

**HAMPTON BUDGET COMMITTEE
MINUTES
April 15, 2014**

Budget Committee Members Present

Eileen Latimer, Chairman

Richard Reniere, Vice Chairman

James Waddell, Selectman Representative

Jerry Znoj, School Board Representative

Robert Ladd, Hampton Beach Village District Representative

Timothy Citizen Jones

Stephen LaBranche

Brian Lapham

Jim O'Loughlin

Michael Pierce

David Wood

Excused

Pat Collins

Joe Grzybowski

Sunny Kravitz

Chairman Latimer called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

Committee members made self-introductions.

Chairman Latimer said elected seats on the Committee have been filled and there are two seats that need to be appointed. There are two candidates, Michael Plouffe who was unable to attend this meeting and Jim O'Loughlin.

Chairman Latimer introduced Mr. O'Loughlin who spoke about his previous experience in municipal government and his desire to be on the Committee.

Moved by Mr. LaBranche, seconded by Mr. Pierce, to appoint Michael Plouffe to the Hampton Budget Committee.

Vote: 10 yes, 0 no. Motion passed unanimously.

Moved by Mr. Ladd, seconded by Mr. LaBranche, to appoint Jim O'Loughlin to the Hampton Budget Committee.

Vote: 10 yes, 0 no. Motion passed unanimously.

Shirley Doheny, Town Clerk's Office, then swore Mr. O'Loughlin in and he took his seat on the board. Chairman Latimer said Mr. Plouffe will be sworn in at a later date.

Mr. Reniere said after the last meeting he thought about his 10 years of tenure on the Committee. During the early days things were different than they are now. There is now more depth to proceedings. This evolution has placed a burden on the Chairman for his/her many duties. Technology is also very important. Mr. Reniere said that after careful consideration he would like to step down as Vice Chairman, but remain a regular member of the Committee. Chairman Latimer commended Mr. Reniere for his fine service.

Moved by Mr. Jones, seconded by Mr. Reniere, to appoint David Wood as Vice Chairman for the Hampton Budget Committee.

Vote: 11 yes, 0 no. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Latimer welcomed Mike Schwotzer, Finance Director, who gave an informational presentation on the various funds associated with the Town by type and responsibility. One group belongs to the Trustees of the Trust Funds. The Real Estate Trust Fund has generated \$650,000 in income during the past year. This money is used to reduce taxes. Mr. Schwotzer also discussed the revolving funds and special revenue funds.

Mr. Ladd asked when it would be advantageous for the Town to borrow from the Real Estate Trust Fund. Mr. Schwotzer said it would not be a prudent move because the Town would have to pay a higher rate of interest than if they borrowed elsewhere.

Mr. Schwotzer then discussed the Audited Financials for 2013.

Mr. Ladd asked about the feasibility of quarterly tax billing. Mr. Schwotzer said it would be necessary to have six months of funds on hand to do this and it would be difficult.

Chairman Latimer thanked Mr. Schwotzer for his presentation and noted that he would be missed upon his retirement.

A break was taken at 8:20 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 8:30 p.m.

Chairman Latimer presented a calendar showing scheduled meetings through January 2015. She said traditionally the Committee does not meet in July and August. Discussion was held on whether there should be a June meeting. Some members felt an informational meeting could be beneficial. This will be decided at the May meeting.

Selectman Report

Chairman Latimer asked Mr. Waddell to get back to her when the default budget is resolved.

School Board Report

Chairman Latimer asked Mr. Znoj to give the Committee the School Board's summary when it is completed.

HBVD Report

Chairman Latimer asked Mr. Ladd to keep the Committee up to date on the monthly financials.

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Mr. Lapham, seconded by Mr. Wood, to approve the Minutes of March 18, 2014.

Vote: 7 yes, 1 no (Jones), 3 abstentions (O'Loughlin, Waddell, Znoj). Motion passed.

Old Business

Mr. LaBranche presented a draft outlining the duties of the Budget Committee members. He said it is a working document.

Moved by Mr. Jones, seconded by Mr. Znoj, to adopt the document outlining the duties of the Budget Committee members. Such document should be on the Agenda for all future meetings at which time members can make revisions.

