

TOWN OF HOPKINTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Location: Senior Center
Meeting Date: December 4, 2007
MINUTES

Board of Selectmen members present: Muriel E. Kramer, Chairwoman; Mary Pratt, Vice-Chairwoman; Michael Shepard; Brian Herr; Matt Zettek

Others Present: Richard Conn, MetroWest News; Fire Chief Gary Daugherty; Police Chief Thomas Irvin; Dr. John Phelan, School Superintendent; Rebecca Robak, Chairman of the School Committee; Anthony Troiano, Town Manager; Geri Holland, Executive Assistant

Work Session

5:30 p.m. Mrs. Kramer opened the work session to discuss the \$1.5 to \$2M budget shortfall for the FY'09 budget and to craft a budget message to give to department heads; and to prepare for the Quarterly meeting planned after this work session at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Herr asked if the Board would vote on a budget message once it's been written. Mrs. Kramer responded yes. She added that she would like the Board to submit a unified message. The Board further discussed various issues including the need for the water and sewer enterprise funds to be self-sustaining. Mrs. Kramer pointed out that the DPW has many needs and even with a tight budget climate, she believes this department has needs for growth. There was a discussion about putting a moratorium on the CPA funding; but, it was pointed out that if this is done, the CPA would have to be re-voted by the voters. Mr. Herr posed the questions about increasing revenue, reducing costs and investing in the future. Mr. Zettek pointed out that towns across the State are also having "meltdowns", and that what Hopkinton is experiencing is not unique. He believes that the Town needs to look for support from the State. He also talked about maintaining and improving the bond rating; and to look at how the town can reduce trash by decreasing the amount of trash pick-up per household. Mr. Shepard said that he doesn't believe the Board should make a statement about an override at this time; and that more information is needed before recommending or not recommending an override. He stated that the Town cannot manufacture money. The Town functions by taxes only; and that we need to generate more revenue. He cited examples such as implementing the "pay as you throw" trash program. He also suggested looking at raising the building permit fees from \$7 to \$10. He suggested consolidating services between the DPW, School Department and Facilities Department. Mr. Shepard also suggested a hiring freeze. Mrs. Kramer said that changes have to be made over time and that all departments have to work hard and tighten up. Mrs. Kramer would like to increase voter communication. She said that the budget message should state one Town, one problem, one solution and should have a positive tone. She suggested a public forum of all department heads and work together on this issue. Rebecca Robak, Chair of the School Committee, stated that the Master Plan has recently been completed and that the residents have the information. She said that the School Department is as "lean" as they can be; she advocated for the Board of Selectmen to look at the option of an override tonight. Dr. Phelan, School Superintendent, stated that the Town needs an override and pointed out that the problems are not going away and that there will be a deficit for the next few years. Mrs. Kramer said that she spoke to Appropriation Committee member, Ronald Eldridge, who suggested the possibility of asking the voters at Town Meeting if they wish to vote a town-wide override or an individual department by department override. Dr. Phelan said that there needs to be a clear sense of direction in moving forward. Mr. Herr said that all core services need to be looked at. The Board agreed to hold the Quarterly meeting and continue this meeting to craft a budget message to be sent to all departments tomorrow.

7:05 p.m. The Board moved the meeting into the Senior Center's Main Meeting Room.

QUARTERLY MEETING

Others Present:

Casey Kadlik, HCAM; Demian David Tebaldi, Esq. HopNews; Amy Comcowich, Hopkinton Crier; Richard Conn, MetroWest News; Attorney Raymond Miyares, Town Counsel; High School Students: Maria Kennedy;

Colleen Burns; Julianna Carbone; Michael Abbate; Brian Gordon; Dr. John Phelan; Police Chief Thomas Irvin; Fire Chief Gary Daugherty; John T. Gaucher, DPW Director; Heidi Kriger, CFO; Maureen Dwinnell, Town Treasurer; Daniel McIntyre, Chairman of the DPW Board; Dr. John Duffy, Chairman of the Board of Assessors; Robert Bushway, Principle Assessor; Cindy Chesmore, Senior Center Director; Rownak Hussain, Director of the Hopkinton Public Library; Anthony Troiano, Town Manager; Geri Holland, Executive Assistant

7:00 p.m Quarterly Meeting Discussion/Stand for the Pledge of Allegiance

Mrs. Kramer opened the Quarterly meeting and invited everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Introduction of Town Counselors, Att’y Raymond Miyares

Mr. Troiano introduced Attorney Raymond Miyares, newly appointed Town Counsel, of Miyares & Harrington. Attorney Miyares recommended that the Board of Selectmen give the Town Manager the ability to act as the Town’s “gatekeeper” or to be able to interface between the town department heads and Town Counsel to be able to approve legal assistance requests which are submitted by the Town’s various departments and committees. Attorney Miyares believes this would help to create a more expeditious and efficient process for resolving legal issues. It was agreed to discuss this issue at the next Selectmen’s meeting as this evening’s meeting is dedicated to the FY’09 budget message.

