

HAMPTON BUDGET COMMITTEE
MINUTES
March 18, 2008

Budget Committee Members Present

Mary-Louise Woolsey, Chairman
Michael Plouffe, Vice-Chairman
Richard Nichols, Selectman Representative
Jim Desrosiers, School Board Representative
Pat Collins
Dick Hansen
Eileen Latimer
Jack Lessard
Michael Pierce
Norman Silberdick
Larry Stuker

Excused

Victor DeMarco
Maury Friedman
Peter Traynor

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Chairman Woolsey asked for a moment of silence to remember Ken Malcolm, state representative and former Budget Committee member, who passed away this week.

Chairman Woolsey introduced the members of the Committee. New members are Larry Stuker and Peter Traynor. Mr. Traynor was unable to attend this meeting due to a prior commitment.

Chairman Woolsey discussed the availability of Collective Bargaining Agreements for public viewing. A vote taken at a prior meeting asked Chairman Woolsey to write a letter to the Local Government Center asking for an opinion. Chairman Woolsey read the letter she sent. She later spoke to an attorney at the LGC who said they had received her letter and that other towns had similar issues. The attorney said the LGC would try to come up with an answer, but that the statute was vague. On March 10, Chairman Woolsey again spoke with the attorney who said they had not reached a conclusion and recommended that the Budget Committee get together with the Board of Selectmen and try to produce a joint request outlining the concerns, submit it to the LGC and they would take the matter up again. Chairman Woolsey said she had discussed this with Chairman Lally of the Board of Selectmen. She said another concern is that the public does have a

right to see public documents and as a Budget Committee it is important that when the Committee receives a request to act on a money article that the article is legitimate.

Chairman Woolsey suggested asking the Selectmen to join the Committee at the April meeting to see if some understanding can be reached.

Mr. Silberdick said he was under the impression that that there was opposition on the part of the Selectmen to provide this information and agreed that it would be a good idea to get together with the Selectmen.

Mr. Nichols said it was not so much that the Selectmen were trying to prevent public access of the documents, but that they were given guidance from the Manager that they could not do this. Mr. Nichols said the approach of seeking an opinion from the LGC would benefit many other towns.

Mr. Pierce said it was important to get an opinion and that it was a good idea to work with the Selectmen and come up with a solution.

Moved by Mr. Pierce, seconded by Mr. Silberdick, to direct that the Chairman send a letter to the Board of Selectmen, inviting them to the regular monthly Budget Committee meeting on Tuesday, April 15, for the purpose of determining whether they will agree to collaborate on a joint inquiry to the LGC as to whether:

- a) Collective Bargaining Agreements are subject to RSA 91 (Right to Know)
- b) If CBA's are public documents, when do they become so
- c) What steps need to be taken to make the agreements "legal documents"
- d) Need CBA's have legal status as agreements prior to having the special money articles for union contracts turned over to the Budget Committee for action prior to Public Hearings and posting on the warrant

Ms. Latimer said this motion would provide structure and a format for future boards. Chairman Woolsey said the LGC lobbies in Concord and this may provide impetus for clearing up this entire problem.

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

Approval of Minutes – February 19, 2008

Moved by Mr. Plouffe, seconded by Mr. Lessard, to approve the Minutes of February 19, 2008.

Vote: 8 yes, 0 no, 3 abstentions (Collins, Desrosiers, Stuker). Motion passed.

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Chairman Woolsey said the Precinct Annual Meeting will be held on Friday, March 28, at 7:00 p.m. at the Beach Fire Station.

Chairman Woolsey then asked for nominations for Chairman and Vice-Chairman for the coming year.

Moved by Mr. Hansen, seconded by Mr. Lessard, to appoint Mary-Louise Woolsey as Chairman and Michael Plouffe as Vice-Chairman of the Hampton Municipal Budget Committee for the coming year.

Vote: 9 yes, 0 no, 2 abstentions (Plouffe, Woolsey). Motion passed.

Chairman Woolsey said the Budget Committee meetings are held on the third Tuesday of the month. There are no meetings in July and August.

