

Town of Hampton



TOWN OF HAMPTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN March 08, 2010 Minutes

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

ABSENT: Frederick Welch

6:00 PM Non-meeting with Legal Counsel - RSA 91-A:2., I., (b)

7:00 PM

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

I. Public Hearing – Emergency Lane “Mary Avenue”

Chairman Griffin asked if anyone in the audience would like to speak and they did not. Mr. Lally suggested that it be sent to the Police and Fire Chief for comments. Mr. Bateman suggested tabling the Public Hearing until the next meeting.

II. Public Comment Period - None

III. Announcements and Community Calendar

Mr. Bateman would like to comment on the census that is being taken. He shared the impact that this type of census has and how in the previous census only 72% responded. It is vitally important and it only takes 10 minutes.

Mr. Nichols would just like to add in regards to the census it also helps to determine how \$400 billion in Federal Funds is going to be spent on infrastructure and services. Mr. Nichols commented in regards to the storm if you call Comcast you can get a credit on your bill for the days you were without service. Mr. Nichols explained that he called today and it only took about 3 minutes and he received a \$9 credit.

Mr. Znoj reminded everyone that tomorrow everyone needs to get out and vote.

Mr. Lally would like to follow up on the article in the paper in regards to the Warrant Article for the Legal Department. He encourages people to visit the Town website at hamptonnh.gov for further information. The true figures are listed under the Legal Department.

Chairman Griffin encourages everyone to come out and vote.

IV. Appointments

1. Michael Schwotzer – Financial Statements

Mr. Schwotzer explained that the budget column uses the 2010 budget versus measuring against last year's 2009 budget which was \$1.2M larger. Town Meeting will make the final choice between the proposed/default budgets and the March reports will be reflective of that vote.

The income for the month totaled \$426k. Of this motor vehicle total came in at \$152.7k, this is \$44k below budget and almost identical to January's level. He will continue to monitor/report on this segment since it represents over 40% of the income budget. Other major areas were NH Highway Subsidy at \$53k, Cable Franchise Fee at \$102k and the first monthly payment from the Real Estate Trust Fund at \$81k.

The expense summary show the year to date expenses by department. At the end of February the operating departments were 15.2% of the budget which is lower than the month's target of 16.7%. In the Town Manager's department, as discussed last month, the Supplies & Expense line is over the target due to processing the initial payment for the codification project which is covered by a '09 PO. As this project progresses through the year, it will continue to appear out of line with the monthly target.

Assessing Department – The second bill relating to Contracted Services has been received and will be processed in March. This level of expense will continue until the appeals meetings/reviews happen later in the year with their higher activity level and cost. In Personnel Admin the NHRS costs are running below the target because the budget was calculated to include the contribution rate increase (an additional 1% impact) which will start in July.

The Town Office Building Maintenance account is within target. This is reflective of being measured against the new budget, which was increased \$30k over '09. If February's actual was measured against the default, the percentage would increase to 27% which is higher than the target of 16.7%.

In Municipal Insurance, Health Insurance came in on budget for the second time/month of the year. This is another of the "important" accounts due to its annual cost/impact of \$2.25M.

The Fire Department OT analysis showing February's YTD cost as being \$29k lower than incurred in '09. March however will reflect at least half of those savings being used at the recent beach fire. The \$202k charge to Hydrants is for the first half of the year.

Trash transportation is at 7% of budget which is typically low due to the lag time in billings by the disposal company. There should also be an increase in cost due to disposing of storm damage materials at the transfer station.

The January charge of \$1,970 in Public Assistance - Other was confirmed as containing the cost of two burials and a relocation related expense. This line may appear out of line but the overall Welfare Department is running at 7.2% of budget vs. the 16.7% target. Debt Service is at 20.9% vs. the 16.7% target due to the timing of re-payments. The next "large" payments are not due until June and July.

In Fund 25 – Cable Committee the costs related to the Contracted Services have been reclassified for 2009 and 2010 YTD. At this time of year, these costs typically run a bit higher than average due to the offsite work relating to the budget and deliberative sessions.

In Fund 27 – EMS the reporting of the Ambulance Revenue always lags at least a month behind. At the beginning of the year, the emphasis of the billing company is focused on closing out the prior year's bills causing this minimal amount to be processed in February.

