

SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, February 8, 2016

6:00 pm

HAMPDEN TOWN OFFICE

A G E N D A

1. MINUTES – January 11, 2016
2. OLD BUSINESS
 - a. Review of correspondence to landowner regarding Skehan Center lease
3. NEW BUSINESS
 - a. Recreation/Conservation Reserve Account (3-769-00), including funds received in lieu of open space: Update on account balance, and discussion of eligible uses.
4. PUBLIC COMMENTS
5. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, January 11, 2016

MINUTES – DRAFT

Attending:

*Councilor Terry McAvoy, Chair
Mayor David Ryder
Councilor Dennis Marble
Councilor William Shakespeare
Councilor Stephen Wilde*

*Councilor Ivan McPike
Town Manager Angus Jennings
Public Safety Director Joe Rogers
Sergeant Chris Bailey
Fire Matthew Thomas
Resident Bill Shakespeare*

Chairman McAvoy called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

- 1. MINUTES – December 14, 2015** – *It was motioned and seconded to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2015 Services Committee meeting. Unanimous vote (6-0) in favor.*

Due to the presence of several people to discuss New Business Items 3a and 3b, the Committee agreed to take up those two items first.

3. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Update on Public Safety Good Neighbor and Telecare Programs – Sergeant Bailey** – *Sergeant Bailey discussed the materials in the meeting packet regarding the Good Neighbor and Telecare Programs. He said that individuals and their families benefit from this free service provided by Public Safety. This can assist people getting back to their homes. The program has gone well. He would like to see more participants than the current ten people enrolled in the program. Sergeant Bailey also discussed Telecare, which has volunteers that call residents at a specified time Monday through Friday and, if no one answers, calls a secondary contact and, if necessary, investigates further. Public Safety has started to advertise this service. There are currently four residents enrolled. He'd like to advertise this through the town website and social media in hopes of getting more people involved.*

Councilor McAvoy suggested making materials regarding the Good Neighbor and Telecare programs available through the Skehan Center and the Pool.

- b. Discussion of concept for Public Safety Advisory Group – Sergeant Bailey** [*Items 3a and 3b were consolidated for discussion purposes*] – *Sergeant Bailey described that he approached the Town Manager to talk about how Public Safety could better connect with the community. Sergeant Bailey suggested a possible citizen advisory group or committee, and he is*

here to seek the Services Committee's input on how such a group could be structured and composed to represent a broad cross-section of the community. The objective is to get citizens more involved with consideration of what types of services or programs may be helpful. The Public Safety Department is working toward preparing a two-year strategic plan, and this would benefit from an ongoing dialogue with the community. He envisions maybe 8-10 members. In Sergeant Bailey's opinion the group could be limited to public safety, or could be broader to encompass other issues. He asked the Committee whether they support this concept.

Councilor Marble said it is good to connect with the community. He suggested tying the effort in to Facebook, and noted that people would like to know what's going on. This could help communicate changes in State policy to local residents. Sergeant Bailey noted that, while it's not required, if body cams were required, for instance, this would be a policy change people would see locally. Councilor Marble commended Sergeant Bailey on his initiative.

Councilor Wilde said he thinks it's a great idea. Councilor McPike asked how the Committee could help. Sergeant Bailey said he'd like to know that the Committee supports the concept, and asked how the members feel about identifying potential members to serve on a working group or committee.

Mayor Ryder asked when the next Hampden Highlights newsletter is expected to go out. Manager Jennings said the goal is to send it in March. Mayor Ryder noted that the newsletter would be a good way to advertise this, as it goes to all people including those who don't have computers. Councilor Wilde suggested highlighting the Telecare and Good Neighbor programs in the next newsletter.

Public Safety Director Rogers noted that emergency response comprises roughly 10-15% of staff time, and that the Department wants to maximize its value including during downtime.

Mayor Ryder and Councilor Marble suggested keeping the group focused on public safety. Manager Jennings noted that this would build on the earlier "Citizen Police Academy" initiative. Sergeant Bailey said that that program was run a few years ago and went well, but later ran into challenges getting enough people signed up to participate. Chief Rogers said he'd be interested in running that program again if 12-15 people signed up.

Councilor McPike said he liked the idea of Councilors identifying participants from their Districts.

Manager Jennings said that, in his experience, such committees or working groups are more successful if they are appointed based on a specific Committee Charge setting out the Committee's goals, and sometimes a

timeline. He offered to work with Sergeant Bailey to think through what such a Charge may include, as well as potential committee composition.

