

CAMPTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, January 29, 2024

Call to Order. A regular meeting of the Town of Campton Board of Selectmen was called to order at 4:32 p.m. on Monday, January 29, 2024 by Chairman Sharon Davis in the Campton Town offices and via Zoom.

Select Board attendees: Sharon Davis, Dan Boynton, Craig Engel, Mort Donahue and Nik Coates

Campton employees present were Lisa Vincent, Jade Hartsgrove, Hannah Joyce, Ron Farnsworth, Matt Abear, Fire Chief Dan Defosses, and Police Chief Kevin Foss.

Minutes recorder: Paula Woodward

Members of the public included Mary O'Brien, Kathleen Lewis, Jeffrey Lewis, Linda Molinaro, Cheri Mackey, Clinton Peabody, Jim Butler, Ron Goggens, Jon Gablinske, Elizabeth Ruger, Nancy Donahue, Mary O'Brien, Mary Miller, Bruce Miller, Ed Beaumeister, Donna Hiltz, Gregory Jenks, Joann Moser, Ian Halm, Kelly Wieser, Barbara Mullen, Butch Bain, Cami Bain and Paula Woodward.

Public Hearing – Unanticipated Revenue.

Selectman Mort Donahue made a motion to open the public hearing at 4:32 p.m. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Unanticipated funds have been received from the FEMA 2022 storm reimbursement in the amount of \$38,738.99. A member of the audience asked if there were any restrictions. Chairman Davis responded that there were none. At 4:33 p.m. Selectman Engel made a motion to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved. Selectman Boynton made a motion to accept the unanticipated FEMA funds of \$38,738.99. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Campton Community Power Plan Update.

Bill Sebastian provided a brief overview of the project. No revisions have been made in the proposed plan since the last public hearing on December 4. Several questions were raised by the public.

Q: Can people change their provider if they later decide to leave Community Power? Bill: yes.

Q: Are there fees to change? Bill: No.

Q: Can one choose to stay out of renewable energy? Bill: All providers use a mix of power sources and approximately 23% of NH power comes from renewable resources.

Selectman Boynton made a motion to approve the updated Campton Community Power Plan. The motion was seconded and a roll call taken: Boynton aye, Coates aye, Donahue aye, Engel aye, Chairman Davis abstained. Selectman Engel made a motion to submit a letter to the Public Utilities Commission stating the plan approval. The motion was seconded and a roll call taken: Boynton aye, Coates aye, Donahue aye, Engel aye, Chairman Davis abstained.

Administrative Tasks.

Consent Agenda. Selectman Donahue made a motion to approve: January 8, 2024 Regular Public Meeting Minutes, January 8, 2024 Non-public Meeting Minutes, and January 15, 2024 Budget Work Session Minutes. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Privilege of the Floor -none-

Non-public session.

Selectmen Engel made a motion at 4:48 p.m. to go into non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3,II(a). The motion was seconded and a roll call taken: Boynton aye, Coates aye, Donahue aye, Engel aye, Chairman Davis aye. The Board came out of a non-public session at 5:30 p.m.

Public Hearing – Budget.

Selectman Boynton gave a slide presentation with several illustrations of the tax rate over time and by district, and how the budget is apportioned by department.

Q: Are the State mandates paid for by the State? Selectman Coates said that funding isn't available from the State and that some jurisdictions have sued.

Chairperson Davis reminded the group that reevaluation of the entire town will take place during 2024. The selectmen provided overviews of all budget components.

#4130, Selectmen. Budget up due to the number of elections in 2024.

Q: Asked how much the Board members are paid. Selectman Boynton responded \$4,000.

#4140, Town Clerk/Tax Collector. Budget increased mostly due to pay increases, COLA, health insurance and number of elections in 2024.

#4150, Executive Administration. Budget increased mostly due to Town Administrator salary and new position of Compliance/Health Officer. A market study was conducted of towns of similar size – it showed our Town Administrator salary wasn't competitive. The new part-time position of Compliance/Health Officer is necessary due to the increase in construction permits that affects the Compliance Officer position and Health Officer duties which includes inspections that are keeping Fire Chief Defosses from his fire duties. Jade Hartsgrrove, Planning and Zoning Coordinator, gave a brief overview of construction issues that the Compliance Officer faces. The new position will be funded, in part, by the new permitting fees that were recently increased to match nearby towns.

Several questions came from the audience regarding this position. Chief Defosses described the array of inspections he currently performs including childcare facilities, pending adoptions, homes with special needs, animals impacting water, complaints about trash, mold in rental properties, wells near septic systems, etc.

Q: What is the range of the Town Administrator's salary? Selectman Coates responded \$85k-125,000.

Q: \$44,000 seems like a lot for a part-time position. Selectmen Coates and Boynton responded with the higher level of qualification given the codes, etc.

Q: What are the hours and how are they divided between the two parts of the job? Selectmen Coates and Boynton responded that the position is written as 29 hours/week knowing that this will vary week-to-week, sometimes more sometimes less.

Q: Why can't the inspectors be paid by the job? Selectmen Coates, Boynton and Davis responded that it is prohibited by the State.

Q: Is the Health Officer mandated by the State and, if so, does the State pay for it? Selectman Boynton responded that the position is mandated and the State does not pay for it.

