

HAMPTON MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING
DRAFT MINUTES

Tuesday May 21, 2019

Attendance

Brian Warburton, Chair
Michael Plouffe, Vice Chair
Steven Henderson
Stephen LaBranche
Joyce Skaperdas
Rusty Bridle, Selectman Representative
Robert Ladd, Hampton Beach Village District Representative
Ginny Bridle-Russell, SAU90 Representative

Absent

David Maurer (excused)

1. Call to Order at 7 PM by Mr Warburton

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Introduction of Members

4. Review and Approval of Minutes - April 16, 2019

Members pointed out the need to change the typo from BRA to DRA.

Motion	Michael Plouffe	to accept the Municipal Budget Committee Minutes of April 16, 2019 with typo corrected.
Second	Steve Henderson	APPROVED: Unanimous

5. New Hampshire Municipal Association (NHMA) Update

Contacting NHMA -- Mr Bridle confirmed that any member of the Budget Committee can call the **NHMA**.

Procedure for Tie-Votes on a Ballot Item – Mr Warburton referenced an email and conversation with NHMA Attorney Steve Buckley who cited RSA case law and his view that a tie-vote on a ballot item means no position taken and should no longer be designated as “not recommended “. Accordingly, a tie-vote is not a failure to make a recommendation, and the designation of the vote tally can be left blank without affecting the legality.

Motion	Joyce Skaperdas	to leave blank any description relating to a tie-vote on a ballot item.
Second	Steve Henderson	APPROVED: Unanimous

6 Old Business

February, March, April Finance Reports – Mr Warburton called attention to the financial reports provided by the Finance Director, and asked Members to review these reports on the website in advance of meetings. Ms Skaperdas thanked Ms Pulliam for providing her with historical Budget Committee information and orientation. She hoped the Committee could agree on an FY2020 budget, commenting that because default budgets differ from year to year comparatives are problematic. Aside from collective bargaining contracts, she thought the Committee could be more effective. Mr Ladd said the key is how much tax revenue is available above that needed for the default budget, and what would not be funded in the event of a default budget. Mr Plouffe said that figures for at least 6 months are needed to see the line-item trends, i.e. some expenses come early in the year and others toward year end.

Mr Henderson commented that police and fire experiences fluctuate, weather is unpredictable, and unforeseen infrastructure funding expense may occur. Up to date performance data for all of these items are needed by the Committee when considering/evaluating next year’s budget. The public needs a clear understanding of what will and will not be funded under a default budget. Reductions should have the least impact on the voters. He felt that the public has been good about taking care of town employees and equipment Now the town must plan for how major infrastructure projects (water, sewer, roads) will be funded

Mr Bridle reported that in April 2018 the town was under budget by \$727,000; April 2017 was under budget by \$504,000; In April 2019 the figure is \$697,000 (2.7%) under budget. Some expenses come early in the year. A number of calls about the transfer station were received. This is a contract issue as those who work on Saturday or Sunday are paid at overtime rates.

Research showed that most activity on Sunday occurred before noon; closing Sunday hours would have the least impact on voters. Ms Bridle-Russell wanted default reductions to stay as reductions.

Mr LaBranche commented that a default budget is not necessarily negative, i.e. a \$500,000 reduction is a small amount in a \$26,000,000 budget. Mr Warburton recalled that a few years ago when there was a lot of snow, transferring money from the unassigned fund balance was denied because it was too early in the year; considering reduced hours for the transfer station should wait for results toward the end of the year. People are tired of hearing there is no money and question picking up trash 7 days at the beach, but closing down hours at the transfer station. The unaudited 2018 yearend figures for the town is anticipated to be approximately \$300,000 under budget.

Mr Warburton said more is at stake than what will be given up, and Committee members change. The Budget Committee needs to understand the early months' performance to make informed decisions in December; three-year comparisons are essential to the process. He noted that some members had missed meetings and urged full attendance for discussions. Ms Bridle-Russell said that the audience is affected by rudeness; when they ask good questions, they want to be treated respectfully. Mr Henderson noted the substantial budgets for the town, SAU90, and Academy construction. Although members may disagree, he expected matters to be handled professionally.

