

BUDGET COMMITTEE
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

November 10, 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

Steve Henderson

Brian Warburton

Mike Plouffe

Bob Ladd, Village District Representative

Rusty Bridle, Selectmen's Representative

Frank Deluca, School Board Representative

I. Acceptance of October 18th, 2022 Minutes

Mr. Warburton MOTIONED to approve the October 18th minutes. SECONDED by Mr. Plouffe. Vote: 7-0-1. Mr. Henderson Abstained.

II. New Business

A. Selectmen's Update

- Mr. Bridle noted that the Selectmen have reviewed the budget and it will be passed on to the Budget Committee next.

B. School Board Update

- Mr. Deluca noted that the school board met the previous night to approve the 2023/2024 school budget. It will be presented to the Budget Committee in December.

C. Village District Update

- Mr. Ladd stated that the Village District, The Hampton Area Chamber, and the State Parks cooperated to produce a film which was shown on NESN. It was titled Hampton Gone Wild and it focused on the estuary.

D. SAU 90 2022 Budget Update presented by Mariah Curtis and Dr. Lois Costa

- *Highlights from the previous year, presented by Dr. Costa.*
- *Financial Summary, presented by Ms. Curtis.*
 - a) There is a fund balance of \$476,255
 - (1) Catastrophic Aid, Medicaid, a Health Trust surplus, and prior year revenues from Primex all contributed to the balance.
- *District Goals (from the 2022-2023 year), presented by Dr. Costa*
- *Current Year Budget*
 - a) Total appropriations: \$25,371,221
 - b) 954 Students
 - c) Fully Staffed
- *Student Services Data*
 - a) Mr. Warburton asked about the 160 identified students and the

extent of the services they receive. Services could include a range of things, including occupational therapy, and speech. Students could have one service or multiple. If they are receiving services, they are identified. This is for grades K-8.

- b) Identified students receiving services at Sacred Heart: If they're identified, our Special Education Director does all the testing for them and determines which services they need. This is a part of a grant and does not cost the Taxpayers anything.
- c) Mr. Warburton asked if English Learners are people who are currently learning English as a second language. Dr. Costa confirmed that it is and there are students spread throughout the grades.
- d) Mr. Warburton asked that the administration be more specific at meetings regarding what the line items in the budget are for. He offered praise to Mr. Deluca for his work and efforts to be clear about the budget.

- *Planning for FY 2023-2024*

- a) Ms. Harake asked if SAU 90 is paying for studies that drive the classroom standards. Dr. Costa and Ms. Curtis noted that it is professional development, so it is grant funded.
- b) Mr. Warburton recommended that saying SESPA contracts are a 'budget increase driver' is misleading. He suggested that they discuss the entire budget including salaries.
 - (1) Ms. Curtis noted that 80% of the school budget is salaries.
- c) Ms. Harake asked that more attention be brought to operational costs for the three buildings in the budget review. She would specifically like to learn more about energy efficiencies and what strategies are being used to save money.

E. 2022 approved budget tax impact and 2023 budget overview, presented by Kristi Pulliam and Jamie Sullivan.

- *General Questions/Comments/Discussion*

- a) Ms. Harake asked about the tax rate. Mr. Sullivan explained that the rate has not been set yet, but as soon as it is they will present it to the Budget Committee.
- b) Ms. Harake asked about the possibility of receiving the tax rate before reviewing the budget. Mr. Sullivan explained that the town does not have the legal structure to do that, although it has been discussed in the past.
- c) Ms. Harake asked about 5-year averages of tax impact. Mr. Sullivan can provide historical tax rates, but stressed that a tax rate is made up of multiple pieces, not just the municipal budget. He noted that the municipal portion has been stable for the past decade.
- d) Ms. Harake noted concern about the tax impacts of recent investments made via the budget and warrant articles passed in the previous year. Ms. Sullivan noted that he feels the voters understand what they are voting for.

- (1) Mr. Warburton voiced concern about the length of time between voting for the funding and the burden hitting the tax bills. He suggested calling the DRA and having a conversation along with making sure the town understands

- b) Mr. Warburton would like to see their annual reports. Mr. Sullivan will look into the viability of sending a condensed report out via email.
- Mr. Warburton requested a detailed analysis of the “outside agency” costs. He feels that the cost of these extra staffing in the summer should not be absorbed by the Hampton taxpayers.
 - a) Mr. Sullivan asked that Mr. Warburton let him know what information he would like and he can compile that.
 - b) Mr. Henderson asked for a comparison on pay from outside agencies to town police officers.
 - c) Mr. Ladd suggested the creation of a new state agency.
 - (1) Mr. Sullivan noted that there is a park ranger, but the state police are a better solution. The issue is that there is a need, but no resources.

III. Adjournment

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