Executive Summary of the Town’s Financial Model and FY’08 Budget Recap

Mr. Troiano, Town Manager, gave an executive summary report of the Town’s budget for Fiscal Year 2009 and reviewed a financial worksheet (see attachment). He told the Board that the Town could be faced with the options of cuts in services or an override to compensate for the shortfall. He asked that the Board consider whether the Town could take on further exclusionary debt for capital expenditures and whether taxpayers could absorb another override.

The Board invited Department heads to address what problems or issues their department would face if their budgets were to remain level funded going into FY’09. Mr. Herr asked each department head whether there were any services within their department that were not core services and could be eliminated until the Town revenues were able to handle these services. Attached to these minutes are the following department heads written responses to the Mr. Troiano’s request for input about their budget realities and/or priorities that pertain to what level of service their department can provide with a 0% increase, what they are doing within their department to create efficiencies which would reduce costs, and what they would need to do to invest in their department to keep providing acceptable levels of service.

The department heads that addressed their department’s budgets included Police Chief Irvin, Fire Chief Gary Daugherty, Mr. John Gaucher, DPW Director, Mr. Brian Main, Facilities Director, Mrs. Maryrose DeGroot, Human Resource Director, School Superintendent, Dr. John Phelan, and Rebecca Robak, Chair of the School Committee, Mrs. Maureen Dwinnell, Town Treasurer, Mr. Charles Kadlik, Municipal Building Inspector, Mr. Don MacAdam, Conservation Commission Administrator, Mr. Robert Bushway, Principle Assessor, Mrs. Rownak Hussain, Public Library Director, Mr. Mark Abate, Chair of the Planning Board, Mrs. Cindy Chesmore, Director of the Senior Center, Ms. Lynn Fournier, Cemetery Commissioner. Mr. Joseph Karner, Chairman of the Appropriation Committee, who was sitting in the audience, was asked to make any comments about tonight’s meeting, and Mr. Karner stated that there were many great questions, but did not wish to make any other statement about this evenings’ meeting. The Board thanked all attendees.

Selectmen’s Minutes: 10/16/ 07; 10/30/07 (ES); 11/20/07

The Board agreed to table voting the minutes.

Massachusetts Water Pollution Abatement: H2 Well Drinking Water Bond (Fruit St. – Final Note H2 Well Construction) Mr. Shepard and Mrs. Pratt stepped off the Board due to potential conflict of interest.

Mrs. Dwinnell, Town Treasurer, gave a brief explanation of the purpose of the bond for the Massachusetts Water Pollution Abatement, H2 Well Drinking Water Bond for Fruit Street for \$100,000.

Vote: Mrs. Kramer entertained a motion to approve for signature the bond for the Massachusetts Water Pollution Abatement, H2 Well Drinking Water Bond for Fruit Street for \$100,000. **So moved Mr. Herr. Second Mr. Zettek. Unanimously voted.** Mr. Shepard and Mrs. Pratt stepped back on the Board.

Bond for Chapter 90 Funding

Mrs. Dwinnell, Town Treasurer, gave a brief explanation of the purpose of the bond for Chapter 90 funds for \$100,000.

Vote: Mrs. Kramer entertained a motion to approve for signature the Chapter 90 funds for \$100,000. **So moved Mr. Shepard. Second Mrs. Pratt. Unanimously voted.**

Bond for an Ambulance - \$180,000

Mrs. Dwinnell, Town Treasurer, gave a brief explanation of the purpose of this Bond for an ambulance for \$180,000.

Vote: Mrs. Kramer entertained a motion to approve for signature the bond for an ambulance for \$180,000. **So moved Mr. Shepard. Second Mrs. Pratt. Unanimously voted.**

FY'09 Budget Message

11:00 p.m. The Board resumed the work session to discuss the FY'09 budget message. Mr. Herr stated his concern about holding this portion of the meeting off-camera as it gives the public the appearance that the Board is working behind closed doors. Mrs. Kramer responded that the public is invited to attend these work sessions and that she is comfortable with continuing the Selectmen's meeting in a work session environment.

The Board of Selectmen with input from members of the School Committee including Dr. John Phelan, School Superintendent, Rebecca Robak, and Nancy Burdick had a discussion regarding the Board's FY'09 budget message. The Board of Selectmen agreed that the FY'09 message would be to be committed to providing as close to level services as possible for FY'09; and to facilitate the budget discussion, to ask department heads to submit both a level service budget and a level funded budget; and as part of the process, the Board of Selectmen would require all departments to demonstrate what they are doing to increase revenues, including fees, decrease costs, including cross functional service opportunities, and improve efficiencies.

Vote: Mrs. Kramer entertained a motion that the Board of Selectmen is committed to providing as close to level services as possible for FY'09. To facilitate the budget discussion, please submit both a level service budget and a level funded budget.

As part of the process, the Board of Selectmen is requiring all departments to demonstrate what they are doing to increase revenues, including fees, decrease costs, including cross functional service opportunities, and improve efficiencies. **So moved Mr. Herr. Second Mr. Shepard. Unanimously voted.**

Meeting Adjourned:

11:55 p.m Mrs. Kramer entertained a motion to adjourn the public meeting. **So moved Mr. Shepard. Second Mr. Herr. Unanimously voted.**

Respectfully submitted,

Geri Holland
Executive Assistant

Date approved: 2/12/08