2. OLD BUSINESS

- a. The Connector Bus – Town Manager update on meeting with Superintendent Laurie Linscott** – *Manager Jennings summarized his memo in the meeting packet. Councilor McAvoy said that the memo repeats information that they've heard in the past, but does not get to the crux of the issue: where are people getting on and off the Bus? The Connector doesn't seem to have the capacity or the willingness to determine that. Manager Jennings confirmed that, during his meeting with Superintendent Linscott, she confirmed the limitations on their fare boxes' ability to track this information.*

Councilor Wilde said that his concern is the cost per rider. Because our ridership is relatively low, our cost per rider is higher than other towns. Last year the Council made an adjustment to get rid of Saturday service, and reducing the expense of the Bus, estimated at approx. \$76,000 in FY16, won't affect the mil rate. He noted that we're trying to develop the town, and reinforce the town center, and that the Bus is part of that.

Councilor Marble noted that Hampden is relatively rural and relatively well-off compared to the region. He acknowledged that a small percentage of residents use the Bus. He said that it's a regional system, and if we're going to participate in a regional system we need to participate. Does Hampden want to be inclusive? Do we want to support our neighboring hub (Bangor)?

Councilor Sirois agreed, saying we pared back the service to weekdays only. Our job is to serve the people.

Councilor McAvoy noted that not even 25% of residents have access to the bus. Councilor Sirois suggested we should look at the Bus route, and Councilor McAvoy agreed. Councilor Marble suggested that we should ask Public Safety where they think the Bus should go.

Councilor McPike said that until four years ago the Bus hadn't gone to the Community College, but that a new College president had made it happen, and ridership on that route went up. He asked whether the Bus should go down Main Road North then loop back on Old County Road. He wondered if we should hire someone to ride the Bus and count riders. He noted that if Hampden were to lose this service it would not likely get it back if it was needed.

Resident William Shakespeare said that he is not against the Bus, but is against what it costs. The Bus runs empty, day after day, hour after hour.

People get on the Bus mostly in East Hampden, and some people use it, want it, need it. He raised concern that the costs are a “shell game.”

Councilor Wilde, referring to Manager Jennings’ memo indicating the VOOT (Veazie Orono Old Town) is 15%, said that their actual cost is less than 15% because UMaine pays a portion. He said that in his conversations with Hampden residents no one has ever told him they want to get rid of the Bus.

Councilor Marble said he’d like to know what the consequence would be of a change of routes. He asked whether Bangor is paying for any portion of the Hampden route.

Councilor Sirois said that Hampden’s riders benefit from access to the Bangor route, which Bangor pays for. He agreed that we ought to look at how to reduce costs.

Resident Shakespeare said that we’ve got a big budget crunch coming up, and that he will continue to be focused on this issue.

Councilor McAvoy asked whether we could ask Bangor for a cost split for the Hampden line.

Mayor Ryder asked whether we could get our own bus and driver, which could provide service connecting to the Bus route in Bangor. He asked whether we should hire someone to ride the Bus and count riders.

Manager Jennings noted that the discussion of Bus costs per rider could be understood to suggest that costs increase with each rider, when in fact we’re talking about a fixed-cost system. Therefore, with an increase in ridership it would bring the cost per rider down. He said that, in his meeting with Superintendent Linscott, it was clear that her focus was to increase ridership.

Mayor Ryder said that the route change discussed earlier to provide service on Old County Road would add potential riders.

Councilor Wilde said that there are people who need that bus. The Bus is part of the community, and supports our economic development. Among others, retired people and disabled people benefit from the Bus.

Councilor McPike said that it’s a regional system. The question is who pays for what, where?

Resident Shakespeare said that he would like the Town Manager to try to negotiate a better cost for the Bus.

3. NEW BUSINESS

- c. Update from January 7, 2016 meeting of Recreation Committee and review of correspondence regarding Skehan Center lease** – *Manager Jennings reported that, following on the Committee’s direction at its last meeting, he is working on a letter to the owner of the former Hampden Academy to document issues regarding the heating and electrical costs associated with the Skehan Center lease.*

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS – *None.*

- 5. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS** – *Councilor Sirois reported that he has been hearing discussion about citizen interest in a potential local referendum regarding ballfields and recreational facilities. He noted that Sanford, Maine has a facility with fourteen fields which is used for large regional tournaments, and that the activity brings customers and spending to local businesses.*

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted –

Angus Jennings
Town Manager