

## TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

MAY 12, 2008

A special meeting of the Hampden Town Council was held on Monday, May 12, 2008 for the purpose of holding a budget workshop on the proposed FY 2009 budget. The meeting was called to order at 6:20 p.m.

**Attendance: Councilors:** Mayor Rick Briggs, Edward Murphy, Thomas Brann, Matt Arnett and Shannon Cox. Andrew Colford and Andre Cushing were excused (Councilor Cushing did arrive at 8:05 pm)

**Town Manager:** Susan Lessard

**Department Heads:** Economic & Community Development Specialist Dean Bennett, Public Works Director Chip Swan and Highway Foreman Dudley Patterson

Budgets for Economic Development, Public Works, Municipal Garage, Solid Waste, Buildings and Grounds, and Marina were reviewed. The Council also reviewed proposed Revenues.

Before the individual budgets were reviewed, Councilor Arnett asked to discuss employee health insurance costs. He provided a copy of U.S. average annual employer and employee contribution to health insurance in 2007 compared with Town of Hampden contributions (copy attached). He said this was discussed at the Finance Committee meeting and he wanted to share with the full Council his concern over the level of cost the Town is incurring for healthcare coverage for its employees. He noted that as we work on this problem, it is not something that will be done in this budget cycle, but he personally would like to see the Council freeze the current level of contribution the Town is making (to pay the same dollar amount that the Town paid last year). Insurance rates are up by 4% this year and that would mean asking employees to pick up that 4% increase for the same coverage. He said the Finance Committee was not ready to adopt this policy, but that is his preference.

Mayor Briggs noted that there is a huge difference between the public sector and the private sector and he believes that the figures would change if Hampden was compared to other public service and government workers. Manager Lessard informed the Council that since the Finance Committee met last week, she has been doing some additional research and will have some more information for the Council in a number of areas related to healthcare costs, including some incentive options for employees that could result in a lower contribution by the Town. Following further discussion, it was the consensus of the Council that this issue warrants further study and Mayor Briggs said he would like to formally request that the Finance Committee do a comprehensive healthcare coverage study. Councilor Arnett so moved; Councilor Brann seconded the motion. Councilor Cox suggested that the study should include a wage/salary comparison as well. Councilor

Arnett and Councilor Brann agreed to amend the motion to include a comprehensive wage study – unanimous vote in favor of the motion as amended.

### **01-30 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Manager Lessard informed the Council that the budget was prepared shortly after Economic & Community Development Specialist Dean Bennett's arrival at the Town of Hampden. She said many of the numbers are based on past practices and some, such as travel and training have been increased. The budget only includes the salary for the Economic & Community Development Specialist as the contract for the Economic Development Consultant is being paid out of the current budget. Dean said he has reviewed the proposed budget with Manager Lessard and he feels that it is a very strong supportive budget for his efforts going forward this year.

Motion by Councilor Brann, seconded by Councilor Arnett to accept the entire budget of \$92,318.00 as proposed – unanimous vote in favor.

### **10-01 PUBLIC WORKS**

Public Works Director Chip Swan noted that this year's budget is driven by fuel costs and is up by 30%. The proposed budget includes adding another truck to the fleet and because of the addition of 3 acres to the cemetery; he has included an additional mower. He has also added a full-time position to work 20 weeks plowing and 32 weeks with the cemetery crew. The proposed budget was reviewed line-by-line.

#### **10-01-20-15 COPIER**

Chip noted that this line item should have been \$0.00 instead of \$400.00.

With the correction to line item 10-01-20-15, the new proposed total for Public Works is \$1,236,520.00.

### **10-05 MUNICIPAL GARAGE**

The budget was reviewed line-by-line and no change was made to the proposed total amount of \$37,840.00.

### **15-10 SOLID WASTE**

The budget was reviewed line-by-line and no change was made to the proposed total amount of \$482,820.00.

**30-10 BUILDINGS/GROUNDS**

The budget was reviewed line-by-line and no change was made to the proposed total amount of \$86,800.00.

**20-25 MARINA**

The budget was reviewed line-by-line and no change was made to the proposed total amount of \$500.00.

**REVENUES**

The proposed revenue amounts were accepted as presented.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Denise R. Hodsdon  
Town Clerk