

Town of Hampton



TOWN OF HAMPTON MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN MONDAY, MARCH 23, 2009

PRESENT: Richard Griffin, Chairman
Richard Nichols, Vice Chairman
William Lally
Richard Bateman
Gerald Znoj
Frederick Welch, Town Manager
Mark Gearreald, Town Attorney

6:30 PM

Non-Meeting with Legal Counsel - RSA 91-A:2., I., (c)

7:30 PM

Chairman Griffin called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM and introduced the members of the Board.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

I. Presentation

Chairman Griffin presented to, Mr. Frederick Rice, Mrs. Ellen Goethel, and Mrs. Joyce Sheehan on behalf of the Board of Selectmen and the residents of the Town of Hampton; individually; a Resolution for Recognition of Service.

The resolution recognized the position of office that they each have held and their accomplishments throughout their years of service to the community of Hampton. These honors were given by the Selectmen to these individuals for their commitment to the Town of Hampton.

II. Public Comment Period

Art Gopalan, 20 Windmill Lane, spoke to the part of the agenda in regards to the Selectmen Priorities. He would like to see information on the many house bills before the State that have an impact on the Town posted on channel 22. He also spoke about HB426 as a bill that could hurt the residents of Hampton.

Maury Friedman, 30 Hampton Meadows, would like to have the Board look at two items when setting its priorities. One would be to look at how things are being done in a variety of departments and the second would be the need to understand how we can best meet the needs for facilities of this Town.

III. Announcements and Community Calendar

Mr. Lally informed the public that Mike St Gelais who was a coach with HYA passed away this weekend at a very young age.

Mr. Bateman was interested in details about a meeting tomorrow in Exeter in regards to Unitil and the Ice Storm. Mr. Welch explained that the information is in his report.

Mr. Lally complimented Public Works on a job well done picking up the tree limbs from the storm.

Chairman Griffin thanked everyone who congratulated him on becoming chair. Chairman Griffin informed the Board that just after he became Chairman he received a call informing him of his first mistake and that was that the Board is not sitting in the proper seats. Chairman Griffin inquired of the Board if they were comfortable with where they are seating and that if they are then that would be the seating arrangement for this sitting Board.

IV. Appointments

1. Chief Sullivan – Police Departmental Update – The stats that the Chief is providing to the Board include the months of January, February and part of March. Chief Sullivan touched on the following items: Calls for service are slightly down; incidents and motor vehicle reports are up; part one, crimes against a person down 21%; part one property crimes up 33%; part one crimes against society down 25%; part two crimes down 32%. The two new fulltime officers hired last year are scheduled to graduate from the academy on April 10th; the 8 part-timers are currently at the Academy part time. The department is operating below allotted budget. The JAG grant awarded was approximately \$51,000; and the department has received laser radar. The public can view the Police website where they can find the recent crime reports, and lastly on April 11th the Seacoast DARE basketball game will be held to raise money.

Discussion

Mr. Znoj questioned how overtime is going so far this year. Chief Sullivan stated it was down.

Mr. Lally asked if the Chief could have the Beach car keep an eye on the playground as damage has been reported. Mr. Lally also has some real concerns about the bridge and the light.

Mr. Welch said that originally, they were supposed to be out by Memorial Day and he is now hearing the end of June.

Chairman Griffin remembers them saying that they would be out by Memorial Day. He also remembers them saying that they would provide a detail for Memorial Day if it was needed and wonders if the Chief would like a detail before that.

Chief Sullivan would at this time like to see a solution to the problem with the lights. He would suggest that there be a combined letter from himself and the Manager to the DOT.

Chairman Griffin feels that the letter should be written and that for Memorial Day and the weekends in June, detail still need to be provided by the State.

Chief Sullivan is more concerned about the warm weekends in April when the department only has four officers on duty.

Mr. Znoj asked for clarification of when the bridge is going to be done. The project is to last for a couple of years but all work will be stopped during the summer.

Chairman Griffin thanked Chief Sullivan for his report.

Discussion

2. Fire Chief Silver – Department budget line adjustments – explained that he supplied the Board with some information on Friday in regards to the proposed changes. He is not requesting any additional money for the budget he would like the permission be granted to the Finance Director to report a budget that more accurately represents how the funds are being used in the department. The majority of the 2009 budget was constructed under a different administration. He feels by making these changes he will be able to accurately report to the Board.

Discussion

Mr. Znoj noticed that the overtime burn rate for the first two months is significantly less than last year and this causes concern since Chief Silver is adding money to these accounts.