Mr. Lapham said he felt members should have more time to review the document before adoption. Chairman Latimer said new members have not had time to review and she would like to wait until the next meeting.

Vote: 4 yes, 7 no (Ladd, Lapham, Latimer, O'Loughlin, Reniere, Waddell, Znoj). Motion failed.

Chairman Latimer cautioned the Committee to always adhere to RSA 91:A Right to Know Law on all communications.

Mr. Jones said he had made a motion at the last meeting which was tabled and would like to present a new motion.

Moved by Mr. Jones, seconded by Mr. LaBranche, that:

Whereas the voters of Hampton's Town Meeting have for three consecutive years refused to approve the position of Town Planner, and

Whereas a Town Planner was hired in direct breach of the voters will and previous committees have been reluctant to de-fund the position which would have caused hardship upon the individual hired, and

Whereas the Town Planner's position is presently vacated, and

Whereas the Budget Committee respects the will of the voters, and democracy itself, and seeks to demonstrate proper respect for the voters of Hampton's Town Meeting, and

Whereas continued disrespect of the voters would constitute a fatal blow to fundamental principles of democracy, and

Whereas individual Budget Committee members find that taking no action to remedy this breach of voters trust would cause each member to violate his/her sacred Oath of Office, therefore

Be it resolved that;

1. The Hampton Budget Committee intends to "zero out" the funding of the position of Town Planner until such time that the voters affirm the creation of the position, and
2. Instructs the Chairman of the Budget Committee to cause the public distribution of this motion to be made known to every member of the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board and to advise said board members that no such hiring of anyone into the position of Town Planner should occur until the Town Planner's position is affirmed by the voters.

Mr. Reniere asked what research Mr. Jones did on this issue. Mr. Jones said the issue violated the Consent Clause of the New Hampshire Bill of Rights. Mr. Reniere expressed amazement that this has continued to exist for so long Mr. Reniere said this is budgeting in reverse. The job of the Budget Committee is to approve or disapprove the budget submitted to them. This is dictating to department heads what is going to happen before their budget comes to the Committee.

Mr. Waddell said he would want a legal opinion on this. He also agreed that this is reverse budgeting. This is not the committee to take this on.

Chairman Latimer said the "No Means No" law was passed in 2004 and this could not have happened after that date. Chairman Latimer also said that there is a real need for a Town Planner due to increased development in the Town.

Mr. Ladd said this is an issue clearly beyond the scope of the Budget Committee. He said he also felt this motion was inflammatory.

Mr. LaBranche said when he votes he would like to think that his vote is counted. Mr. Jones is bringing this issue to light. Mr. Wood said he think having a Town Planner is a good thing. However, if the voters don't want one, their wishes must be adhered to. The Budget Committee should make their opinion known.

Chairman Latimer said when this occurred, the No Means No law was not in effect. It was probably unethical, but not illegal. Today the voters might feel differently. Chairman Latimer said she would rather see something temporary and have this resolved in the voting booth.

Mr. Lapham said he sees the need now more than ever to have a Town Planner. Mr. Pierce said he thinks this Committee should send a message to the Planning Board suggesting to them that they hire a temporary planner from RPC and then create a warrant article for the voters to approve a full-time planner. Mr. Znoj agreed with Mr. Pierce.

Chairman Latimer asked for a vote on the motion.

Vote: 4 yes, 7 no (Ladd, Lapham, Latimer, O'Loughlin, Reniere, Waddell, Znoj). Motion failed.

Moved by Mr. Pierce, seconded by Mr. LaBranche, to instruct the Chairman to send a letter to the Planning Board stating that the Budget Committee has deep concerns about their hiring of a full-time Town Planner due to the voters turning this down three times and would suggest the hiring of a temporary planner or borrowing one from the RPC. A warrant article should then be created for action by the voters in March, 2015 for a full-time planner if they so choose.

Vote: 7 yes, 4 no (Latimer, O'Loughlin, Reniere, Waddell). Motion passed.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, May 20, 2014, at 7:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Rice
Secretary