

BUDGET COMMITTEE
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

March 15, 2022 in the Selectmen's Meeting Room

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

Chairman Harake led the pledge of allegiance.

Introduction of Members (Roll Call)

Katherine Harake, Chairman
Matt Saunders, Vice-Chair
Larry Quinn
Brian Warburton
Mike Plouffe
Bob Ladd, Village District Representative
Rusty Bridle, Selectmen's Representative

Absent: Ginny Bridle-Russell, School Board Representative

I. New Business 6:01 PM

A. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Mr. Saunders MOTIONED to nominate Ms. Harake for the chair position. SECONDED by Mr. Ladd. Vote: Unanimous.

Ms. Harake MOTIONED to nominate Mr. Saunders for the vice-chair position. SECONDED by Mr. Warburton. Vote: Unanimous.

B. Select Committee Representatives (6:03 PM)

Mr. Warburton MOTIONED for Ms. Harake to continue as the CHAT representative. SECONDED by Mr. Ladd. Vote: Unanimous.

Ms. Harake MOTIONED for Mr. Ladd to represent the Budget Committee on the Capital Improvements Plan. SECONDED by Mr. Warburton. Vote: Unanimous.

Mr. Plouffe MOTIONED for Mr. Warburton to act as the Budget Committee Representative for the Master Plan. SECONDED by Ms. Harake. Vote: Unanimous.

II. Village District Budget Presentation - Given by Chuck Rage, Chair and Maureen Buckley, Vice-Chair 6:04 PM.

Mr. Rage gave an overview of the Hampton Beach Village District Budget. The Village District has a bottom line budget and two separate tax districts.

Mr. Rage noted that the playground budget had increased, but not much had been spent yet due to supply chain challenges.

Ms. Harake asked if they have coordinated with the Parks and Recreation Department regarding playground equipment. Mr. Rage stated that he has been in-touch with Rene, the director of the

department.

Mr. Rage stated that the budget is mostly flat, although insurance costs have gone up due to a few new events.

Mr. Rage noted an increase in Culture and Recreation. \$40,000 increase in advertising compared to the previous year. This is an effort to bring tourists back post-covid.

Mr. Rage noted a decrease in the Concert Series budget. He said that the decrease was due to a change in the way vendors are paid. Mr. Rage added that they have hired some new people this year.

Mr. Rage noted the increase in the Idol Competition budget. This was done so that they can offer better prizes and draw more people.

Mr. Rage noted that the Media Director position is taken on by co-directors who do all of the advertising.

Mr. Rage highlighted the increase in the Fireworks budget. They will use the same contractors as the previous year. Last year, less was spent due to the piping plovers.

Mr. Rage explained that the Sand Sculpture costs have gone up due to the cost of goods. Mr. Rage noted that they produced \$40,000 through sponsorships in the previous year.

Mr. Rage pointed out a decrease in the special event budget from \$902,000 to \$892,500.

Mr. Saunders asked if one firm handles all the advertising and PR. Mr. Rage explained that it is all done in-house by the media directors.

Mr. Rage noted a line for bus services. They always put this in the budget, but if they do not spend it, it goes back to the people. Mr. Rage stated that they have tried to make a deal with Coast in the past, but the cost was too high.

Mr. Warburton MOTIONED to send the proposed budget of \$892,500 to the March 25th Hampton Village District Deliberative Session. SECONDED by Mr. Bridle. Vote: Unanimous.

Mr. Warburton MOTIONED for the budget committee to recommend \$61,350 for the annual meeting on March 25th. SECONDED by Mr. Plouffe. Vote: Unanimous.

Ms. Harake asked how many registered voters they have in the village district. Mr. Rage estimated 200, some of which are exempt.

Mr. Ladd commented that people who do not live in the district do not pay anything towards this. If you live in the district but do not operate a business, you pay a very nominal amount, he estimates about 8% of the total budget. If you live in the district and want to vote in the district, you need to register. Registering to vote uptown does not register you to vote in the district.

The district meeting will take place on Friday, March 25th at the fire station at the beach. If you live in the district, you can register to vote the day of. Voting starts at 1 PM. The meeting starts at 7 PM and then they vote on the budget.

Mr. Ladd added that they will be honoring the Prestons at this meeting and invited anyone to come.

III. Questions and Comments on October 2021-January 2022 financials (6:20 PM)

Ms. Harake recommended that anyone who has a question let her know and she will pass it on to the town.

Mr. Warburton stated that at this point in the year they usually want to look at the end of year results.

Ms. Harake stated that if anyone has looked at October, November, or December and has questions they can talk about them now. She asked if anyone had any questions.

No one had questions.

Ms. Harake stated that she would like to have more clarification on the encumbrances and open positions, along with warrant article outlays from the previous year.

Mr. Plouffe noted concern about the Unassigned Fund Balance and money that is committed but not yet spent. Ms. Harake asked if he believes a 3-year budget would work better than a year-to-year. Mr. Plouffe said that he feels they need a report each year on what is committed out of the Undesignated Fund Balance. Ms. Harake asked for clarification on how that differs from what is in the end-of-year report. She noted that it shows the total capital outlay. Mr. Plouffe said that they need something that says “there are X dollars committed and X dollars spent”. Ms. Harake reiterated that the numbers are there, but they need more clarification.

Ms. Harake asked for clarifications on the questions that she will ask the town. Mr. Plouffe stated that he wants to know if there is actually 10 million in the Undesignated Funds Balance. Ms. Harake summarized that they would like more clarification on the timeline of purchases and the expectation of the open positions along with the Undesignated Fund Balance and encumbrances by the year-end. Ms. Harake stated that she felt this could be best addressed in a live meeting.

Mr. Warburton asked what funding sources would be used for Winnacunnet Road? Mr. Bridle noted that it will come out of the highway block grant.

Ms. Harake stated that she would like to look more closely at the revenue side going forward.

Mr. Ladd noted that it would be nice if there could be some projections on what the increased taxes would be in the following year. He also stated that he feels that the Undesignated Fund Balance can become confusing when a percentage is committed. He asked about the potential of opening a second account. Mr. Bridle believed that it all had to stay in one account, but suggested creating categories. He suggested talking to the finance committee to see what the best path forward would be.

Ms. Harake reviewed the committee’s concern about the designated vs undesignated funds and capital outlays regarding unfilled positions. She added that she would like to see metrics regarding investments made in different departments this year and how the money has improved things.

Mr. Warburton stated that the voters overwhelmingly approved a lot of money. He noted that the communication is out there, and whatever can be added to the review process is a win-win. Ms. Harake agreed. Mr. Ladd cautioned that their minds could change when the costs hit the taxpayer. Ms. Harake acknowledged Mr. Ladd’s point, and added that people are supporting investments like these so that they can enjoy Hampton.

IV. Other Business/Comment

Ms. Harake noted that she may not be here for the April meeting.

V. Adjournment (6:39 PM)

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