Chief Silver stated that last year the new firefighters were not added until later in the year which caused the overtime to be higher this time last year.

Mr. Nichols feels that we should be cutting the amount of monies placed in overtime not adding monies to overtime accounts. The overtime budget for fire is 39% of base pay, which is a problem. He will not object if the Town Manager feels that moving this money from one line item to another is the right thing to do. However, he does feel that overtime for all departments not just Fire needs to be looked at closely.

Mr. Lally also feels that overtime needs to be addressed but if the Chief feels that this money should be moved than he would agree with that.

Mr. Welch supports the Chief in this, and knows that overtime needs to be addressed.

Mr. Znoj does not have a problem with aligning the accounts but we have to keep our eyeballs on overtime the whole year.

Chairman Griffin agrees and the Chief has a consensus from the Board to make these changes.

Chairman Griffin asked if the Chief had any other information to share with the Board.

Chief Silver explained that he is on the agenda next week for departmental update. If anyone has any specific questions please forward them to him and he will address them in his report.

V. Minutes of March 16, 2009

Page 3: Change all references to Beach Area Commission to the Beach Village District Precinct.

Page 8: Under discussion and Mr. Znoj's question add the wording "on Saturday" after 4 PM.

Page 9: Under discussion for ISO New England Agreement, and Mr. Znoj's question add the wording "and what would be the decibel level for the generators noise be"

Mr. Nichols MOTIONED to accept the minutes of March 16, 2009 as amended. Mr. Lally SECONDED.

VOTE: 5-0-0

VI. Old Business

1. Town Manager's Report

The State Public Utilities Commission will be conducting a public hearing on Wednesday, March 25, 2009 from 6 to 9 PM at Winnacunnet High School on the request of the Aquarion Water Company to be granted a double digit rate increase that would be retro-active to December 15, 2008. Please attend and voice your concerns regarding this rate increase.

We have been notified by the Coalition that a bill to establish a homestead exemption will be reported out to the House of Representatives this week. As we understand the bill, it will increase the Statewide Property Tax from \$2.17 to \$5.50 on all property in excess of \$150,000. The bill provides for the collected taxes to be paid directly to the State. Please contact your State Representatives with any concerns that you may have.

The latest on the retirement front indicates that the State has lowered its contribution to the retirement system this year from 30% to 35% and is projecting lowering its contribution next year to 20% followed by an end to any contribution after that.

The State construction work on the Tide Mill Bridge on Route 101 that was cancelled last year has been rescheduled. While no date has been set for the commencement of work that has been given to the Town as yet it is noted that a pre-construction meeting is scheduled for April 1st.

Mr. Welch received a communication from the PUC dealing with hearings regarding the December 2008 Ice Storm. The hearing closest to us is scheduled for tomorrow night at 7 pm at Exeter High School. The meetings after tomorrow night are scheduled for 7 pm as follows: March 31st at Raymond Middle School, April 1st at Salem High School, April 9th at Performing Arts Center in Plaistow, April 16th at Milford High School, April 20th at Town Hall Meeting Room in Derry and April 21st at New London Town Hall. The purpose of this is for the commission to gain evidence to find out what transpired from the outages in December. They are trying to find out a way to improve the time it takes to restore power during situations like the Ice Storm in December.

Discussion:

Mr. Nichols wondered if in the forecast that Mr. Schwotzer put out last week if under the probable scenario the \$85,000 was annualized.

Mr. Welch confirmed that is was annualized.

Mr. Nichols asked about the Beach Fire Station and if something is being done about it.

Mr. Welch confirmed that they are waiting for the Beach Precinct vote, which should take place on Friday night.

Chairman Griffin asked about some houses that seem to be run down and dilapidated and wonders what can be done about them.

Mr. Welch said that the Building Department has been out to visit some of the properties especially the one on Exeter Road. The house on Exeter Road does have someone living there and they are trying to make repairs. There is a long process under RSA 155 that one must go through on dilapidated buildings. It boils down to a taking by eminent domain of the Town.

Chairman Griffin was glad to hear that someone is living in the house on Exeter Road.

VII. New Business

1. Board of Selectmen Priorities

Mr. Lally has the following priorities: a location for the Beach Fire Station, plans for the study for the uptown station, State Delegation to come in once every two months, and lastly contract negotiations; he would like to see the Board a little more proactive with relationships with Town employees.

Mr. Nichols agrees with Mr. Lally in regards to the Fire Station.

Mr. Znoj agreed with Mr. Lally that it would be a good idea to have the State Delegation come to several meetings.

