

Minutes for North Hampton Budget Committee Public Hearing:
North Hampton Town Recommended Budget
North Hampton School Recommended Budget
North Hampton School Auditorium, January 10, 2008



Attending Committee Members: Robert Copp, Michael Golden, Emily Creighton (Board of Selectmen), Robert Hamilton (Little Boar's Head), Jim Maggione, Larry Miller, David Peck (Chair), Kari Schmitz (North Hampton School Board)
Others in Attendance: Town Manager Steve Fournier, Police Chief Brian Page, Police Lieutenant John Scippa, Road Agent Bob Strout
Not Attending Committee Members: none

David Peck, Chair, called Hearing to order at 7:12 P.M.

Hearing Agenda and Discussion Points

1. David gave a Power Point presentation of overall year-to-year spending and tax rate trends.
 - a. For the years 2005 to 2007 inclusive, Town expenditures increased 33%, North Hampton School expenditures increased 14%, Consumer Price Index increased 10% and North Hampton tax rate increased 12%.
 - b. The Budget Committee recommended that the budget increase from 2008 to 2009 would be approximately 2.4% for the Town and 4.2% for the School for an average of 3.1%.
 - c. The 2006 tax rates were \$15.43 for North Hampton and \$8.66 for Rye. Since towns are assessed at different times, when the actual State of NH equalized property values were taken into account, the North Hampton tax rate was \$11.49 and that of Rye was \$8.08. The North Hampton tax rate may seem high, but compared to over 200 NH cities and towns, it is placed number 40, with number 1 being the lowest. New Castle had an equalized tax rate of \$4.49 and placed number 7.
 - d. The Power Point presentation is appended to these minutes.

Following the overall presentation of Town and School spending and tax rate trends, Dave gave a presentation of North Hampton School trends.

- a. For year 2009, salaries and wages will be about 57% of the school budget. Benefits will be approximately 19%. Supplies will be about 6% and debt about 5%.
- b. The major budget increases for year 2009 will be approximately \$24,900 for an added 1/2 Spanish teacher and \$142,779 for contracted increases for staff salaries and benefits.
- c. Cost per pupil for year 2006 was approximately \$14,000 for Hampton Falls and South Hampton (small towns), \$12,000 for Rye, \$12,500 for North Hampton and \$11,000 for Hampton and Seabrook (larger towns). The State of NH average is approximately \$10,000.

Lastly, David gave an overview of Town Budget trends.

- a. General town administration uses 18.63% of the town budget, public safety 53.71%, public works 13.09%, culture and recreation 7.94, debt service 5.87%.

- b. The major costs affecting the budget for year 2009 will be an increase of \$129,207 for debt service (69% increase) and an increase of \$61,306 for financial administration (41% increase) for bookkeeping and financial services.
 - c. The town operating budget was \$4,278,850 for 2005-2006, \$4,649,110 for 2006-2007, \$5,183,668 for 2007-2008 and \$5,401,048 for 2008-2009 (proposed).
2. The issue of improvements to the cemetery building was discussed. Cynthia Swank offered how important it was that original cemetery records not be kept in an unsecured building subject to fire. She strongly recommended that only copies be kept there.
 3. The need for a town part time bookkeeper and a part time financial person was reviewed.
 4. Chief Page offered that in so far as the Budget Committee had reduced the BOS suggested 5% across the board salary increase for non-union Town workers to 3.6%, there did not seem to be enough funds to cover an approximate \$7,000 retirement contribution for the Chief and Lieutenant, both of whom are non-union employees. (Later, during the Budget Committee meeting, Steve Fournier, the Business Manager said there had been a clerical error but that \$7,153 dollars had in fact been budgeted for retirement.)
 5. Sandy Dewing wanted to know if money from the Town Building Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund had actually been used to repair Town buildings, in particular the Town Hall. He was assured that the Selectman have discretion to use the fund and that necessary immediate repairs to the walls, floor, window and ceiling had been made to the Town Hall. More substantial work, however, would be needed in the future.
 6. The Town program to eventually televise town meetings and events will be funded by Comcast from a 3% "franchise fee" on each Comcast subscriber's bill. (The Town, can in the future authorize Comcast to deduct as much as 5 %.) A previous year's warrant article permitted the Town to use this money to only buy media equipment. Two of this years special warrants support an expansion of this program. One discontinues the right of the Town to use Comcast money to only buy equipment and the other warrant article allows the Town to use the Comcast money for equipment and staff. Cynthia Swank asked where this person would work. In the context of the discussion, it seemed that Cynthia was cautioning that there would be future costs for this program.
 7. Barbara Kohl asked if there was an actual scheduled maintenance plan for Town buildings. Emily Creighton assured her that Bob Strout and Richard Mabey, building inspector, have made schedules, which the Selectman use.
 8. The Budget Committee Town Hearing adjourned at 8:15 P.M.