

HAMPTON BUDGET COMMITTEE
MINUTES
December 4, 2008

Budget Committee Members Present

Mary-Louise Woolsey, Chairman
Michael Plouffe, Vice-Chairman
Gary Kubik, Precinct Representative
Richard Nichols, Selectman Representative
Pat Collins
Victor DeMarco
Dick Hansen
Jack Lessard
Michael Pierce
Larry Stuker
Peter Traynor

Excused

Maury Friedman
Norman Silberdick

Unexcused

Eileen Latimer

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Chairman Woolsey introduced the members of the Committee

Approval of Minutes – December 2, 2008

Moved by Mr. Plouffe, seconded by Mr. Lessard, to approve the Minutes of December 2, 2008.

Vote: 10 yes, 0 no, 1 abstention (Kubik). Motion passed.

Chairman Woolsey said this meeting was a final review of the Town's operating budget.

Mike Schwotzer, Town Finance Officer, said at the present time the budget is at \$25,864,412. This includes the \$650,000 spike charge and is a 4.8% increase. If the spike charge is removed, the budget will be at \$25,214,000 which is a 2.19% increase.

Mr. DeMarco asked if those figures include the \$30,000 for a building study for the Fire Department. Mr. Schwotzer said the Board of Selectmen did add that and it will also be

Hampton Budget Committee

December 4, 2008

Page 2

put forth as a warrant article. Chairman Woolsey said she felt the \$30,000 should be left in the budget because if the warrant article fails, the Fire Department can still transfer that money to other uses.

Mr. Traynor asked what would happen if the \$650,000 spike amount were fixed in Concord. Mr. Schwotzer said both the budget and the default budget would decrease by that amount.

Mr. DeMarco asked what would happen if new collective bargaining agreements were not accepted in March. Mark Gearreald, Town Counsel, said that the expired agreements have a current life until the next contracts are signed.

Chairman Woolsey asked the Committee how they were perceiving the budget at this point.

Mr. Stuker said he felt all of the department budgets reviewed thus far are a reflection of the economy and the taxpayers' concern about the high cost of government. All of the departments did a magnificent job. Mr. Stuker said he was comfortable with this budget.

Mr. Traynor said he was not sure how the department heads would be able to accomplish all their goals with the amount of money in the budget. The taxpayers should be appreciative.

Mr. Collins said the department heads have done an admirable job.

Mr. Hansen said he agrees with this budget. He complimented the department heads on a job well done.

Mr. Lessard said the town departments are the best and he is 100% for this budget.

Mr. Pierce said he felt the Committee should stay with the Board of Selectmen bottom line of \$25,856,785. \$10,000 for Cemeteries was added to this budget and it was then reduced by approx. \$3,000 due to a reduction in the Library budget. Mr. Pierce said he felt the remaining amount of \$7,000 that was added should be deleted from the budget, but it should come out of fuel costs since it is important that the cemeteries get the extra money. Mr. Nichols said this would be a symbolic gesture and it would not hurt to take this money out of the fuel costs.

Chairman Woolsey asked for a main motion.

Moved by Mr. Plouffe, seconded by Mr. Nichols, to approve the Town Operating Budget of \$25,864,412.

Amendment made by Mr. Pierce, seconded by Mr. Nichols, to adjust the bottom line of the Town Operating Budget to \$25,856,785.

Mr. Nichols discussed the spiking charge problem. He said it is \$600,000 just for this year and it could keep going on in future years. Our reps are working hard on this.

Mr. Plouffe said a message came from the taxpayers last year and he hopes this budget works for 2009.

Chairman Woolsey said she agrees with this amendment. She said the Committee appreciates the departments of the Town and we should all know we could not live in the manner we do without them. The Committee is not here just to cut or add, but to focus on best value.

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

WARRANT ARTICLES

Mike Schwotzer passed out a list of proposed Warrant Articles.

Fire Engine - \$500,000

Mr. Schwotzer said the tax impact of this article will be spread out over time.

Salt Storage Shed - \$223,000

Chairman Woolsey said this has to be done or the Town will be fined by the EPA. Mr. Schwotzer said if this article is successful the work will be put out to bid. Mr. Traynor asked what the estimated date of completion would be if this article passes. Mr. Price, Director of Public Works said it would hopefully be completed next fall. Mr. Nichols said if this shed was built it would preclude running out of salt.

Town Hall – “Greening” - \$100,000

Mr. Schwotzer said Fred Welch, Town Manager, will present a list of what needs to be done in January.

Uptown Fire Station Study - \$30,000

Chairman Woolsey said she would make a recommendation at the deliberative session that the amount should be \$475,000 for a full architectural study. Mr. Nichols said he would urge staying with the \$30,000 because the higher amount will not pass.

Chairman Woolsey said what is needed is a professional study that will meet the needs of the Fire Department as provided by the Fire Chief. She said this is an emergency service and if a plan isn't presented predicated on the needs of this department, there will be many problems.

Mr. DeMarco said it is important that the Precinct put forth an article to extend the lease at the beach fire station. Mr. Kubik said no formal request for this has been received. Mr. DeMarco asked if the Precinct Commissioners would support this. Mr. Kubik replied that the Commissioners would, but he did not know about the taxpayers.

Chairman Woolsey said that union contracts are the only unknown at this time.

Mr. Nichols said that with warrant articles added, the operating budget would be \$26,709,785 (with spike included). This is an increase of 7.4%.

Chairman Woolsey said the Estimated Revenues are \$6,226,512. She asked if there were any adjustments. There were not.

Chairman Woolsey said the next meeting would be on Thursday, December 12, 2008, at 7:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at which time the School Budget and Revenues would be reviewed.

Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Rice
Secretary

Mary-Louise Woolsey, Chairman