Discussion

Mr. Nichols wants to make sure that Mr. Nickerson is aware of the fact that \$18,000 has already been spent in contracted services in the Cable Committee Fund. Mr. Schwotzer stated that Mr. Nickerson did receive the monthly report.

Mr. Bateman commented that time must be flying since it seems Mr. Schwotzer was just here.

Mr. Nichols is going to disagree with Mr. Schwotzer on that nothing major is going on. Mr. Nichols feels that on the revenue side the run rate on motor vehicle income could potentially be a problem. It could kick back the other way in March but if you simply take the rate that we are off for the first two months if that rate were to continue for the full year that is over a half million dollars. This could be big so let's see what happens in March. Mr. Nichols asked for clarification on tipping fees YTD in February was roughly \$52,000 and he recalls that in January Mr. Schwotzer indicated that the \$24,000 that was applied to that line item in January was like an accrual from last year. Mr. Schwotzer commented that the \$24,000 was actually what was billed through that month. He has not flipped the accruals. Mr. Schwotzer explained that he is handling the encumbrances a little different this year. He will be reviewing it with the auditors when they are here in April. Mr. Nichols clarified that the numbers in this account are the amount of actual bills. Mr. Nichols thinks that we are seeing some savings in tipping fees from recycling.

Mr. Lally also commented on motor vehicles income being down.

Mr. Znoj commented on gasoline in building department running at 34.5% spent and we are only at two months. Mr. Znoj feels that the other department heads should be present to answer these questions when Mr. Schwotzer gives his report. Mr. Nichols pointed out that when he has a question that he does not think Mr. Schwotzer will know the answer to off the top of his head he sends an email ahead of time so that Mr. Schwotzer can do the research. Mr. Znoj thinks that is a good idea and in the future he will email Mr. Schwotzer with any questions that might need an answer from a department head.

2. John Nyhan – Hampton Beach Area Commission

Mr. Nyhan gave some history of when and why the Hampton Beach Area Commission was established. He also shared the makeup of the Commission. Since the Hampton Beach Master Plan and the Commission were developed there have been a number of recommendations through the Master Plan that have either been implemented or partially implemented. The largest being the Town's \$12M Infrastructure Project. Other plans that have been implemented or will be in the near future includes: the State Park Redevelopment Project, the continued landscape and beautification process and a proposed planning and zoning ordinance that will hopefully be passed tomorrow. However they have only started to make an impact on the recommendations within the Beach Master Plan. In their annual report they highlighted a number of master plan projects that they are working on. They are working with the Town to complete the seven streets as part of the Infrastructure Project. Finalize the parking study that was started last year with the Rockingham Planning Commission. Working with DOT to secure funding for a new Ocean Blvd. Also working to explore realistic solutions to construct a new

Neil Underwood Bridge. Continuing to work to secure funding for a new Visitors Center. Finally working to develop economic and commercial strategies to help support our businesses along Ocean Blvd and surrounding areas.

This last item in Mr. Nyhan's opinion has to become their number one priority. He feels that the Commission, the Village District, the Town and the Chamber owe it to these businesses to work with them and assist in every way we can so that those who have spent money in new construction so that they will stay here and continue to be a part of that jewel of NH that everybody talks about. Part of this strategy should include helping businesses rebuild, rehabbing existing businesses, bring in new business investors to fill vacant lots and to buy for sale properties giving Hampton that Main Street look that we talk about all the time.

As a starting point the Commission will be hosting a high level economic development summit in late April early May. It is their intent to bring our business community together with the public sector at all levels of government to discuss ways of revitalizing this jewel through a public private partnership. They will also be inviting outside business partners and investors to participate. For them to achieve this objective they need to bring back that same community support that brought us that \$14.5M for the Beach Project.

It's time for all of us to work together as one to achieve the economic recommendations laid out in the Master Plan. He has spoken to the President of the Chamber, the Chairman of the Hampton Beach Village District and both have pledged their support and cooperation in the summit. He comes here tonight to ask the Board for their support and cooperation in this effort and ask them to extend this request to their departments including Channel 22 Advisory Committee. He hopes that Channel 22 could play an important part in this meeting. Over the next couple of weeks he will be finalizing a list of the invited guests including Federal, State and Local and an agenda which will also include public comment. They will be identifying a date and location in the very near future. Once the details are firmed up he will give the Board an update.

