

## FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, June 7, 2010

5:45 p.m.

Hampden Town Office

1. Minutes of 5-17-2010 Meeting
2. Review and Signature of Warrants
3. Old Business
  - a. Water District – Sewer Reading Update
  - b. Councilor Internet Payments – Councilor Cushing
  - c. State Reduction in Homestead Exemption – Councilor Brann
4. New Business
  - a. Tax Refund Request – Walter Cupples
5. Public Comments
6. Councilor Comments

FINANCE COMMITTEE

May 17, 2010

Minutes

Attending:

*Mayor Matthew Arnett*

*Councilor Jean Lawlis*

*Councilor William Shakespeare*

*Councilor Janet Hughes*

*Councilor Tom Brann*

*Councilor Shannon Cox*

*Town Manager Susan Lessard*

*Councilor Andre Cushing*

1. Minutes of 5/3/2010 Meeting – *The minutes of the 5-3-2010 meeting were reviewed and approved.*
2. BAT Fare Increase Proposal – *The Town Manager presented the Finance Committee with information regarding a proposed fare increase for the BAT buses for the coming year. It was the consensus of the Committee to recommend to the full council to support the proposed fare increase for the BAT system. The City of Bangor is also considering elimination of service of its buses on six holidays. The Town Manager expressed concern over this because of the impact to those from Hampden who use the service for shopping, doctor appointments, etc. that would still occur on the named holidays. The Town of Hampden running its service on that day would have no benefit because riders could not get beyond the Bangor 'hub'. It was the consensus of the Committee to recommend to the full Council that the Town Manager provide testimony to the BAT system opposing the curtailment of service on the named holidays.*
3. Manager Contract – *The Town Manager provided the Committee with information regarding performance over the past five years, including annual reports submitted by the Town Manager for that time period. It was the consensus of the Committee to recommend to the full council that the evaluation of the Manager be conducted by the Council in executive session following the budget workshop to be held on May 18<sup>th</sup>.*
4. Public Comment - *None*
5. Councilor Comment – *None*

*The meeting was adjourned at 6 p.m.*

*Respectfully submitted,*

  
*Susan Lessard*

*Town Manager*

Town of Hampden  
106 Western Avenue  
Hampden, Maine 04444  
May 26, 2010



Phone: (207) 862-3034  
Fax: (207) 862-5067  
email: hampden@midmaine.com

Hampden Water District Trustees  
P.O. Box 218  
Hampden, ME 04444-0218

RE: Water Readings

Dear Trustees,

The purpose of this letter is to respond to the letter from Mr. Torrey dated May 21, 2010 regarding your decision to increase the rate for providing water readings to the Town of Hampden.

The Town's Infrastructure Committee discussed the proposed fee increase at their meeting on March 22, 2010. The recommendation of that Committee was that the Town pay approximately \$900 per quarter for readings, which is consistent with what communities the size and type of Hampden pay. The entities cited by Mr. Torrey are much larger - or in one case, are actual municipal departments. That would increase the amount paid annually to the Water District to approximately \$3,600 - which is more than double the current rate. At the Town Council meeting on April 5, 2010, the Town Council endorsed this recommendation from the Infrastructure Committee.

It was my intention to have this as a subject on the agenda for the May 2010 meeting that was supposed to have been scheduled between the Trustees and the Council, instead of creating a paper war back and forth between the two entities. The Town has been in the process of budget review as well as holding hearings on its comprehensive plan and had not yet scheduled a meeting. Instead, you have simply implemented a fee that is more than ten times the current rate.

The Town is still willing to voluntarily contribute \$3,600 annually to the District for meter readings for sewer customers. However, since the Water District has chosen to unilaterally implement its decision to charge a "sewer reading fee" of \$16,585.60 per year, please consider this letter as a formal Freedom of Access request pursuant to Title 1 M.R.S. §408 for copies of the District's Water readings for the quarter ending June 30, 2010. Our attorney indicates that these readings are public records under the Freedom of Access statute. In lieu of the annual payment of \$3,600.00, the Town will pay the reasonable costs of the District to provide copies of public records as permitted under the statute. If you are unwilling to provide copies of those records to the Town, please advise me as to when those records will be available for inspection and copying by a representative of the Town in accordance with the statute.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Lessard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Susan Lessard  
Town Manager

cc. Cam Torrey, Water District Superintendent  
Tom Russell, Town Attorney

# Hampden Water District



Tel: (207) 862-3490  
Fax: (207) 862-3595  
[www.hampdenwaterdistrict.org](http://www.hampdenwaterdistrict.org)

P.O. Box 218  
Hampden, ME 04444-0218

May 21, 2010

Town of Hampden  
Attn: Hampden Town Councilors  
106 Western Ave  
Hampden ME 04444

Dear Hampden Town Councilors,

This letter is in regards to the meter reading fees that were discussed in the last joint meeting of the Hampden Town Councilors and the Hampden Water District Board of Trustees in February 2010.

