

TOWN OF HAMPS TEAD

BUDGET COMMITTEE

MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES

January 14, 2016

Approved April 14, 2016

PRESENT: Emily Reschberger, John Skidmore, Steve Londrigan Bill Keating, Jorge Mesa-Tejada

VISITORS: Penny Williams, Priscilla Lindquist, Natalie Gallo

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jorge Mesa-Tejada at 7:01 PM in the Selectmen's Office, Hampstead Town Hall.

1. Call to Order; Pledge of Allegiance

Emily Reschberger led the Pledge of Allegiance

2. Visitors Comments

None

3. Approval of Minutes: December 10, 2015

Motion by John Skidmore, seconded by Steve Londrigan, to approve as written

VOTE YES 5 NO 0 ABSTAIN 0

4. Discussion: Review of School Board vote on January 12th – Jason Cipriano

School Board Chairman Jason Cipriano was invited but couldn't attend because of a previous engagement. The BudCom wanted him to explain the School Board's vote on January 12th whereby the School Board, based on legal advice, voted that the Hampstead Budget Committee had no standing on School District affairs because it was never adopted per RSA32:14,IV. That's factually correct because, when created, the Budget Committee was to be advisory and not "official" per the meaning of RSA32:14,IV. Further, RSA 32 did not exist then.

Jorge Mesa-Tejada stated that, in his opinion, the lawyer's conclusion was correct based on the documentation he had been given. He suspected that whoever requested the opinion did not furnish complete data, namely, that the first School District Warrant did not appear until 1930. Jorge then stated that the adoption of Article 13 of the 1926 Town Warrant—creation of an Advisory Budget Committee—applied to both the Town and School District because the District did not exist then as a separate corporation but was a department of the Town. Therefore, he rejected the School Board's action; stated that, that in his opinion, the BudCom is not illegal and proposed that unless the members rule otherwise, the BudCom should continue its functions until the Legislative Body votes to relieve it of its duties.

John Skidmore questioned why three members of the School Board felt they had the authority to override the legislative body's vote on Article 7, 2009 School District Warrant, which passed 1,100 to 162. He added that rescission of the 2009 vote requires an explicit vote of the Hampstead voters. More to the point, he wants to know why those three board members do not want the voters of Hampstead to see the recommendations of their BudCom on warrant articles.

Emily Reschberger agrees with John and finds the timing of the School Board action suspect, especially because of the 3-2 vote. She also maintains that it is the Legislative Body that has to rescind the action.

Steve Londrigan stated he agreed with all the previous statements.

Bill Keating wondered why the School Board objects to having a 5-member board—totally independent from the School District and with nothing to gain—express its opinion on warrant articles for the benefit of the voters.

Jorge proposed that the BudCom submit a letter to the area newspapers, signed by all the members, stating our position in the matter. The members agreed. Jorge will draft the letter and bring it to the Deliberative Session for their signature.

Priscilla Lindquist suggested that the BudCom use the town's legal line to get an opinion. Jorge explained that the School District is a separate corporation and he could not see how it could use town funds in School District matters.

5. Discussion: Police Union contract

The members reviewed the final document; had no objections.

6. Warrant Article Recommendations:

TOWN WARRANT

The Committee, having previously considered and discussed the warrant articles, voted to recommend as follows

- **Article 2 – Budget**

Motion by Steve Londrigan, seconded by John Skidmore

VOTE YES 5 NO 0 ABSTAIN 0

- **Article 3 – Police Union contract**

Motion by Emily Reschberger, seconded by Bill Keating

VOTE YES 5 NO 0 ABSTAIN 0

- **Article 5 – \$10K to Building Repairs and Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund**

Motion by Emily Reschberger, seconded by John Skidmore

VOTE YES 5 NO 0 ABSTAIN 0

- **Article 6 – \$10K to Hampstead Public Library Building Maintenance Non-Capital Fund**

Motion by Steve Londrigan, seconded by John Skidmore

VOTE YES 4 NO 0 ABSTAIN 1

- **Article 7 – \$3,070 for A Safe Place/Sexual Assault Support**

Motion by Emily Reschberger, seconded by Bill Keating

VOTE YES 5 NO 0 ABSTAIN 0

- **Article 8 - \$7,000 for Community Caregivers**

Motion by Bill Keating, seconded by John Skidmore

VOTE YES 5 NO 0 ABSTAIN 0

- **Article 9 - \$500 for Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)**
Motion by Steve Londrigan, seconded by Bill Keating
VOTE YES 5 NO 0 ABSTAIN 0
- **Article 10- up to \$50K for construction along road of Shop Pond**
Motion by John Skidmore, seconded by Bill Keating
VOTE YES 5 NO 0 ABSTAIN 0
- **Article 11 - \$130K long-term lease/buy for loader/up to \$18K for 1st year payment**
Motion by Emily Reschberger, seconded by John Skidmore
VOTE YES 5 NO 0 ABSTAIN 0

SCHOOL WARRANT

Jorge Mesa-Tejada indicated that the complete School Warrant was not handed out at the Public Hearing: the petitioned warrant articles were missing. However, Emily Reschberger had obtained a complete copy at the subsequent School Board meeting on the same date. That is the warrant the BudCom will use because it contains the petitioned articles omitted at the Public Hearing.

Further, the BudCom will ignore the January 12th action of the School Board and vote as usual because the voters have not relieved it of that responsibility.

