 4 firefighters.

Mr. Workman asked about the 7-8% annual increase in firefighter cost. It is a combination of raises and step increases. Mr. Workman asked what would happen if it were necessary to cut firefighters in future years. This would be a warrant article and represent a contractual obligation that would go into default budget.

Discussion returned to location of the Station 1 building. Chief Lipe described the process of reviewing various sites. He said they considered the Church Street lot, the Island Path lot, the State Park area and a private property. He described the reasons the other sites were not feasible. Town Manager Welch said part of the consideration was redoing the police station bond. The objective was to not have the payment be higher than it is now so that the tax rate will not be affected. Construction costs were such that town property has to be used.

Mr. Welch said only one fire engine will need to be replaced. We need a new fire station to get a larger replacement fire truck into it.

Chairman Moore called for a motion on the fire stations. There was additional discussion.

Mr. Schwotzer said the decision was made to not increase the tax rate. The new funding amount would be \$9.6 million. A 30-year bond is the only one that would work to not increase the tax rate. In effect, \$17 million will be spent in total to pay off the police and fire stations.

There was no motion to move the warrant article to the ballot.

Chairman Moore called for a motion on the warrant article for the SAFER program. There was discussion. The vote will be postponed until the warrant article is revised to add the commitment language and correct figures.

Proposed Warrant Article- Hose, Hardware, and Nozzles - Deputy Chief Benotti talked about this proposed warrant article. Total funds requested are \$65,132.08. He described the current inventory of this equipment and the ages of the items.

Ms. Ms. Bridle-Russell-Russell asked what would happen if the voters say no. Deputy Benotti said, in that case, they will use what they have. Chairman Moore asked n about the length of hose needed. Each pumper carries 2000 feet of hose. Hose is not included in the cost of the pumper to be purchased.

Mr. Lally **MOTIONED** to move this warrant article forward to the ballot. Ms. Bridle-Russell **SECONDED**.

There was discussion of the consequences of combining this article with the truck article.

Ms. Bridle-Russell-Russell noted that hoses should be in the budget and not on a warrant article.

VOTE; Unanimous For

Proposed Warrant Article - Fire trucks – Deputy Chief Benotti then discussed the proposed warrant article for the trucks. They are proposing to replace Engines 1 and 4, which are currently in backup status. At that point, a pumper would not have to be replaced for another 12 years. He said one truck has high mileage. The other is corroded from being at the beach, even though the mileage isn't high.

He said they don't meet NFPA standards. He described other problems with the trucks. He said the old trucks don't hold what is carried today to a fire. Engines 1 and 4 represented 2/3's of the maintenance budget last year (\$43,000). The proposed new trucks have more storage space. He said one benefit of new trucks would come in maintenance costs. Originally the cost was \$485,000 per truck. Because the Town doesn't have a rescue truck, the pumper needs to be more expensive to be able to carry rescue tools. He described features of the new trucks. He commented that a \$485,000 truck is a no frills truck.

Mr. Workman asked if there would be a discount for buying 2 trucks.

It was decided the article would be rewritten for one truck and reviewed next week.

Proposed Warrant Article -SCBA – Chief Lipe said this is a grant being applied for. If we get it, it needs to be matched by 5%. The grant is from the Fire Act to buy fire equipment. It is to replace breathing apparatus. He said the Town's current equipment, which is 3 to 10 years old, is out of compliance. This proposed article is to appropriate \$250,000. Deputy Silver said the grant was written for \$437,000. He doesn't believe that much will be granted. But he believes the warrant should reflect the grant amount requested. Grant monies would be reimbursement for the equipment purchased.

Mr. Workman asked if there are any similar programs for replacing vehicles. Deputy Chief Benotti said there are, but the requirements are more stringent. Mr. Workman asked if we could apply for both. Deputy Chief Silver said that we could, but it is hard to get.

It was decided that this proposed warrant article will be rewritten and reviewed next week.

Proposed Warrant Article -Fire Alarm Maintenance Truck – Chief Lipe said the boom can be fixed on the current truck, but it won't pass inspection. Even though we are not in the fire alarm business any more, the truck is used for traffic lights, changing light bulbs, hanging Christmas lights, and if a pole transfer is needed and we have to cut our own line down. The Fire Department also maintains a tag line between the two fire stations and the police station. He described the options considered (reconditioned truck, leased truck). He said they have no truck now to do needed line work. Deputy Chief Benotti described the Town's responsibility with respect to utility poles. He said there might be a greater need for this type of truck in the future if the Town went with a mesh network.

