

Board of Selectmen
Minutes of 12/20/04 AM Session
Approved 01/10/05

I. Call to Order.

Chairman Don Gould called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. There were present, Emily Creighton, Selectwoman, Jon Rineman, Selectman and Michael Pardue, Town Administrator. Mr. Pardue served as the Recording Secretary for this session.

II. Selectmen Items

A. Meet With Assessor Mr. Scott Marsh

The Board met with Mr. Marsh of Municipal Resources Inc. (MRI) to discuss the Town's tax rate and reduction in value following the Assessment Certification process as performed by Vision Appraisal Technologies during the fall of 2003.

Mr. Gould provided an overview of what the Board perceived as contributing factors that led to the rise in the tax rate (\$12.72 to \$15.05). Mr. Marsh concurred with the Boards interpretations of the factors that contributed to the rise in the tax rate.

The Board discussed the need to control spending in order to hold the tax rate in check while at the same time acknowledging that the Town would be "picking-up" value from recent sales and construction.

Mr. Marsh spoke of the philosophy of fair and equitable taxation citing the need to ensure that all properties are assessed at, or near, the 100% level.

Mr. Marsh explained the role of Municipal Resources in the 20% per year Assessment Certification effort. He further explained the "pick-up" process and the importance of April 1st as related to the taxing of property.

The Board thanked Mr. Marsh for attending their meeting and formally welcomed him and his colleagues from MRI as MRI serves as the Town's Tax Assessing firm.

B. Review of Town Department Budgets

The Board met with department heads to review department budgets that had been revised to reflect a maximum 3% increase as requested by the Board.

The Board met with Recreation Department Interim Director Ms. Diane Wheeler to review her revised budget. The Board complimented Ms. Wheeler on her revised budget efforts and asked that she reduce the amount allocated for North Hampton Youth Association to \$1.00 for FY '05-'06.

Motion / Vote: Ms. Creighton made a motion to approve the Recreation Department budget as amended. Mr. Rineman seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved. 3-0.

The Board met with Fire Chief Lambert and Deputy Chief Landry to review the revised Fire Department budget. The Board and the Fire Department administrators shared in much discussion concerning staffing levels, overtime and training. The discussion was considerable in relation to the benefits associated with “call” firefighters.

The Board asked Chief Lambert what he felt he needed for personnel / funding in order to provide minimal professional services.

Chief Lambert advised that he felt it imperative to add back \$20,000 in the overtime line, \$2,400 in the training and education line and \$6,000 in the Call Firefighter line of the proposed budget.

Following considerable discussion and consideration, the Board agreed with the request by Chief Lambert.

Motion / Vote: Mr. Rineman made a motion to approve the Fire Department budget as amended. Ms. Creighton seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved. 3-0.

The Board met with Chief Page and Lieutenant Scippa to discuss and review the revised police department budget. Chief Page, as previously requested by the Board, presented staffing levels reflecting no increase in staffing, and increase of one officer and an increase of two officers.

Chief Page, Lieutenant Scippa and the Board engaged in considerable discussion concerning the type of calls for service being experienced by the police department. Discussion also addressed the fact that between the hours of 2:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. on a daily basis, the department is minimally staffed.

Following considerable discussion and careful consideration, the Board voted on the proposed police department budget.

Motion / Vote: Mr. Rineman made a motion to approve the proposed Police Department budget that reflects the addition of two (2) new patrol officers. Mr. Gould seconded the motion. The vote was 2-1 with Ms. Creighton opposing the motion.

***Ms. Creighton asked that the minutes of this meeting reflect that she is in strong support to add one (1) additional officer at this time and is only opposed to the two (2) additional officer proposal due to fiscal constraints faced by the Town.**

The Board then met with the Mr. Richard Maybe, Code Enforcement Officer to review the Code Enforcement budget and the budget of the Planning Board.

Motion / Vote: Ms. Creighton made a motion to approve the Code Enforcement Department budget as amended. Mr. Rineman seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved. 3-0.

Motion / Vote: Ms. Creighton made a motion to approve the Planning Board budget as presented. Mr. Rineman seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved. 3-0.

The Board reviewed the budget of the Highway Department, Town Clerk and Tax Collector.

Motion / Vote: Mr. Rineman made a motion to approve the budgets of the Highway department, Town Clerk and Tax Collector as presented. Ms Creighton seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved. 3-0.

