

**HAMPTON MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE**  
**PUBLIC HEARING**  
**DRAFT MINUTES**

**Tuesday June 18, 2019**

**Attendance**

Brian Warburton, Chair  
Michael Plouffe, Vice Chair  
Steven Henderson  
Stephen LaBranche  
David Maurer  
Joyce Skaperdas  
Rusty Bridle, Selectman Representative  
Robert Ladd, Hampton Beach Village District Representative  
Ginny Bridle-Russell, SAU90 Representative

**1. Call to Order at 7 PM by Mr Warburton**

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Introduction of Members**

**4. Review and Approval of Minutes – May 21, 2019.**

There being no changes.

<b>Motion</b>	<b>Michael Plouffe</b>	<b>to accept the Municipal Budget Committee Minutes of May 21, 2019 as written.</b>
<b>Second</b>	<b>Seven Henderson</b>	<b>APPROVED: Unanimous Abstained: David Maurer</b>

**5. Old Business**

**Information Requests**

**Financials** – Mr Warburton said SAU90 representatives would appear at the September 17, 2019 BudComm meeting, noting that the school year begins in July. He called attention to

information and data materials that have been distributed to members to gain understanding in preparation for comparison to line-items in the forthcoming 2020 Budget. In particular, he asked for comments in re the Finance Director's May 18 Revenue and Expense Report presented to the Board of Selectmen. Mr Plouffe asked whether fluctuations in motor vehicle registration revenue reflected an increase in the number of vehicles from year to year, and wondered if that data could be provided. Mr Bridle explained this is based on the cost of vehicles; in a good economy vehicles may cost more and can be replaced sooner; the town population is increasing. Mr LaBranche thought another factor would be car-sharing which could reduce registration revenues.

**General Government**—Several Members expressed concern about legal expenses. Mr Warburton stated in 2017-2018 the legal department expenses amounted to \$254,000; an additional \$320,000 was for outside counsel costs. Mr Warburton said that some years ago legal expenses were all on a billable basis and showed as one line-item. Another concern is that 2019 legal costs through May were 120% over budget. In response to Ms Skaperdas' concerns about cost comparisons, Mr Warburton said the town counsel annual compensation is \$140,000 i.e. not on an hourly billable basis, but for accounting purposes the number of hours spent are recorded.

Mr Henderson explained that in the past the town had used a number of lawyers, depending on the situation, who were paid based on billable hours. Subsequently, a decision was made to engage an internal town counsel whom it was thought would handle all legal work. That is not the case now, as outside counsel is often being engaged and the cost has expanded greatly. He wondered if another attorney should be added, or if going back to using outside counsel for all legal matters on a billable basis should again be considered. Mr Ladd said the baseline should be the number of hours that internal counsel spends on town legal work compared to what the cost would be if that work was done by outside counsel. Mr Maurer noted that costs for staff assistance also had to be considered. Mr LaBranche thought Town Counsel would say if more help is needed next year. Ms Skaperdas suggested that one BudComm member be assigned to inquire with in-house counsel about these matters. Mr Warburton will do a memo summarizing the requested information. Mr Henderson wanted to know what outside expertise might be needed.

**Parks and Recreation**—Mr Warburton noted that this department no longer did parking and some mowing, yet the payroll was \$140,000. Mr Bridle said a number of employees do small parks and ball fields, as DPW did not have enough employees for this.

**Encumbrances**—Mr Warburton wants to look at carry-over encumbrances.

Mr Warburton thanked the Finance Director for the excellent summaries. He believes that BudComm has to drill down into costs and think “outside the box” to provide information to the public. Also he suggested that changes in the Library and Cemetery accounts be looked at by the BOS, noting that the Cemetery Trustees last year did not provide requested information. Mr Bridle said the Cemetery and Library Trustees, not the town, controlled their respective budgets. Ms Skaperdas thought the trustees dictated the spending. Mr Warburton noted that payroll was paid from the town funds and some allocations were via a taxpayer warrant article. Mr Maurer said there needs to be accountability, recalling that the Library submitted a warrant article for new windows yet they had money in a trust account; he asked for clarity.

## **6. School Board Report**

Mr Warburton announced that later this week he would meet with the SAU90 Superintendent and Business Manager, noting that the school budget runs from July 1-June 30. Mr Maurer agreed there must be full transparency. Mr Warburton thanked Ms Bridle Russell for the tally of construction costs, and had questions in re certain unanticipated adjusted costs. Special Ed and related student transportation costs amount to \$1,033,400; perhaps special education transportation costs should be in a different section. Enrollment is declining, so analyzing future needs is important. Ms Bridle-Russell said 37 paraprofessionals reflect the impact of special needs services. Also, Hampton’s 2019-2020 population actually is rising. Mr Warburton said that certain Special Ed out-of-district costs are a liability of more than \$800,000 over 5 years. The taxpayer needs to know that this is a state mandate. Ms Bridle-Russell added that if a Hampton child becomes homeless but attends school in another town, both towns share the cost for transportation and school until they have a permanent home. Mr Warburton asked what the schools and the town will do to reevaluate and bring the budgets down, even while some costs will rise. Mr LaBranche noted that Hampton’s school costs included SAU90 and SAU21 budget; the state and federal government should be asked why they creates mandates and offer so little help. Mr Warburton added that Hampton is considered a wealthy community so if there are distributions it gets very little help.

**Hampton Academy Construction**--Ms Bridle-Russell submitted the Academy construction figures, despite some revisions cost, the project costs are slightly under budget. This year the graduation was held indoors. The building will open in a few weeks . Mr Warburton asked for information on income and expenditures in re the Hampton Academy Trust Fund, as well as other revenues. Ms Bridle-Russell informed the Committee that in September SAU90 Business Administrator Nathan Lunney will be employed in Portsmouth.

## **7. Selectman’s Report**

Mr Maurer was impressed with the quality of the Police and Fire Department presentations, and the outstanding quality of the DPW updating. Mr Bridle said the DPW work on Mill Pond Dam, Ann’s Lane, the Gristmill renovation, and the force main have been completed; the Park Avenue

culvert replacement is scheduled for July. The Wastewater Treatment facility engineering is in progress. Another hazardous waste collection will be on August 24. Mr Bridle said that information can regularly be found on Channel 22. Mr Warburton commended the recycling information.

#### **8. Hampton Village District Report**

Mr Ladd said the sand castle contest has begun with artists beginning construction tomorrow. More people will visit the artistic sand sculpting, than visit 90% of all art museums in the country..

#### **9. New Business**

**Coastal Hazard Adaptation Team (CHAT)**—Mr LaBranche explained CHAT is an outgrowth of the Seabrook-Hampton Estuary Alliance (SHEA), and is a pilot program to focus on site specific coastal flooding in Hampton; the information collected from various locations and solutions will be distributed in the region.

**Hampton Master Plan Initiative**—Mr Warburton represents the Budget Committee on the Master Plan Committee which meets every month on the second Wednesday. Ms Kravitz is also a committee member.

#### **10. BudComm Schedule of Meetings**

BudComm will not meet in July or August. Next Meeting is September 17, 2019 with SAU 90 Administration, and next on October 15. Beginning in November through the Deliberative Session, the Committee can expect to meet on Tuesday and/or Thursday with dates to come.

#### **11. Adjournment**

Mr Warburton adjourned the June 18, 2019 Municipal Budget Committee meeting at 8:15PM.

Respectfully Submitted by,  
Barbara Kravitz, Recording Secretary,  
Town of Hampton Municipal Budget Committee