Mr. Nyhan is sure that they have all driven through the beach after the current disaster and he feels that we do not need any more empty lots or parking lots. He thinks that we need to fill these lots with vital businesses that will contribute to the success of Hampton Beach.

Discussion

Mr. Bateman had a conversation today with Ray Blondeau one of the three families connected to the difficulties on the A Street block. He applauds Mr. Nyhan's foresight to indicate yeah that it's time for us to jump in to make sure a number of things are fast tracked so that Mr. Blondeau can rebuild. Mr. Bateman would rather see this corner in a state of reconstruction all summer than the state that it is in of destruction. The image from the beach can either be uplifting or dragging the heart down. He believes that the Town is going to be very supportive in making this happen for these three families.

Mr. Nichols questioned Mr. Nyhan indicating that the Visitor Center is not part of the Beach Project. Just to make sure that he understands it correctly this is the building down at the south end of the State Park. However the Haverhill Ave, Ross Ave and the Seashell are funded at this point. Mr. Nyhan confirmed that this is true and on Wednesday the final stamp of approval will be given by the Governor's Council. The contractor has already been selected and plans are to get the shovel in the ground as early as the end of this month. Preliminary plans have that the

two bath houses could be completed by July 4th. Then they will take a retreat until after the Seafood Festival at which time the Seashell will be taken down and hopefully have the new Seashell in place for the beginning of the 2011 season.

Mr. Lally commented on how the Town cannot help financially but will do everything that they can do to help. He thinks the key at the beach is that the State needs to be involved and even the Federal Government. He thinks that Mr. Nyhan is on the right track to this.

One thing that Chairman Griffin found interesting is that the level of aid that they help people in many instances depends on the medium of how much people make and Hampton does not qualify for so many things because we have a very high medium amount which is \$57,000. He does not know if this plays into this instance or not but he still found it very interesting.

Mr. Lally says that the problem is many of these businesses are not open year round. This is why he feels that the State and the Federal Government need to get involved.

Mr. Znoj thanked Mr. Nyhan for coming in and providing the update. He looks forward to the upcoming summit. He believes that the beach needs a new look.

There was an additional discussion of how the beach looked very long ago and how it has changed over time. Mr. Lally explained how at one time when the Plant was being built the workers rented properties at the beach and the restaurants stayed open year round for these people.

Mr. Nyhan hopes that at this summit we can get people to think outside of the box. He would like to bring in an economic development engine somebody who would either works directly down on the beach as an Economic Development Manager or connected with one of the two Economic Organizations here in the seacoast area. Finding funds on a Federal level to do this job would be great and a win situation for everyone.

Chairman Griffin commented that it is easier for these businesses to deal with the private lender and some of the difficulties these business owners face when they go to a bank for a loan.

Mr. Bateman MOTIONED that the Board whole heartedly support the concept and the realism of going out to search for funding at every level and for the position of an individual to help coordinate that is a wonderful add on. Mr. Lally SECONDED.

VOTE: 5-0-0

Chairman Griffin would suggest inviting some of the private lenders to the summit.

Mr. Nyhan provided the Board with an update on the meeting that was held today in the Senator's office in regards to funding for the seven streets. The Senator's senior staff has been very helpful. A couple of things happened today he knew going in that they were trying to find several different Federal Agencies that would listen to our story and try to come up with ideas if there is a pot of money out there to help support the seven streets. Today they had a meeting with the Department of Agriculture they have a number of programs unfortunately most of which we do not meet the population criteria.

However, another person who was an Executive Director with the State Economic Development Community Block Grant Organization thought she might be able to help. She will be calling Mr. Welch in the next couple of days to set up a time to bring her staff down here to tour the seven streets.

There is a slight possibility that there are funds available that they call emergency funds and if somehow we can show that these seven streets during storms and during high tides get flooded creating a health condition issue then we might be able to get some funds through that.

Mr. Lally would suggest getting Chief Silver onboard with this. DES was a subject that was brought up in terms of getting some funding from DES.

