

BUDGET COMMITTEE

February 21, 2023 in the Selectmen's Meeting Room

Draft Version

Chairwoman Harake called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Chairwoman Harake led the pledge of allegiance.

- Mr. Warburton asked for a moment of silence to remember Kenny Lessard who passed away recently. Everyone in the room stood for a moment.
- Ms. Harake referenced the recent devastating earthquake in Istanbul, Turkey and asked for a moment of silence to acknowledge those who were affected.

Introduction of Members (Roll Call)

Katherine Harake, Chairwoman

Matthew Saunders, Vice-Chairman

Steve Henderson

Brian Warburton

Larry Quinn

Mike Plouffe

Bob Ladd, Village District Representative

Rusty Bridle, Selectmen's Representative

I. Acceptance of the 1/12/23 minutes

- Ms. Harake noted that on page 5, "Hampton Beach Area" should be changed to say "Hampton Beach Village District".
- Mr. Warburton noted that on page 1 "Silverdick" should be corrected to say "Silberdick".
- Mr. Ladd stated that he did not mean the 2023 Hampton Beach Village District budget would be presented in March of this year. He was referencing the 2022 budget, which was presented in March 2022.

Mr. Bridle MOTIONED to accept the minutes with the suggested edits.

SECONDED by Mr. Ladd. Vote: Unanimous.

II. Village District Budget Presentation; Chairman Chuck Rage and Commissioner Maureen Buckley.

- Mr. Rage presented the budget. He gave an overview of the Village District's history along with their responsibilities and procedures. He noted that to vote in the village district you have to specifically register in the village district. The next registration will be on March 18th.
 - General Budget: \$61,850
 - One reduction noted in the line item for 'legal'.
 - Culture/Recreation Budget

- Line Item: Sand Sculptures:
 - This line item has increased due to increased costs.
 - Mr. Ladd commented that this event results in high attendance and exposes a lot of children to art.
- Line Item: Community Support:
 - The Chamber of Commerce support is mostly for children's week.
 - The Blue Ocean Society does beach clean-ups throughout the summer and they also have a touch tank.
- Line Item: Bus/Trolley: \$20,000
 - Mr. Rage noted that this is an item that is kept open while they work to find a way to bring transportation to the beach.
- Line Item: Revenue:
 - Revenues come from the parking lot and the sand sculptures.
- Questions and Discussion:
 - Mr. Warburton asked for clarification regarding the timeline of a loan payment,
 - Mr. Rage confirmed that it is a 20 year note.
 - Ms. Harake asked for statistics on the number of tourists coming to Hampton Beach.
 - Mr. Rage stated that they have tried to measure it in the past. He stated that their website does get over 1 million hits.
 - Mr. Quinn asked if the Hampton Beach Village District carries an Undesignated Fund Balance.
 - Mr. Rage confirmed that they do. He noted that they have been able to keep the tax rate pretty much even for the last 5-6 years.
 - Mr. Ladd commented that Hampton Beach is one of the few places left that offers free entertainment. He stated that it is a great asset to the state.

Mr. Warburton MOTIONED to accept the Hampton Beach Village District's budget as presented. SECONDED by Mr. Bridle. Vote: Unanimous.

III. Year-End Financials

- Mr. Warburton noted that the Police Outside Agencies budget of \$40,000 is being overspent by 367.81%. He added that even more was spent above and beyond that, but it's not reflected because it was covered by grants. He feels this is misleading and asked how it can be more accurately reflected in the reports.
 - Mr. Saunders suggested that the total spent and how much was offset be reflected in the report. Committee members agreed that it would be beneficial to reflect amounts that are offset by grants,

undesignated fund balance funds, and warrant articles.

- The committee discussed summer police presence and ways to reduce outside agency costs.

IV. Old Business

○ Encumbrances

- Committee members acknowledged that they received information regarding encumbrances. No discussion was had.

V. New Business

○ Mr. Quinn

- Commented that all budgets sailed through deliberative sessions aside from a few warrant articles. He stated that he does not believe that the voters are up in arms.
- He praised the town administrators for giving fantastic presentations to the Hampton Beach Village District.

○ Mr. Warburton

- Commented that attendance at deliberative sessions is always low and he still believes that the people will go out and vote no.
- He voiced opposition to the use of Undesignated Funds.
- He noted that Mr. Plouffe had previously asked for clarification on if the town would be doing a re-list or a reevaluation and never received an answer.
- He noted that the information he requested from the school district regarding people who have left and retired in the last 5 years was never provided.

○ Mr. Henderson

- Stated that although people are busy and don't show up for town meetings, there are still a lot of people in-town who care and know what is going on.
- He stated that people vote by their pocketbook and people in town are hurting.
- He commented that he thinks the police body cams would be great, but not this year.

○ Ms. Harake

- Asked what questions have not been answered.
 - Mr. Warburton stated that he would like to know if the town will be doing a re-list or a revaluation.
 - Ms. Harake re-read a statement from Kristi Pulliam from an earlier meeting.
 - Mr. Warburton and Mr. Henderson did not feel that Ms. Pulliam's statement was clear enough.
 - Ms. Harake will submit a clarifying question.
 - Mr. Warburton asked for information on teachers and administrators who have left the district or retired in the last 5 years.

- Mr. Warburton voiced concern about the current process of asking questions and the resulting delays in information being dispersed to the committee.

- Mr. Saunders echoed Mr. Warburton's concerns and suggested that the person with a more complicated question should be involved in asking the question.
- Mr. Bridle noted that questions can be sent out and answers can be sent back. No discussion, just answers.
- Mr. Henderson
 - Voiced concern about the use of Undesignated Fund Balance funds. He feels that a lot of people are confused by the articles that say "No Tax Impact".
 - Mr. Warburton stated that he feels the Undesignated Fund Balance is being used in the wrong way. He stated that he will be voting no to any article which proposes using them.
 - Mr. Henderson suggested that in the spring the committee have a discussion about how to approach articles that use these funds. He stated that he will evaluate these articles on a case-by-case basis.
 - Mr. Ladd noted that he does not feel it is appropriate to say no to any article proposing to use these funds before knowing what they are.

VI. **Adjournment**

Mr. Bridle MOTIONED to adjourn. SECONDED by Mr. Warburton. Vote:
Unanimous.