We sent a letter to Sue Lessard on March 23, 2010 in regards to the topic of meter reading fees being on the agenda for the March 22, 2010 Infrastructure Meeting. We had requested feedback from this meeting and have not received any at this time.

Since we have not had any response to our requests, The Hampden Water District, starting July 1, 2010, will be increasing its sewer reading fee to the Town of Hampden to \$16,585.60 per year (see attached breakdown). Due at this time is \$8,292.80 and the remaining \$8,292.80 may be paid on a quarterly basis. Failure to remit payment may result in a delay of sewer readings.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 862-3490, M-F, 7:00 am-3:30 pm.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Cam Torrey'. Below the signature, the name 'Cam Torrey G.M.' is printed in a standard font.

Cam Torrey G.M.

The Hampden Water District Board of Trustees

Cc: Sue Lessard, Hampden Town Manager

**HAMPDEN WATER DISTRICT  
METER READING  
and  
ASSOCIATED COST**

	2010	<i>Annual HWD Cost</i>	
Meter Depreciation*		\$14,254.00	
Computer		\$500.00	
Printer		\$2,720.00	
CUSI Program updates		\$1,600.00	
Maintenance Agreements; Handheld Computers Pocket Readers Computer Program		\$3,100.00	
Meter Installation;*	Included in Dep*		
	Hrs./Yr	P/Hr	
Meter Reading;			
Technicians	192	\$35.00	\$6,720.00
Office Personnel	40	\$30.00	\$1,200.00
Vehicle	192	\$5.00	\$960.00
Meter Repair;			
Technicians	32	\$35.00	\$1,120.00
Office Personnel	8	\$30.00	\$240.00
Vehicle	32	\$5.00	\$160.00
Meter Testing;			
Technicians	170	\$35.00	\$5,950.00
Office Personnel	40	\$30.00	\$1,200.00
Vehicle	170	\$5.00	\$850.00
191 meters in 2009			
<b>Totals</b>			<b>\$40,574.00</b>

HWD 1783-- Meters  
Per Quarter read---\$5.69

Town of Hampden---Sewer Accounts 1460 @ \$2.84 Totals \$4,146.40 p/qtr or \$16585.60 p/yr

P/hr rates include 73% overhead

Figures do not include the cost of computer programs or hardware for meter reading and billing

HWD is about 1/3 radio read

*CPH/CA*

4-2

Susan M. Lessard  
Town Manager  
Town of Hampden  
106 Western Ave.  
Hampden, ME 04444

June 1, 2010

Dear Sue,

We send this to you knowing you will be forwarding it to the Town Council.

Last month we had several pleasant conversations and a visit with Kelly Karter, our Town Assessor. We will tell you we left those encounters respecting Kelly's expertise and manner of handling her position. The Town is fortunate to have her.

Our reason for initiating conversations is that we had an appraisal done on our home at 42 Main Rd. N. recently and found that its appraised value was \$210,000. We compared this with our recent tax bill where the assessment was \$243,300.

Kelly came and did a thorough assessment and determined the assessment should be \$233,100, which she explained falls within the acceptable relation between assessed and appraised values.

She found several errors in the last assessment done July, 2004, which means our assessment has been inaccurate since that time. And it also explains why she lowered the amount by \$10,200.

She was able to refund \$162.18 of our 2010 taxes and explained we needed to ask Council to refund the two previous years. For 2009 it will again be \$162.18 and for 2008 it will be \$160.14. She said nothing could be done about the years 2005-2007 with the inaccurate assessment. We would not be adverse to the Council differing with her on this matter.

We trust this can be taken care of and closed.

Sincerely,

  
Deborah Phillips-Cupples

  
Walter Cupples  
42 Main Road North  
Hampden, ME 04444  
207-862-6136