

HAMPTON BUDGET COMMITTEE
MINUTES
October 17, 2006

Budget Committee Members Present

Mary-Louise Woolsey, Chairman
Michael Plouffe, Vice-Chairman
William Lally, Selectman Representative
Rosemary Lamers, School Board Representative
Maureen Buckley, Precinct Representative
Russ Bernstein
Rusty Bridle
Maury Friedman
Dick Hansen
Eileen Latimer
Jack Lessard
Richard Nichols
Michael Pierce
Norman Silberdick

Excused

Pat Collins

Chairman Woolsey called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

The Committee wished John Nickerson a Happy Birthday.

Chairman Woolsey introduced the members of the Committee.

Approval of Minutes – September 19, 2006

Moved by Mr. Plouffe, seconded by Mr. Lessard, to approve the Minutes of September 17, 2006.

Vote: 12 yes, 0 no, 2 abstentions (Buckley, Latimer)

Chairman Woolsey read a memo from Mr. Sanders, Business Administrator for SAU 21.
Information was as follows:

The Hampton School District Deliberative Session will be held Monday, February 5, 2007, at 7:00 p.m. in the WHS Auditorium. The Winnacunnet School District Deliberative Session will be held Wednesday, February 7, 2007, at 7:00 p.m. in the WHS Auditorium. The Winnacunnet School District Public Hearing will be held on Thursday, January 11, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. in the WHS Library.

Precinct Report

Chairman Woolsey welcomed Ms. Buckley to the meeting. Ms. Buckley said there has been good community participation in the beautification project. The fire station is a big issue at this time.

School Board Report

Ms. Lamers reported that the total number of students in grades K through 8 is 1,266. The breakdown is Centre – 386, Marston – 425, and Hampton Academy – 455. Ms. Lamers passed out a forecast of what the population is projected to be in 5-10 years. Ms. Lamers passed out an explanation on federal grants which included who applied for the grant and the definition of what grants can be used for. Sometimes grants can be used for different programs than those for which they were given. The School Board is looking at the hiring of a grant writer. Ms. Lamers said that all the school district reports will be on the school website. Reports will be available on the fifth day of the month. Ms. Lamers said that there will be a fundraiser at WHS on Thursday, October 19, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. for the child who was injured in Hampton earlier this year.

Regarding the withdrawal, Mr. Silberdick asked if the declining numbers in student population is being considered. Ms. Lamers replied that it would be looked at.

Selectman's Report

Mr. Lally said that the final budget review by the Selectman was postponed. Mr. Lally said that this year in an effort to get a budget passed he hopes there will be constraint on Warrant Articles. The interviewing process for the Town Manager position is in its second phase. Mr. Lally said there will be a Planning Board meeting tomorrow night where the public can give their views about the growth of the town.

Chairman Woolsey said that the logical place for staffing is in the Operating Budget. She asked Mr. Lally to provide a debt service projection for 2007 to the Committee before work begins on the budget. She also requested rolling stock by department. Mr. Lally said he would submit these items to the Committee.

Chairman Woolsey discussed the Trustees of the Trust Funds. She said they are independent elected officials. The Town is required to fund what they need. However, since they are contained in the Operating Budget, it is up to the Selectmen to see that they are adequately funded.

Chairman Woolsey said that before the Committee reviews any Warrant Article related to bonding, they should have an overview of expenditures. Mr. Lally said he would provide this by next Monday.

Chairman Woolsey, referencing Mark Gearreald's letter of October 4, said that members of this Committee independently should not overburden the Town staff asking for information. If

information is desired, it should be run by the Committee and she will then request the information from the Interim Manager.

Mr. Friedman asked about the role of the Town Manager regarding budgets. Mr. Lally said that the Manager meets with each of the department heads. The key subject is personnel.

Mr. Silberdick said he hoped there wouldn't be a repeat this year on the perception of big spending at the end of the year. Mr. Lally said it was only a perception and nothing wrong was done last year. Chairman Woolsey reminded the group that there are fixed items in December that are high.