The Board reviewed the remaining departmental budgets as presented by Mr. Pardue and Ms. Facella, Administrative Assistant. The Board acknowledged that the presented budgets reflected the Board's request not to exceed a 3% combined maximum increase. Following considerable discussion related to the rising cost of health care insurance the Board voted.

Motion / Vote: Mr. Rineman made a motion to approve the Town budgets as amended. Ms Creighton seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved. 3-0.

C. Review of Proposed Warrant Articles

Mr. Pardue presented the Board with a list of the DRAFT warrant articles as compiled to date. This list was developed from requests received from the Town's various departments, boards, commissions and committees. The DRAFT list of warrant articles included:

Highway Garage Bond

To see if the municipality will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of nine hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$950,000) for the construction of a new highway garage and maintenance facility of approximately 8,000 square feet, and a salt and storage shed to be located on Town owned property on the east side of Cedar Road known as Tax Map 007, Lot 048? A "yes" vote will authorize the issuance of bonds and notes in accordance with the Municipal Budget Act (RSA Chapter 33) and to authorize the Selectmen to issue and regulate such bonds or notes and determine the rates of interest therein. Passage of this article requires a 3/5 vote.

Demolition of 233A and 239 Atlantic Avenue

To see if the municipality will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of twenty five thousand dollars (\$25,000) for the demolition of the buildings located at 233A and 239 Atlantic Avenue?

Capital Reserve #8 Road Reclamation

To see if the municipality will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) for road reclamation on Mill Road and to authorize the Selectmen to withdraw the amount of one hundred eight five thousand dollars (\$185,000) from the Road Reclamation Capital Reserve Fund?

Capital Reserve #8 Road Reclamation

To see if the municipality will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred eighty-five thousand dollars (\$185,000) to be added to the Capital Reserve #8 Road Reclamation fund previously established? This sum to come from fund balance (surplus) and no amount to be raised from taxation.

HW Dump Truck

To see if the municipality will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of (\$45,000) for the purchase of a dump truck with a nine foot heavy duty plow to replace the 1995 Ford F350? Any monies received from the sale of the 1995 Ford F350 shall be used to offset the cost of the new vehicle.

Police Cruiser

To see if the municipality will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of twenty five thousand eight dollars (\$25,800.00) for the purchase of one police cruiser for the Police Department? This sum to come from fund balance (surplus) and no amount to be raised from taxation.

Police Department Renovations

To see if the municipality will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of twelve thousand dollars (\$12,000) for interior maintenance of the police station, and the construction of desks/workstations in the officer's room of the police station?

Patrol Vehicle Toughbook Laptops

To see if the municipality will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) for the purchase of Panasonic Laptop Computers to be used in the patrol vehicles? These computers will replace the outdated toughbook computers that were purchased in 1995.

FD Self Contained Breathing Apparatus

To see if the municipality will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of sixty four thousand dollars (\$64,000) for the purchase of Self Contained Breathing Apparatus for the Fire Department? This is the first half of a two year replacement program.

FD Command Vehicle

To see if the municipality will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of thirty six thousand sixty one dollars (\$36,061) for the purchase of a Command Vehicle, with all necessary components for the Fire Department? This sum to come from fund balance (surplus) and no amount to be raised from taxation.

Architectural Fees

To see if the municipality will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of seventy five thousand dollars (\$75,000) to pay for professional architectural services for the design and space planning for the renovation of the Municipal Complex (Town Office, Library, Town Hall, Police & Fire Building and Highway Shed).

Mosquito Control

To see if the municipality will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to fund the Mosquito Control Expendable Trust Fund? This sum to come from fund balance (surplus) and no amount to be raised from taxation.

Cable Television

To see if the municipality will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred twenty five thousand dollars (\$125,000) and further authorize the Board of Selectmen to expend from this fund, for the purchase of cable television equipment, consultation fees and related training so that the Town can broadcast public, educational and government programming? This sum will be offset through cable franchise fees that the Town receives.

Capital Reserve Fund Town Hall Building Maintenance

To see if the municipality will vote to establish the Building Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund for the maintenance and repairs of the North Hampton Town Hall?

Capital Reserve Fund Town Hall Building Maintenance

To see if the municipality will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred twenty five thousand dollars (\$125,000) to be added to the Building Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund and further to authorize the Board of Selectmen to expend from this fund for the maintenance and to bring the facility into ADA compliance.