Chairman Woolsey said that if the Board of Selectmen work diligently on the fire station issue, the Committee would be willing to work with them.

Mr. Nichols said the uptown fire station proposal failed because it was simply too much money, and the beach station failed because of the land issue. He said it would be much better to get objections on the table ahead of time. This would give a better chance of success. The fire station proposals came up too late in the process.

Mr. Hansen said public input is needed on the fire station issue.

Chairman Woolsey discussed the makeup of the Budget Committee. There are 12 members at large and 3 appointed members (Board of Selectmen, School and Precinct). Appointed members are not held to the same attendance standards as other members. They don't need to be excused and usually have alternates. When they are here, they give a unique and specific outlook, help, etc. The statute of the budget law makes these appointed members literal members of this Committee. They must vote their conscience regardless of the views of the board they represent.

Chairman Woolsey said she is on the Waste & Recycling Committee. At the February meeting Brian Warburton, DRED, gave a wakeup call. Mr. Warburton has been invited to the May meeting. The public needs to know what is happening regarding recycling.

Chairman Woolsey said she needs a recommendation for the June meeting. The School will come in September as usual.

Mr. Stuker suggested inviting the Fire Chief to come in to discuss some areas in his presentation at the Deliberative Session. The public had concerns about the design of the proposed stations as well as the cost.

Mr. Lessard said he agreed with Mr. Stuker.

Chairman Woolsey said that the residents of the Town have known for years that it is necessary to address the physical plant needs of our Fire Department. It is imperative that this is taken care of.

Mr. Nichols said most people know it needs to be addressed, but they had a problem with the specific plans.

Mr. Silberdick said the Fire Station proposals were a last minute approach without public input. He said he felt everything can be accomplished if it is done rationally and carefully.

Ms. Latimer said the public voted against everything with a dollar sign and that she agrees with Chairman Woolsey's passion for solving this problem.

Chairman Woolsey said this is a recognized need and has been for years. The only group in the Town who can generate a bond request is the Board of Selectmen. The new Manager inherited many problems.

Chairman Woolsey asked Mr. Nichols to give an update at the next meeting regarding the refinancing of the police station. She said she would also like to see encumbrances shrink.

Mr. Hansen suggested adding a small fire station on to the police station. Chairman Woolsey said the problem there would be the displacement of parking spaces.

Chairman Woolsey asked Mr. Nichols to ask the Board of Selectmen if there is any thought towards restoring the social services articles into the budget. This would refer to petitioned articles only. She said operating budget functions belong in the operating budget.

Mr. Silberdick said this was a great suggestion.

Mr. Silberdick asked what the goals for the Committee for this year will be. These goals should be communicated to the Board of Selectmen. Chairman Woolsey asked the members to put together a list of goals and submit it to her at the April meeting.

Chairman Woolsey discussed *Town & City Magazine*. Presently there are no subscriptions paid for by the Committee. This was due to the fact that previously when there were subscriptions, members did not take advantage of reading the magazine.

Moved by Mr. Pierce, seconded by Mr. Hansen, to buy six subscriptions to *Town & City Magazine* for use by Budget Committee members.

After discussion, Mr. Pierce withdrew his motion.

Moved by Mr. Hansen, seconded by Mr. Pierce, to buy five subscriptions to *Town & City Magazine* for use by Budget Committee members.

Vote: 6 yes, 5 no (Collins, Latimer, Pierce, Plouffe, Woolsey). Motion passed.

Mr. Nichols said that during the last meeting with the Precinct, they agreed to forward the MS34 which shows the revenue number they used for setting the tax rate. Mr. Nichols asked if this had been received. Chairman Woolsey said it had not. Mr. Nichols suggested that a letter should be written on this matter.

Ms. Latimer said she had been wondering what the future of the library is and felt that people were not ready to put money into a building that might not be there in the future. She said the Committee should find out what the concerns of the library are so as to be more informed.

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 8:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Rice
Secretary

Mary-Louise Woolsey, Chairman