

HAMPTON BUDGET COMMITTEE
MINUTES
November 17, 2009

Budget Committee Members Present

Mary-Louise Woolsey, Chairman
Michael Plouffe, Vice-Chairman
Jerry Znoj, Selectman Representative
Gary Kubik, Precinct Representative (7:15 p.m.)
Pat Collins
Victor DeMarco
Dick Hansen
Brian Lapham
Eileen Latimer
Jack Lessard
Michael Pierce
Richard Reniere
Larry Stuker
Peter Traynor

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 of November 12, 2009

Moved by Mr. Plouffe, seconded by Mr. Lapham, to approve the Minutes of November 12, 2009 as amended.

Amendments to the Minutes were as follows:

Page 3, paragraph 2, sentence 2 should read “ Documentation has not been received on a timely basis”.

Page 3, paragraph 7 should read “Mr. Znoj said he wanted to assure the public that the money will be relegated into the revolving fund and there will be plenty of money for ambulances, etc.”.

End of corrections from November 12, 2009 Minutes.

Chairman Woolsey asked for a vote to approve the amended Minutes of November 12, 2009.

Vote: 13 yes, 0 no. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Woolsey said she was pleased to hear that the suit regarding drainage Hannaford brought against the Town has been settled. \$45,000 will be paid by the state, \$50,000 by the Local Government Center and \$50,000 by the Town. Chairman Woolsey asked Mike Schwotzer, Finance Director, for a recap on how many dollars were spent on this lawsuit.

Chairman Woolsey welcomed Chris Silver, Chief of the Hampton Fire Department.

Chairman Woolsey read a warrant article (Article 19) from the 2006 Town Report written by Attorney Gearreald concerning the EMS fund. This article was overwhelmingly passed by the voters. This article states that the funds may only be used for EMS activities and equipment. Chairman Woolsey asked if any legislation has changed this. Mr. Schwotzer replied that the stipulation that part of this money can be put in the general fund was not stated in the warrant article.

Chairman Woolsey asked Mr. Znoj to invite Attorney Gearreald to the final review to discuss Article 19.

Mr. Traynor said the voters wanted this money to go into the EMS fund. If money is taken from this fund to lower the tax rate it will cause problems.

Mr. Znoj said the Board of Selectmen have no agenda to undermine that fund, but excess funds are accumulating in that account.

Mr. Pierce said he saw no problem with excess funds going back into the general fund.

Ms. Latimer said when the public voted on this article they voted on all funds staying in the fund. It is the way the article was worded.

Mr. Collins said it would be best to wait and hear from Attorney Gearreald before there is any more discussion.

Mr. DeMarco asked where the EMS funds are used. Chief Silver said they go to regular wages, overtime wages for purposes related to EMS, special events, overtime callback for emergency medical services, medical training wages, career incentive wages, audit services, contracted services, i.e. ambulance billing, telephone which is necessary for monitors and defibrillators, supplies and expenses, diesel fuel, vehicle maintenance, new equipment, and recruitment.

Mr. DeMarco asked Chief Silver why his previous position has not been filled. Chief Silver replied that he has still been assuming some of those responsibilities and a portion of his salary does come from the EMS fund.

Mr. Stuker asked how much money there was in this account. Mr. Znoj said \$434,000. Mr. Stuker said staffing must also be considered for the EMS services.

Mr. Reniere asked if wages for EMS staffing come out of the EMS fund. Chief Silver said they come out of the regular fire department wages.

Chairman Woolsey said there are three fully equipped ambulances in the Town and asked why only one is being used. She said she felt it was because of under-staffing. She said overtime is not wanted, but callback is overtime and causes delays in service. The idea of this fund was to self-fund.

Chairman Woolsey asked if the department was discussing replacing an ambulance this year. Chief Silver said they were and the cost would be approximately \$170,000.

Rolling stock was discussed. Chief Silver said Engine 1 and Engine 4 need to be replaced. He said preventive maintenance is for longevity and there have not been funds for this. Chairman Woolsey asked if a special money article had been discussed with the Board of Selectmen regarding replacement of these vehicles. Chief Silver said it had not. Chairman Woolsey asked how long it would take to get the vehicles if approved. Chief Silver said it would take 10 to 12 months. Chairman Woolsey said the condition of these vehicles is one of the factors in the ISO rating.

Mr. DeMarco asked Mr. Znoj what the plans were regarding these replacements. Mr. Znoj replied that this needs to be addressed each year. The first priority is to get the stations done.

Mr. Traynor noted that the public will pay much more in property insurance if the ISO rating goes down.

Ms. Latimer said she felt it only prudent that this is put before the public in a warrant article.

Chairman Woolsey then asked for discussion on the operating budget for the Fire Department.

Moved by Mr. Znoj, seconded by Mr. Lessard, to move forward to the public hearing the amount of \$2,987,671 for the Fire Department.

Chief Silver commented that this budget is the same as Chief Skip Sullivan had when he retired 10 years ago.

Chairman Woolsey asked about the recommended national number per shift. Chief Silver said it is dependent on tasks performed. It is 15 for a first alarm. The number on a single fire apparatus is 4. There is an OSHA regulation that requires the use of self-contained breathing apparatus at the fire and you must be in a team of 2. There must be another team of 2 outside to rescue the first 2 team members

Mr. DeMarco said the Town Manager reduced the overtime line by 18%. This was reduced further by the Board of Selectmen for a total reduction of 44%. Mr. DeMarco said he did not see how this could work. Chief Silver said he could not say it would be adequate. It is likely that staffing will be at 6 rather than 5. Five means one engine and one ambulance in service.

Chairman Woolsey said her priorities were the three major departments. The public must realize that if they are unwilling to pay, services will be reduced.

Mr. Pierce asked if anything had been done on combining dispatch with the Police Department. Chief Silver said he and Chief Sullivan had been working on this.

Mr. Pierce said the main factor is what the voters will tolerate as a bottom line.

Chairman Woolsey said the Committee's function is to educate the public along with making the budget. She said there is an obligation to see that the Town's emergency services are funded properly.

Mr. Znoj said the Board of Selectmen are looking at the budget in an affordable way and are trying to find ways to execute for less.

Chief Silver said they now have schematic floor plans for the stations for review by the advisory committee. They are going through the elevations with the architect. Proposals are due back on November 24th.

Chairman Woolsey complimented Chief Silver and his staff for all their work on the two stations.

Mr. Stuker said he felt money should be added back into this budget. Chairman Woolsey said this can be taken up at the final review in December.

Chairman Woolsey asked for a vote on sending to the final review the main motion moved by Mr. Znoj.

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Vote: 8 yes, 6 no (Collins, DeMarco, Latimer, Stuker, Traynor, Woolsey). Motion passed.

The next meeting which will be the final review of the Town's 2010 Budget and Revenues will take place on Thursday, December 10, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room.

Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Rice
Secretary

Mary-Louise Woolsey, Chairman