- **Article 2 – Bond issue/ One Story HCS Renovation and Construction Project/ 10-year bond**

Motion by Emily Reschberger, seconded by John Skidmore

There was a long discussion on the pros and cons of this article plus the “individualized” tours of HCS provided to the BudCom by members of the School Board and the Administration.

Emily Reschberger stated that she took the tour and felt that the combination new constructions and renovations is a more comprehensive solution than just adding sprinklers, renovating the 1960’s wing and removing the portables.

Steve Londrigan said he also took the tour but his conclusion was that the proposed approach tries to do more than what is needed. He noted the decrease in students since the portables were added.

John Skidmore pointed out that the real cost figure was just under \$5.5 million when interest was added and opined that since enrolment was flat, the proposal is not justified.

Jorge Mesa-Tejada stated that the District chose not to expand the classrooms when public kindergarten was added. Thus we lost the 75% building aid incentive. Further, while the renovations are sorely needed, he cannot justify new construction when enrolment is flat for the next 10 years. He also criticized the “infomercial” trying to sell the bond because of the heavy emphasis on real estate values, apparently staged views and exaggerated claims in the narration. Regarding the students exposure to being shot while walking between the portables and the main building, he pointed out that real threat was recess because it provided a larger, easier target.

VOTE YES 1 NO 4 ABSTAIN 0

- **Article 3 – Operating budget**

Motion by Steve Londrigan, seconded by John Skidmore

VOTE YES 5 NO 0 ABSTAIN 0

- **Article 4 – Emergency Access Road**

Motion by Bill Keating, seconded by John Skidmore

Bill Keating is opposed to leasing land from St. Anne's when the district already owns land that could be used. Further, the district would have control over the roadway when, a few years from now, people would push to make it a full two-lane road open to all.

Jorge Mesa-Tejada wants it built on district owned land because there would be no "landlord" plus it has direct access to a public road, not a private parking lot.

Steve Londrigan was concerned about the ability to maintain and keep open a gravel road because it goes through wetlands and heavy equipment, such as fire engines, would get stuck. He prefers to have it paved.

Bill Keating pointed out that paving is not an option because St. Anne's won't allow it.

Emily Reschberger said she shared those concern as well but felt the emergency road is needed.

VOTE YES 2 NO 3 ABSTAIN 0

- **Article 5 – Capital Reserve Fund**

Motion by John Skidmore, seconded by Emily Reschberger

VOTE YES 5 NO 0 ABSTAIN 0

Jorge Mesa-Tejada pointed out that the BudCom could vote recommendations on petitioned articles even though they were not published by the School Board at the Public Hearing.

- **Article 7 – Renovate Hampstead Central School (by petition)**

Motion by Bill Keating, seconded by John Skidmore

Since the article had not been discussed at the Public Hearing, Mesa-Tejada explained the article. He said that the Superintendent stated that the article was under legal review because there was a question on whether he was authorized to write such article. Mesa-Tejada considered that claim to be absurd on its face because the only requirement to submit a petition article is to be a registered voter of the district (RSA197:6). The real reason is that Article 7 threatens the approval of Article 2, even though Article 7 is null and void if Article 2 is approved.

He then explained the two methods he used to arrive at the \$1.2 million figure. The figures are based/computed from various Breadloaf estimates issued over the last three years.

He also explained the meaning of "non-lapsing" vs regular warrant articles and how they work.

Steve Londrigan agreed with the approach, based on his experience and analysis of voters' preferences while trying to have the Police Station approved. He discovered that Hampstead taxpayers don't like to pay interest. They rather squirrel away money in capital reserve funds—at insignificant interest—than to pass a bond issue. Overall, he thinks this incremental approach is far more effective and supports the article.

John Skidmore agreed with Steve Londrigan and pointed out that, when the addition is brought again, the bond would be in the range of \$3 million or less.

Emily Reschberger opined that the \$1.2 million figure did not require bonding and that it addressed most of the infrastructure issues, such as sprinklers, relocation of HVAC systems, adding new windows and insulation to the 1960s wing. She added that she could support article 2—the Bond—or Article 7 as the latter offers an alternative while still getting necessary things done.

Jorge Mesa-Tejada offered to abstain since he was the lead petitioner. The other members disagreed and asked him to participate

VOTE YES 5 NO 0 ABSTAIN 0

7. Members comments

Emily Reschberger: Stated again her opinion of the pros and cons of Article 2 vs Article 7 and hoped that there would be some progress on the issue.

Steve Londrigan: none

Bill Keating: none

John Skidmore: none

Jorge Mesa-Tejada: Reminded members that Emily and Steve are up for reelection and he hopes to see them run again. Also, he informed the members that he would not accept being chairman and/or secretary the following year and hopes the other members will step up to the task. He thanked the members for their past support and for putting up with all his quirks while in office.

8. Next meeting agenda items

Town/School recommendation changes, if any

9. Schedule next meeting date

February 5, 2015 immediately following Town Deliberative Session ONLY if changes in School or Town money articles during Deliberative Sessions.

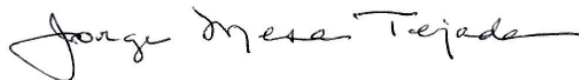
10. Visitors Comments

None

11. Adjournment

On motion by John Skidmore, seconded by Bill Keating, meeting was adjourned at 8:22 PM

For the Committee,



Jorge Mesa-Tejada, chairman