Mr. Lally asked the lease cost. Deputy Chief Benotti said it is \$1,000 per week. Chairman Moore asked if this was unit work. It is. Has the bucket ever been used by other departments? Yes, it is. Chairman Moore commented that it might be cheaper to subcontract the work. Mr. Lally commented that there are so many other needs; it's difficult to put this article on the warrant. Ms. Ms. Bridle-Russell-Russell commented that the proposed warrant articles represent \$9.8 million.

No motion was made.

3. CHARLIE PRESTON – BEACH PARKING

Mr. Preston made a request that the Town Manager authorize Department of Public Works to work with other entities (DRED, DOT) to plow the beach parking lot and playground this winter. It is DRED (State) property, but he feels it is a safety issue for the Town. Hard packed snow can present a liability issue. He said there have been precedents for this. Zoppo Construction, the Department of Public Works and the Police Department have cleared it in the past for the Penguin Plunge. He referenced a petition signed by 200 citizens that had been completed 5 years ago.

Chairman Moore instructed Mr. Welch to research the costs and discuss this with the Department of Public Works.

III. MINUTES – OCTOBER 15, 2007

The minutes were approved as distributed.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

1. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Town Manager Welch noted that the last day to submit petitions to amend the Zoning Ordinance is November 12th at 5:00 PM. Petitions submitted after that date will not be placed on the ballot.

The Cable TV re-licensing hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, October 24th at 7:00 PM at the Winnacunnet High School Auditorium. If members of the public cannot attend, Mr. Welch asked that they send comments and concerns about the cable franchise to the Board of Selectmen as soon as possible.

The State Department of Transportation will be holding an informational meeting on Monday, October 29th at 7:00 PM at the Hampton Falls Town Hall regarding the draft feasibility study to replacement of the Route 95 bridge over the Taylor River and the dam on the river. There will be a follow-up public hearing in Hampton.

The unconfirmed tax rate for 2007 is \$19.79 - a .48 (2.5%) increase in the tax rate. He provided a breakdown of the rates for Town, School, State and County. Ms. Ms. Bridle-Russell-Russell emphasized that the school tax rate went up and the Town tax rate went down. Mr. Workman noted that the Town's portion of the tax rate is 40% and the school portion of the tax rate is 54.27%.

Chairman Moore is concerned about the calendar for the remainder of year. He would like to schedule a hearing now for all bond issues over \$100,000. He suggested 1/7/08 as the date for bond issues being put forward to the voters. This date will be confirmed.

There will be no Board of Selectmen meetings on December 24th and December 31st.

2. FISH HOUSE

Attorney Gearreald prepared a motion as to whether or not to put the issue before the voters at Town Meeting. He prepared 3 warrant articles.

Neither fish house (Mace and Cropper) is currently being used for fishing the waters in front of the houses. Based on the Town vote of March 15, 1950, these houses should not remain. In 1988, the voters approved \$2,000 to restore the houses for the 350th celebration.

The first proposed warrant article would ask the voters if the (Town-owned) Mace fish house should remain even though it is not used for fishing.

The second proposed warrant article would ask the voters to appropriate funds to purchase the Cropper house.

If the second article, fails, the third proposed warrant article would ask the voters if the Cropper house should remain.

His motion is to postpone any removal decisions pending putting the warrant articles before the voters. Attorney Gearreald said that Mr. Cropper still has to pay the penalty for not securing a correct building permit, in any case.

Mr. Workman said the warrant article should read that Mr. Cropper would never transfer the house to any other party besides the Town. Mr. Griffin noted that some citizens are concerned about losing the fish houses. They feel that the houses should be preserved. Chairman Moore noted that we don't need reference to the 1988 articles in this year's articles. The Chairman summarized the first two2 warrant articles. He does not believe the third article should go forward. He believes that we should own the house. If not, then it needs to be removed. Mr. Workman feels the house should stay. Mr. Cropper has owned it for 4 years now. Article 2 will have money added to it. If Article 2 and Article 3 fail, Mr. Cropper will need to remove building.

Chairman Moore called for a motion. There was further discussion of the articles and the consequences of them.

Mr. Workman MOTIONED as follows:

The Town meeting's 1988 passage of Article 25 appropriating \$2,000 for the restoration of the fish houses at Stimson Park for the 1988 350th Anniversary Celebration is a strong, recent signal from the voters that they feel these two buildings to be of historical value and would not want them to be removed. Notwithstanding the fact they are no longer being "used by fishermen whose principal means of livelihood is fishing from the waters in front of said buildings" as required by the 1950 Town meeting vote, I move to postpone any action to remove either or both of the two fish houses until after the Town Meeting voters have the opportunity to vote this coming March on warrant articles that will unequivocally put the removal issue before the voters. **Ms. Bridle-Russell-Russell SECONDED.**

VOTE Unanimous For

2. SOLID WASTE & RECYCLING

Mr. Lally asked the public for volunteers to form a committee to have a meeting on solid waste and recycling throughout the Town. Interested parties should contact either the Town Manager or Mr. Lally.