Ms Skaperdas thought one percent (@\$300,000) was not a lot for surplus. Mr LaBranche pointed out that for government budgets one percent represented good management. Late in the year the town manager looks at the surplus and what might be allocated to department needs. Mr Bridle reminded that last winter was mild with no extraordinary events. Mr Ladd noted it was up to the town to manage the approved budget which looks to the future. Ms Bridle-Russell believes that the Budget Committee's duty is to approve a bottom-line for the budget; it's the Selectmen's decision to approve new conditions via line-items and/or warrants, as does the School Board with respect to SAU90. Mr Warburton thanked the Finance Director for supplying 3-year averages enabling comparisons by account over time. The public wants the FY2020 budget to pass and not be confined to the default budget.

7. Selectman's Report

Mr Bridle reported that the sewer project bridge was set on Monday and the pipes are being tested. When satisfied, the temporary pipes can be removed. Aquarian will be replacing water lines along Church Street during the summer.

8. School Board Report

Ms Bridle-Russell said the Academy figures would be provided as soon as ready. Mr Warburton emphasized the need to receive reports sooner, and asked for the detail on money distributed during the last 3 years from the Academy Trust Fund which may have offset some line-items. In response to Mr Warburton, Ms Bridle-Russell estimated the Academy building revenue surplus at \$200,000. Mr Warburton asked for the year-end figures to be available for the June Committee meeting (the school year is July to June)

Hampton Academy Construction Schedule Ms Bridle-Russell said the Academy construction is almost done. Current work is on the cafeteria and outside areas. Wings are finished and teachers will start moving in on June 14. (For Academy construction information see Channel 13 or SAU90.org.)

9. Hampton Village District Report

Mr Ladd reported summer programs at the beach, expected to include country music singers and the circus program, will be in full swing by July 4 through Labor Day;. After the September holiday, special events continue with the Seacoast Festival and the annual fire show. Beach rules are bring in/bring out. Mr Warburton noted that the DPW is heavily involved and reminded that the snow fencing and more water will be needed. He agreed with the state holding the May 22 community session, but felt that 5:30 was not a convenient time for the public.

10. New Business

Coastal Hazard Adaptation Team (CHAT) --Mr LaBranche represented Budget Committee at the CHAT meeting. Information is being gathered; flood categories and maps were discussed. In response to the question as to why CHAT only involved Hampton, Mr LaBranche reported that Seabrook and Hampton Falls were working through the Seabrook Hampton Estuary Alliance (SHEA). CHAT is being formed through grant money supplied by SHEA. Mr LaBranche thought that regional planning is good, but site specific for locals is best.

Appointment to Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

Mr Warburton recalled that the CIP comprises 6 years of capital projects.

Motion	Michael Plouffe	to appoint Steven Henderson as the Budget Committee Representative to the Capital Improvement Program Committee.
Second	Stephen LaBranche	APPROVED: Unanimous

Motion	Stephen LaBranche	to appoint Michael Plouffe as the Budget Committee Alternate Representative to the Capital Improvement Program Committee.
Second	Steve Henderson	APPROVED: Unanimous

Appointment to Master Plan Committee – Mr Warburton said as the Warrant Article proposing funding for the initial Master Plan revision work did not pass, the Planning Board decided that the subject of its 2nd monthly meeting (7pm) would become a workshop dedicated to developing the Hampton Master Plan. The first meeting includes a presentation by the Rockingham Planning Commission on CIP essentials. The Board is seeking a representative from the Budget Committee.

Motion	Robert Ladd	to appoint Brian Warburton as the Budget Committee representative to the Master Plan Committee.
Second	Michael Plouffe	APPROVED: Michael Plouffe, Steven Henderson, Stephen LaBranche, Joyce Skaperdas, Rusty Bridle, Robert Ladd, Ginny Bridle-Russell, Abstained: Brian Warburton

11. Commentary: Selectman Mary Louise Woolsey

Mr Warburton approved Ms Woolsey’s request to speak to the Committee. Ms Woolsey distributed the November 27, 2017 Town Manager Employment Agreement, noting it is online. Her focus is the related money impact on the taxpayers, which she had previously expressed to the Board of Selectmen. Mr Bridle raised a point of order as to relevance to the Budget Committee.