Mr. Nichols would also like to have the State Reps in but the timing should be a little different than every two months. He would suggest that since the majority of the activity takes place between the middle of January and June it might be a good idea to have them come in once a month between January and June.

Chairman Griffin suggested that they be invited to come in on April 20th. The Board agreed and an invite will go out to all State Reps, Martha Fuller Clark and Bev Hollingsworth.

In regards to contract negotiations Mr. Nichols feels that things might need to be a little different. Maybe legal counsel does not need to be present at each negotiation.

Mr. Welch feels that the Board needs to formulate were they want to go with the negotiations.

Mr. Znoj agrees with Mr. Lally and the others in regards to the Fire Station. He also thinks that the following needs to be done: gain back the Boards creditability and listen to the sentiments of the residents; watch our costs and try and hold the tax rate flat; should begin to talk about getting with the Planning Board about how to bring in new businesses to Town; and keeping current business' viable.

Mr. Bateman echo the priorities and the highest priority sitting here is to be cooperative with the Representatives and need to be very connective with other Boards. He would also like to see more industry brought into Hampton.

Mr. Nichols would like to see the Board get more specific on the finances for 2009. The objective would be to monitor revenues and manage spending with the objective of achieving a municipal tax rate of \$6.50 for 2009. Mr. Nichols is requesting that the Board commit to the voters after six years of picking the smaller number a tax rate of \$6.50 on the municipal side.

Mr. Welch does not feel that the \$6.50 goal is unreasonable.

Chairman Griffin brought up the priority of restructuring the Public Works Department.

Mr. Welch explained that the Board ordered him for the 2010 budget process to restructure the Public Works Department. Mr. Welch and the Public Works Director are in this process right now so that it will be in the budget cycle. The Single Stream Recycling will help with this priority.

Mr. Znoj wonders if this restructuring is only being done for Public Works or for all departments.

Mr. Welch explained that at this time he was only directed by the Board to go through this process for Public Works.

Election Results:

Mr. Lally found some of the results interesting.

Chairman Griffin wondered what was going to be done in regards to the greening of the Town Hall.

Mr. Welch explained that some things that will be looked are: putting in a generator; modernizing the lighting and upgrading all the wiring; bathroom upgrades; heating system; air handling and air conditioning systems. The top priority is the generator and the electrical wiring.

Mr. Znoj thinks that it was a good strategy to reduce the amount of the warrant article to \$35,000 for the greening of the Town Hall.

Chairman Griffin asked about the pumper truck and the fact that it was voted down.

Mr. Nichols made the point that when they were going through the warrant articles he felt that if the people felt that the Board was taking a frugal approach than they would approve the warrant articles. There were very few money articles that passed but in the case of the Town Hall, the Board reduced it from \$100,000 to \$35,000 and it passed. In the case of the Fire Station planning article it started at \$450,000 and was reduced to \$50,000 and it passed. He believes that in the case of the Fire Pumper Truck if the Board does their research this year and can show the Town that it is needed and the price range for a pumper truck than maybe it will have a chance of passing.

Mr. Znoj added that the Board also needs to be sold on the fact that the pumper truck is on its last leg. The Board knows nothing about the condition of the pumper truck and it is critical that they find out this information.

Mr. Nichols feels that this will also be true for other big-ticket items like the uptown Fire Station.

Chairman Griffin wonders about article 25 that did not pass for the \$340,000 to be placed in the Department of Public Works capital reserve fund.

Mr. Welch expressed that the Town is going to be in trouble since this did not pass. Between this year and next year, the department is going to need to buy approximately \$500,000 in equipment just to comply with Federal Storm Water II regulations. If the Town is found that they cannot comply over a period of time they will be fined \$25,000 a day.

Mr. Znoj commented that again, it goes back to putting the articles on the table that are very costly and really having the facts and figures together to sell the article.

Mr. Lally stated that that was done by Mr. Welch and Mr. Price when the article for Public Works was discussed.

Mr. Welch gave an example of the sidewalk plows and the fact that the insurance company gave the Town under \$20,000 to replace a sidewalk plow that now cost around \$130,000 to \$140,000. The balance of the money to replace the plow will have to come from the capital reserve fund.

Mr. Lally pointed out that the longer it takes to pass items like these such as the Fire Station, it will going to cost the Town more since the costs of these items will continue to go up.

Mr. Nichols believes that if for example the Board achieves the goal of \$6.50 for the tax rate than they will gain back their credibility and things will possibly pass.

Chairman Griffin asked what is going to happen since the article for the T Intersection did not pass.