Finally last month the Town Manager wrote a letter to the Senator because one of the things that we continue to put on the table is the earmark. That with the influence that the Senator has in Washington and although earmarking in Washington has not been very popular lately that even if it is the slightest possibility for the Senator to get a million dollar earmark to contribute to this so that is still on the table. It is taking longer than Mr. Nyhan thought last fall but we are making progress. He is seeing some activity and it is just trying to find the right match. Chairman Griffin added that there are people who are trying to help but because of criteria they cannot help.

Mr. Bateman shared some information on when the State was looking at workers comp last year and he shared how when they were looking at this area Hampton came out the highest in this area. He also added that the State was at the Planning Board meeting on Wednesday and it was very informative. Mr. Bateman also added that the State does hope to have a Visitor Center to promote this area and other areas in the State.

Chairman Griffin thanked Mr. Nyhan for coming.

V. Minutes of March 01, 2010 Postponed to March 15, 2010

VI. Town Manager's Report – Town Manager was not in attendance

VII. Old Business

1. 2010 Town Warrant

The Board agreed to not go through all the articles but to allow each member to make any comments that they wished to make.

Mr. Bateman thinks it is important that everyone get out to vote and he mentioned that he is a candidate for a position. He believes that the Cemetery Trustees are the unknown but an integral part of this Town. The issue of getting rid of an entire department and not having any in house legal counsel is misguided and ill sighted. There are so many negatives to this and unless somebody really thinks they can afford going from what we are spending to at least half a million dollars more that would be the only reason to vote for this article and he does not think we will find many people who want to do this.

The last thing he would suggest is coming in and getting a Town Report and going through the warrant and make your own decision on how you want to vote and not vote based on something you received through the mail.

Mr. Nichols only comment is that he received a call today from some people representing Saint Patrick's Church on Church Street. Apparently someone had put a sign on their property saying to vote yes on Article 35 and they simply asked that Mr. Nichols would mention that the Church did not authorize this and doesn't necessarily support this article. Article 35 is the proposal to purchase land on Boston Ave.

Mr. Znoj thinks that they have spent enough time discussing the many articles on the ballot. He would just like to bring up the article in regards to the Galley Hatch. He would suggest that we help are neighbors and this is only a small piece of land and they would be paying \$50,000 for it and taxes.

Mr. Lally agrees with Mr. Znoj and we need to help our neighbors and hopefully people at home can see that the land is literally indistinguishable to the lot. He knows that there was a discussion about selling Town property but he really believes that we need to support the businesses in Town and vote to approve this sale of Town property. Mr. Lally would also like to bring up the article on the Legal Department. He encouraged the people at home to go on the Town website and see the correct figures. There is so much more that goes into a Legal Department then what you see in the paper in regards to who's suing the Town and who the Town is suing.

Chairman Griffin wonders how much taxes were being paid on the properties on the beach that were lost during the fire. Mr. Nichols stated that if the \$3M number is correct for the value of the buildings lost than we would lose somewhere between 45 and 50 thousand dollars. The reason Chairman Griffin brings this up is maybe people want to think twice before they turn down letting the Rye people bring their sewage to Hampton. With the loose from the taxes on the buildings involved in the fire the Town is already going to be down on its revenue and we do not want to lose a revenue stream that we have coming in.

The Board discussed who will be at the polls at what time and the three people who will be there at the end to sign off on the ballots.

Other Old Business

Mr. Lally informed the Board that they had the first meeting of the sub-committee for the recycling committee. The notes will be sent out and they will meet again on the 16th. The purpose of this committee is to come up with ways to get the visitors and renters onboard with recycling. Mr. Nichols felt that a lot of progress was made at this meeting. Mr. Lally shared some of the individuals who attended the meeting.

VIII. New Business - None

IX. Consent Agenda

1. Hampton Cemetery Deed – Charlene Billings

Mr. Znoj MOTIONED to Move the Consent Agenda. Chairman Griffin SECONDED.

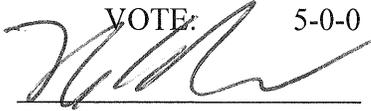
VOTE: 5-0-0

X. Closing Comments - None

XI. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:24.

Mr. Znoj MOTIONED to adjourn. Mr. Bateman SECONDED.

VOTE: 5-0-0


Chairman