According to Ms Woolsey the term of each of the Town Manager’s first three contracts (beginning in 2007) had been three years, but the last contract was extended to four years (2016-2020). The Town Manager’s current year’s gross salary is \$116,368; the contract includes provisions for performance evaluation, benefits and severance. Ms Woolsey also stated that the position of [Assistant] Town Manager was created in 2014, and subsequently filled by contract with a former town employee at an annual gross salary of approximately \$87,000, plus severance provisions. She did not know of another town of similar size that had two managers. Additionally, Ms Woolsey stated that in July of 2020, or in the event the Town Manager sooner vacates that position, he would automatically transition to and remain in the

position of a part-time deputy town manager until June 30, 2021. In that event the then Deputy [Assistant] Town Manager shall immediately be appointed as Town Manager without competition, (remaining in the town's employ until mid 2022).

Mr Bridle again raised the point of order deeming this subject a Selectmen's employment/employee matter that had nothing to do with the Budget Committee, and motioned to adjourn. Mr Warburton responded that only the Budget Committee Chair can cause adjournment, and stated Ms Woolsey's subject appropriately relates to the FY2020 budget. In response to Mr LaBranche's concern that this is a personnel matter, Mr Warburton said this contract was public knowledge and on the website. Ms Bridle-Russell said the Budget Committee votes a bottom-line budget; the Selectmen's job is to fill in that line-item budget.

Ms Woolsey's issues were that approximately \$200,000 annually is allocated just for the town manager(s) position which she felt was "outrageous" and higher than in other towns of similar size. Additionally, she stated that the common procedure when hiring a town manager was to advertise the open position in a search for qualified candidates and interview them, which had not been done. Ms Woolsey said the contract scared her as a resident and taxpayer.

Mr Warburton interrupted Ms Woolsey to address other new business items.

12. Information Requests

Mr Warburton asked the Selectmen's Representative for the following information for the next meeting: i) an accounting of outside counsel expenditures through April 2019, and of all litigation issues pertaining to this committee in the past, ii) a list of persons from outside towns who were paid during the last 2 years for duties in Hampton and the wage amounts they received, which he believed should have been listed in the Town Report. Mr Bridle asked for the requests in writing; he will provide the information. Ms Scarpedas asked that information be provided well in advance of a meeting.

13. Announcement

Mr Warburton called attention to the Rockingham Planning Commission Annual meeting on Wednesday, June 12, 2019 at the Galley Hatch in Hampton. The Featured Speaker is former Supreme Court Justice John T. Broderick Jr whose topic is "Changing the Culture of Mental Illness". The cost is \$35. For more information call 603 778 0885.

Further to Ms Woolsey's comments above (#12):

Mr Bridle asked for the record to show that a motion to adjourn had been duly seconded and had been denied. Mr Warburton again explained that the Committee procedure was for the Chair to call for adjournment. Ms Bridle-Russell, Mr Bridle, Mr LaBranche and Mr Ladd then left the meeting. Ms Woolsey reiterated that her subject was public money, and that she found

hiring persons without specific qualifications for a job offensive believing competition for any position is needed.

14. BudComm Meetings

Mr Henderson said the Committee's purpose is the Budget and hoped that for future meetings guest speakers address budget matters that are listed on the Agenda, noting he had utmost respect for Ms Woolsey. He thanked Ms Scarpedas for her willingness to participate on the Committee. Mr Warburton said the previous presentation was relevant to the FY2020 budget which involves millions of dollars. Ms Scarpedas was very uncomfortable with that presentation, feeling the need for the Budget Committee and other Boards to be sensitive to the current environment in the country and the town, and being respectful to other members who want to do a good job. Rudeness should be avoided and the tone tempered. Mr Warburton felt that Ms Woolsey had been stifled – respect goes both ways. He'd been on town boards for decades; if people did not like his tone they could remove him as Chair.

Mr Warburton announced that Budget Committee meetings will be scheduled for the third Tuesday of the month. Meetings are already scheduled for June 18; and September 17 (with School Administration). Meetings recess in July and August

15. Adjournment

Mr Warburton adjourned the May 21, 2019 Municipal Budget Committee meeting at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully Submitted by,
Barbara Kravitz, Recording Secretary,
Town of Hampton
Municipal Budget Committee