Capital Reserve Fund Town Building Maintenance

To see if the municipality will vote to establish the Building Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund for the maintenance and repairs of buildings owned by the Town of North Hampton.

Software Upgrade

To see if the municipality will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifty six thousand eighty one dollars (\$56,081) for the purchase of Windows based municipal software that will integrate, tax collection, general ledger, accounts receivable/payable, cash receipting, building permits, and tax assessing? This software will replace the current DOS based system that will no longer be supported by the current vendor.

Capital Reserve #4 Fire Department

To see if the municipality will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of thirty five thousand dollars (\$35,000) to be added to the Fire Department Equipment Capital Reserve Fund #4?

Sidewalk Installation

To see if the municipality will vote to raise and appropriate the sum not to exceed two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) for the installation of 950' of sidewalk along Atlantic Avenue from the North Hampton School to the railroad overpass?

The Board discussed each article in great detail while citing their position that given the current economic climate of the Town, only articles they, (the Board), deemed essential would be recommended by them for inclusion on the Town warrant.

The Board identified those warrant articles they felt did not meet the “essential” test. Those articles included:

- Capital Reserve #8 Road Reclamation
- Capital Reserve #8 Road Reclamation
- Patrol Vehicle Toughbook Laptops
- **FD Command Vehicle***
- Architectural Fees
- Mosquito Control
- **Cable Television****
- Sidewalk Installation

The Board continued their review of the proposed articles, working with Ms. Laurel Pohl to determine the financial (tax) impact of each article. Ms. Pohl and Mr. Terrance Conklin (BUDCOM member) have been working with Town officials to develop a spreadsheet that allows for the calculation of the tax rate impact on a warrant article by warrant article basis.

*The Board engaged in discussion with Chief Lambert and Deputy Chief Landry concerning the FD Command Vehicle. It was suggested that said article could be amended to reflect an amount of \$8,000 instead of \$36,061 as the Chief could utilize the currently owned FD Explorer and outfit it with radios and related equipment in order for it to serve as a Command Vehicle. The wording of the proposed warrant article to be changed to Command Center.

With this revision, the Board agreed to include this warrant article as amended.

The Board discussed the Cable Television Franchise Fees warrant article. The Board determined that this was not the appropriate year to withdraw funds from the Undesignated Fund Balance to fund this article. The Board decided to revise said article to provide for future franchise fees to be placed in a Capital Reserve Fund commencing with fees received after 1/1/05 (if allowable under the rules of the DRA).

The Board discussed the funding mechanism for the aforementioned warrant articles. The Board’s consensus was that all articles should be funded through taxation with the exception of the equipment for the Command Center, which the Board agreed, should be funded through the use of monies from the Undesignated Fund balance.

The Board discussed other non-money related articles such as an article seeking voter approval to revert back to the conventional form of Town meeting from the current SB-2 designation.

Following additional discussion, the Board moved to vote to approve (money related) warrant articles.

Motion / Vote: Mr. Rineman made a motion to approve the warrant articles for:

- **HW Dump Truck**
- **Police Cruiser**
- **Police Department Renovations**
- **FD Self Contained Breathing Apparatus**
- **FD Command Center**
- **Cable Television Franchise Fees Beginning in 2005**
- **Capital Reserve Fund Town Hall Building Maintenance**
- **Capital Reserve Fund Town Building Maintenance**
- **Software Upgrade**
- **Capital Reserve #4 Fire Department**

Ms Creighton seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved. 3-0.

The Board then engaged in discussion related to the negative aspects associated with the provisions of RSA 40:13 and the fact that many voters are voting in the March referendum without the knowledge provided during the deliberative session. The Board discussed the fact that typically less than 100 people attend the deliberative session (February) while many times that amount actually vote in March.

The Board discussed the fact that in the conventional Town meeting, those voting had the opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge of the topic and then vote, allowing for a more informed voter.

Following more discussion and careful consideration of this matter, the Board voted on this topic.

MOTION/VOTE: Mr. Rineman made a motion for the Board to present a warrant article to rescind the provisions of RSA 40:13 (known as SB-2), the Town reverting to a conventional Town Meeting form of government. Ms. Creighton seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved.

IV. Adjournment

Being no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Rineman made a motion to adjourn at 6:32 p.m. Ms. Creighton seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and so moved. 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Pardue
Town Administrator