#4150-020, Telephone. A comment was made that it was unethical that the telephone provider was a company owned by Selectman Boynton. Selectman Engel responded that it was ethical, all procurement policies were followed, Selectman Boynton recused and abstained himself from the vote when the Town Administrator presented the recommendation to the board, and it saved the town a lot of money.

#4152, Assessing Services. Flat budget.

#4153, Legal Expenses. Flat budget.

#4155, Personnel Administration. Increase due to migration to employee STEP program, CDL licenses and testing needed by highway department.

#4191, Planning Board. Increase in computer supplies and icloud storage. New impact fee schedule. North Country Council – Campton use to belong and wants to again. Membership places a municipality higher up in consideration of proposals.

#4191 & #4192, Planning & Zoning. Q: why are there two secretarial positions? Ms. Hartsgrove responded that she is not salaried so her overtime is paid out of these two line items. Overtime occurs in attending after hours Board meetings.

#4191, General Government Buildings. Increase in plowing line due to plowing and landscaping being done at the Town Office complex. RFPs were sent out. Several computers will need replacing – an RFP will go out soon.

#4195, Cemetery. An increase in supplies/material is due to the need to re-gravel roads in Blair Cemetery.

#4196, Insurance. Change is due to workers compensation and liability.

#4197, Advertising & Regional Associations. Flat budget.

#4199, Other General Government. Trust fund management fee is down \$8,000.

#4210, Police Department. Increase is due to COLA and STEP. Decrease in health insurance because some officers did not need family coverage.

Q: Are exit interviews conducted? Chief Foss responded, yes. Quality-of-life issues and salary are the factors cited.

Q: Are salaries and raises similar to other communities? Chief responded that an annual wage survey is conducted and Campton's salaries are in the middle. Reasons given for officers leaving seems to be lifestyle driven rather than salary. Q: How long will we have the drug task force officer? Chief responded the position is 100% funded for three years.

A general discussion took place regarding the potential value of professional grant-writers. All were in agreement that grants are very helpful and should be sought.

#4220, Fire Department. Increase in “per diem” and uniforms & equipment. Decrease in vehicle maintenance.

#4290, Emergency Management. Flat budget.

#4312, Highway Department. Increase mostly due to STEP, COLA and health insurance. The gravel line is for immediate “patching” use, not the larger projects addressed in #4900.

Q: Whatever happened with the road study for Lower Beech Hill Road? There is a lot more traffic due to construction. Selectmen Engel and Boynton responded that HEB Engineering was hired to get a more in-depth study of the problem roads throughout the seasons. Repair of these roads, in particular, Lower Beech Hill Road, part of Beech Hill Road, Turnpike, Windmill Road, part of Perch Pond, Eastern Corners is addressed in #4900-013.

#4313, Hydrant Rental. Flat budget.

Q: Why do we rent a hydrant when we could own it? Selectman Coates said that the hydrants are owned by Campton Village Precinct and would cost many thousands of dollars each to purchase.

#4223, Solid Waste & Landfill Administration. Selectman Coates described why this line is unpredictable and that the budget is built conservatively to allow for this. Historically, the actual cost has fallen beneath the budget.

#4332-BB, Beebe River Utilities- Water & Sewer. This line is offset by revenue.

#4415, Health Agencies. This line is largely Pemi-Baker Hospice and Home Health.

Q: Why are we supporting Pemi-Baker? I received services from them and paid a huge amount of money. Chairperson Davis responded with a brief history of #4415 & #4442: in 1965 ten townships agreed to help support home-bound folks who wouldn’t otherwise be able to receive care. Pemi-Baker Hospice & Home Health was organized in 1966 to serve residents of 10 area towns including Campton.

#4442, Town Welfare. Flat budget.

#4520, Parks & Recreation. The decrease in payroll is due to an increase in volunteer help from PSU students. Note the new line item #4520-008 for entrance fees of \$6,000. Parks & Rec budget is off-set by about \$100,000 fees received each year.

#4550, Library. A decrease in staffing has lowered costs.

#4583, Patriotic Purposes. This item covers flags and wreaths placed in cemeteries, etc.

Q: Concern was expressed about the tattered flags being flown in front of town offices. Selectman Coates responded that new flags have already been purchased.

#4611, Conservation Commission. Q: The school board budget shows a line for invasive species. Are we paying twice? Selectman Boynton responded that the school board budget is for their property.

#4711, Long Term Debt-Principal. Flat budget.

#4711-005, Beebe River Road Betterment and Driftwood Road Betterment are pass-through. While these debts appear in the budget, individual property owners make annual payments to the town to pay this item each year.

#4721, Long Term Debt-Interest. This is the interest Campton pays. 4721-005 is a tax anticipation note – a short term loan, if necessary, at the end of the year if the tax rate setting is delayed.

#4900, Capital Reserve Funds. Chairman Davis described this line as a savings account for large purchases.

Q: What has happened re the Charrette? Selectman Coates responded that a large item that came out of the report was a reconfiguration of the State highways. More input is necessary by the Planning Commission (thus a desire for membership in North Country Council).

Chairman Davis thanked the audience for their interest in the budget and attending the meeting.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Budget Public Hearing was adjourned at 6:21 p.m.

Adjournment. There being no further business to come before the regular meeting of the Selectmen, Chairman Davis adjourned the meeting at 6:21 p.m.

Paula Woodward
Recorder

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