Mr. Welch explained that since it was voted down than the Galley Hatch is going to lose many parking spaces since the land is owned by the Town. The Town will have to write the Owners of the Galley Hatch a letter letting them know this and they will have to adjust their plans accordingly.

Mr. Lally wonders what business is going to want to come to this Town if this is the way that the Town treats its business'.

Mr. Znoj wonders why the vote went the way that it did.

Mr. Welch said that the argument that was heard in the public arena, was that the public did not want to give the land up. He also explained that in the end, there is a problem with the intersection and going to cost the taxpayers since the light is going to eventually have to be put in.

Mr. Bateman commented that if the intersection is not corrected, the possibility of a fatal accident could occur there and then the public will ask why the Town did not do something about the intersection.

Mr. Nichols feels that there are two issues here one is the T Intersection and the other is the issue of the parking spaces that the Galley Hatch have been using right along. He heard from voters that they were not opposed to the T Intersection but it was unclear what the income

was going to be versus the expense. He feels that it is important to look very closely at doing things legally and not making the Galley Hatch Owners life miserable.

Chairman Griffin asked about the Rye Sewer.

Mr. Welch said that the first article allows the Town to extend the contract with Rye for 5 years. The second article requires the Town to write a letter to Rye stating that the Town will not extend the contract beyond the 5 years.

Mr. Znoj wonders if this was a capacity problem.

Mr. Welch stated the plant is at about 60% capacity so we have plenty of capacity. The revenue will go down between \$60,000 and \$100,000.

Mr. Lally did not understand the rush to get the second article on the ballot.

Mr. Nichols wonders if it is reasonable to try and reverse this next year by drafting another warrant article.

Mr. Welch said that that could be done.

Mr. Znoj and Mr. Lally, both agreed and said that there would need to be more education next time.

Mr. Bateman pointed out that many people on the west end of Town have a hard time allowing a surrounding Town into the sewer when they cannot get on Town sewer themselves.

Mr. Welch said that there is a cost to tie the west end into the sewer and the Town would have to vote to allow this.

2. Concord Co-Operative Single Stream Recycling - Solid Waste

Mr. Welch explained this is on the agenda since the Town has been notified that they must make a decision by May. The information is provided to the Board to review and it will be put on the agenda for the 13th at which time the Board will vote.

3. Recycling Flyer

Mr. Lally said that it has been worked on for months.

Mr. Welch said that it is on the agenda so that the Board can review it before it goes out to the public.

Discussion:

Mr. Nichols wonders what the life cycle of the brochure is since the recycling article just passed. He wonders if something could be added about the mandatory recycling.

Mr. Welch and Mr. Lally agreed that once the single stream recycling begins another brochure would need to be generated.

Other New Business:

Mr. Lally shared a letter that he received from the girl scouts. The Brownie Troop 22517 requests that the Board bring back the Christmas Parade. Mr. Lally wanted to make sure that

the troop knows that the Board of Selectman never sponsored the parade and that the Chamber sponsors it. He recommended that the troop go to the chamber with their request.

Mr. Bateman questioned whether a train is able to run through Seabrook and into Hampton since there is a Nuclear Plant in Seabrook.

Mr. Welch confirmed that it cannot.

Mr. Bateman wonders if anyone has told the Rail Line Committee since they are talking about trying to run a train through Hampton.

Mr. Welch stated that this could not happen for many reasons including the fact that there is missing track in many areas.

Mr. Gearreald requested of the Board that they go into a non-meeting with counsel to discuss personnel matters.

VIII. Consent Agenda

1. Federal Surplus Property Program Agreement
2. MS-2 " Report of Appropriations Actually Voted"

Discussion

Mr. Welch pointed out that Mr. Schwotzer was unable to attend the meeting tonight since he went home sick today. However, the Board has been provided with the MS2 form that must be signed by the Board. He requested that the Board add this item to the consent agenda.

Mr. Nichols MOTIONED to move the Consent Agenda. Mr. Lally SECONDED.

VOTE: 5-0-0

IX. Closing Comments

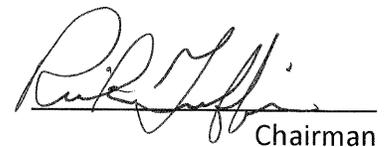
Chairman Griffin thinks that whenever the Board is considering priorities they need to remember to listen to the voters.

At 10:00 PM; on Selectmen Lally's motion; by roll call with all members present and voting unanimously the Board of Selectmen entered into a Non-Public meeting under RSA 91-A:3., II., (a), to discuss personnel matters. Mr. Znoj SECONDED

VOTE: 5-0-0

X. Adjournment

The Board adjourned at 11:00


Chairman