Chairman Woolsey urged the Committee members to read the article about audit committees in the October issue of *Town and City*.

Work Session

Chairman Woolsey opened the budget work session. She said it is important to decide how the Committee will handle motions to make adjustments in the budget and suggestions to the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Bernstein said he would suggest that the Committee not belabor every individual line item because the Committee's responsibility is the bottom line.

Chairman Woolsey agreed with Mr. Bernstein. She said that if something jumps out, a notation should be made to ask the Board of Selectmen to look at that item.

Mr. Nichols agreed with Mr. Bernstein. He said that he felt there should be more discussion on the merit of Warrant Articles.

Mr. Pierce said he agreed, but that he had received many phone calls from people who thought the Committee should go into more detail. Perhaps there could be some sort of compromise. Mr. Pierce said it is important to give the viewers a little bit of the flavor of what the Committee is doing.

Mr. Friedman said it is necessary to verify that management is managing. The public needs to know a comparison on salaries in other towns. He would like to see an analysis from the Interim Manager about grants. Mr. Friedman asked if there was a process in place that will maximize the number of grants the Town receives.

Ms. Latimer said that there is a comparative wage report available from NHMA. Ms. Latimer reminded the group that the town is not constant as it has a peak summer population. Ms. Latimer said she is opposed to not going over all of the details of the budget.

Ms. Lamers said it is important to give direction to the public as to where the value of their dollar lies.

Mr. Plouffe reminded the Committee that putting items into Warrant Articles means that the money can only be spent for a specific purpose. If an item goes into the operating budget there is no guarantee. Mr. Plouffe said we should go through all items that look unusual or anything that has been taken out of the operating budget and put into a Warrant Article.

Regarding wages, Mr. Lally said that the vast majority of people who work for the Town are contractual and this Committee has no control over those wages. Therefore it is a waste of time to get into this at any great length.

Mr. Hansen said he agreed with Mr. Bernstein that the Committee's responsibility is to come up with a bottom line number. He suggested that each member keep a list on certain items of interest as the season progresses. The Committee should not be concerned with anything less than \$100,000.

Mr. Lessard said he agreed that there shouldn't be so many Warrant Articles.

Mr. Bridle said he agreed that the Committee should be concerned only with the larger items. It is important that the department heads have all of the information. What they are asking for must be good for the Town.

Chairman Woolsey said she is very concerned about the debt service level. One-eighth of the operating budget is for debt service. The more money owed, the less money is available to complete projects such as drainage, sewer, etc.

Chairman Woolsey said she was also concerned that with all the growth that has taken place, the taxpayers don't seem to be receiving any benefit. A re-evaluation must be done within the next couple of years according to state law. She suggested that one-fourth of the fee for a re-evaluation be asked for during each of the next four years to pay for this.

Chairman Woolsey said that the Deliberative Session has the authority to decrease whatever amounts they want. They can only increase up to 10% of the Budget Committee's recommended figures. This also includes Warrant Articles.

Mr. Pierce suggested that if the Committee decides to adjust the budget in a particular area, that recommendation should be given to the Board of Selectmen.

Moved by Ms. Latimer, seconded by Mr. Pierce, that the Budget Committee prepare a list of recommendations to the Board of Selectmen to accompany the transmittal of the 2007 Operating Budget.

Vote: 14 yes, 0 no. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Woolsey reminded the Committee to pick up budget books on November 1. The next meeting will be on Thursday, November 2, at 7:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room. This meeting will address Town Clerk, Tax Collector, Assessor, Bldg. Inspector, Recreation, Conservation, Library, Mosquito Control, Cemetery and Welfare/Social Services.

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Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Mr. Lessard **moved**, seconded by Mr. Hansen, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

The meeting adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Rice
Secretary

Mary-Louise Woolsey, Chairman