Other Old Business

Mr. Workman MOTIONED to terminate the Ad Hoc Committee on Benchmarking and to accept the report presented by Dr. Emerick. **Mrs. Bridle-Russell SECONDED**

VOTE Unanimous For

V NEW BUSINESS

1. WARRANT ARTICLES FOR THE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Chief Sullivan described the warrant article requests. \$40,000 will be used from the Police Private Detail Account. The article will ask for \$46,700.

Proposed Warrant Article – Replace three police cruisers

There was discussion of the amount to be used for the appropriation.

Mrs. Bridle-Russell MOTIONED to move the police cruiser article to the ballot. **Mr. Lally SECONDED.**

VOTE Unanimous For

The Police Chief will provide an amount for the Police Forfeiture Fund article.

2. REVENUES

Mr. Schwotzer presented the 2008 Budget Appendixes. He went through Appendix D – Estimated Revenues. He went through these Appendixes and made adjustments reflecting a 6.6% drop in income from the State. Regarding income from departments, there were changes to the Department of Public Works' figures. He said the final income stream number is \$6.4 million to set tax rate. This is about a 1% increase from last year.

Chairman Moore asked about specific revenue items from the State. Mr. Schwotzer described the adjustment. We are expecting to receive \$644,850 for rooms and meals tax. Chairman Moore clarified that room and meals tax revenue is based solely on population of the town. It has nothing to do with how many restaurants and hotels are in the town.

Mr. Workman asked about the cable franchise fee revenue which has decreased. Mr. Workman also asked for confirmation that sewerage revenue is down. Chairman Moore asked about the increase in the Real Estate Trust Fund revenue. This amount has not as yet been determined and an estimate has been used.

There was a consensus to release the revenue schedule to the Budget Committee.

3. DEFAULT BUDGET

Mr. Schwotzer described the Default Budget schedule he has provided to the Board. \$24.9 million is the default budget. The current year default budget was \$24.3 million – a difference of \$611,335.

Chairman Moore said that he is confused because we are adjusting a lot more line items than we have in the past. He asked if what we are doing is in conformance with the RSA's. Mr. Welch stated it is. Mr. Welch said they went through each department to see what contracts were in force and effect. There were contracts in effect that were not in the default budget. The Town has done a lot of work in the past 5 years and it wasn't all in the default budget.

Mr. Griffin MOVED to accept the default budget of \$24,913,895 as presented. **Mr. Lally SECONDED.**

VOTE Unanimous For

4. PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET.

Mr. Schwotzer indicated he received the health benefit cost increase and it has come in at \$146,897. There has been a drop in the budget because of this. He has adjusted the proposed budget accordingly. This changes the operating budget to \$24,606,166 - a 1.24% changes from last year's budget. This constitutes a one cent change in the tax rate. It is \$307,729 lower than the default budget. He asked for a motion to reduce the total to be sent forward.

Mr. Lally MOTIONED to move the revised budget figure of \$24,606,166 forward to the Budget Committee, reflecting lower increases in health benefits. **Mr. Griffin SECONDED**

VOTE Unanimous for

5. WARRANT ARTICLES FOR HUMAN SERVICE AGENCIES

There was a discussion of the procedure to be used. Last year all agencies which had been on the previous warrant and were making the same dollar request were moved forward. The only ones asked to petition were new agencies or agencies that were changing their dollar request. Chairman Moore asked if the Board wanted this policy to remain for this year. There was a consensus to do so.

The next issue was whether to group all Human Service Agencies in one warrant article. Mr. Lally said he doesn't believe they should be batched, because the public may have differing views on the different agencies.

Mr. Lally MOTIONED to place Human Service agencies on the warrant individually. **Mr. Workman SECONDED.**

VOTE Unanimous For

There was discussion of the requests. They are level funded for 2008.

Mr. Griffin MOTIONED to move the following requests to the ballot:

Area Home Care and Family Services - \$12,000

Crossroads House - \$15,000

Richie McFarland Children's Center - \$6,000

Seacare Health Services - \$10,000

Seacoast Mental Health - \$8,000

Mrs. Bridle-Russell SECONDED
VOTE Unanimous For

Attorney Gearreald stated he needed to meet with Board after the meeting regarding litigation.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

None

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Michael Pierce asked if the Board of Selectmen could ask that the plans for the Fire Department buildings be designed to make them as green as possible. He indicated the Police Station uses a lot of energy.

VII. CLOSING COMMENTS

None

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Lally MOTIONED to adjourn. **Mr. Griffin SECONDED.**

VOTE: UNANIMOUS FOR

Meeting adjourned at 9:27 PM.

Chairman