

SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
August 29, 2011

Attending:

Mayor Janet Hughes  
Councilor Shelby Wright  
Councilor Jean Lawlis  
Councilor Tom Brann  
Councilor Andre Cushing  
Councilor William Shakespeare  
Councilor Kristen Hornbrook

Town Manager Sue Lessard  
Residents

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m.

1. Hampden Academy Re-Use

*The purpose of this item was to discuss two questions related to the re-use of the Hampden Academy property. These two questions were raised by the RSU 22 Re-use committee members who attended the Planning and Development Committee meeting on August 17<sup>th</sup>. At that time the Planning and Development Committee was not comfortable with answering those questions without a discussion of them by the full Town Council.*

- a. Is the Town of Hampden interested in pursuing a lease with RSU 22 for the Skehan Center gym for an annual cost of \$1 plus utilities (estimated at \$70,000 per year) and maintenance?*
- b. Is the Town of Hampden interested in acquiring the entire old Hampden Academy site if RSU offers it to the Town?*

*Mayor Hughes read a statement providing background on what had occurred thus far in the re-use process. (copy attached).*

*The Council discussed pros and cons related to both questions.*

*Motion by Councilor Brann, seconded by Councilor Lawlis to direct the Town Manager to inform the RSU 22 School Board in writing that the Town of Hampden is interested in acquisition of the Hampden Academy site if offered by RSU 22 and that the Council looks forward to more negotiation and discussion on this topic. Unanimous vote.*

*It was noted by several Councilors that this message had been conveyed to the school board previously, but it was still determined that a formal letter was necessary to insure that the Council's intent was clear.*

*Motion by Councilor Brann, seconded by Councilor Shakespeare to direct the Town Manager to inform the RSU 22 School Board in writing that the Town*

*Council is not interested in leasing the Skehan Center for recreational purposes for an annual lease cost of \$1 plus utilities and maintenance. Unanimous vote.*

*Councilors had concerns that this option had too many unknowns in terms of costs. Also cited as a concern was the fact that leases are limited by law to 4 years on such properties.*

2. Public Comment - None

3. Councilor Comment –

*Councilor Lawlis – Appreciates the efforts of the re-use committee to find revenues to offset expenses but is concerned that 4 year leases do not provide a level of security that the costs would not fall to the RSU Budget and the taxpayers.*

*Councilor Brann – Thanked Councilor Shakespeare for reporting the hole at the side of the road adjacent to the bridge on 202. The next day a crew was there from MDOT doing considerable work because it was a real safety hazard. He also agrees that a 4 year lease term is too short to be dependable as a long term financing option for costs associated with RSU 22 retaining the Hampden Academy property.*

*Councilor Cushing – Children's Day was a great event this year. Kennebec Road is due to be resurfaced in the near future. He concurs with the idea of a continued dialog with RSU 22 for re-use of Hampden academy.*

*Councilor Hornbrook – Wished that the community had had the information regarding the costs associated with the re-use of Hampden Academy before the three towns in the district were asked to vote to approve the new High School. Reported that she and her family had helped to clean up after Children's Day and that it was a good event for the Town.*

*Councilor Hughes – Reminded the Council that from earlier discussions, neither the Town of Newburgh nor the Town of Winterport was interested in RSU 22 retaining the property. They did not want costs passed on to the Towns that might result from that action.*

*The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.*

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Susan Lessard  
Town Manager*

**Special Town Council Meeting  
August 29, 2011**

Subject: Re-use options for the old Hampden Academy Facility

On August 10, I attended the SAD22 Ad Hoc Committee for Re-Use of the Old Hampden Academy. The Ad-Hoc Committee is made up of SAD 22 School Board Members. Discussion at that meeting was with regards to potential re-use of the old Hampden Academy. The current charge of the Ad-Hoc committee is to explore reuse of the school property. The buildings are anticipated to be demolished except for the 1843 building and the Skeehan Center (known as the old gym), and possibly but not certain Wing 1 (known as the Science Building) and Wing 2 which is the corridor and immediate classrooms at the main entrance to the School. See drawing. Based on preliminary estimate of costs, the demolition of the facilities is approximately \$1.5 million. As part of demolition, this would include utility connections and renovations where necessary to bring the facilities back on line and the site back to useable condition. It is my understanding that SAD22 does not have moneys to provide the demolition, however, has preliminary approval for a \$1.5 million bond, with 0% interest over a 15 year period. Should they move forward with demolition plans or to keep the facility, the decision to secure the bond would rest with the voters of Hampden, Newburgh, and Winterport whom would be part of the continued ownership of the school under SAD22 ownership. Continued operation of the building as is...is estimated at approximately \$200,000 annually.

It is my best understanding that under State mandate, SAD 22 may re-use the old school for educational purposes or offer the facility back to the Town of Hampden, (Town). If the Town does not accept the property, SAD22 may look at other options to sell the property. The SAD22 may lease the property as an educational facility to other entities however, are limited by a 4 year lease option period. It is also my understanding that the SAD22 may request that the Town compensate to the SAD22, the maximum value of the approx. 40% of the market value of the property (less Hampden's share of SAD22). SAD 22 is currently having the property appraised.

The SAD22 Ad-Hoc Committee is exploring the potential to lease the property to two separate entities including Stillwater Academy and SPRPCE. SAD22 has offered to lease the Skeehan Center (new gym) to the Town for a \$1 lease amount. The purpose of the Town of Hampden use would be for recreational purposes and/or recreational center. However, the Town would be required to pay for the operation of the building which has a preliminary cost estimate of \$70,000 per year, (provided by the SAD22). SAD22 has identified that there have been discussions between SAD22 and the Town of Hermon, and John Bapst who may also have interest in leasing the Skeehan Center. If the Town of Hampden, does not desire to lease the Skeehan Center, then the SAD22 may continue discussions with these two entities and others for potential lease options. In discussions, the SAD22 would consider the athletic fields and parking as part of lease options to the Town for recreational purposes.

The Planning & Development Committee met with the SAD 22 Ad-Hoc Committee regarding 1) the Town's interest to lease the Skeeahan Center; and 2) the Town's interest to accept the old Hampden Academy facility. The Ad-Hoc Committee will report to the full SAD22 School Board at their next meeting, with the intent of the School Board to make decisions on how to proceed with their plans for this site.

The Planning & Development Committee and the Council has been considering the options for this school for the past few years, and continued discussions by the Planning & Development Committee have led to the desire to accept this facility and return the property to the taxable land. This would allow the Town to redevelop the facility being located in the heart of our community. The Planning & Development Committee feels that the best use of the facility could be a combination of uses, ranging from commercial development to housing. The Planning & Development Committee in concert with Dean Bennett, Economic and Community Director for the Town, has entertained a conceptual plan for moving forward. It is not the intent to spend tax payers dollars to demolish the site nor do we unrealistically feel that we can make a huge profit if a profit at all. However, we feel that the property could be offered to the Development community in Maine or beyond for proposal for re-development that would fit the needs of the Community, and in a manner which would have the demolition of the buildings completed with some possible recreational amenities, as well. Taxation is the long term benefit to the community which would help pay for the resources of the school, as 67% of the resident's tax bill pays for the school. It is the intent of the Planning and Development Committee to develop the property in a manner which would not impact resident's tax bill.

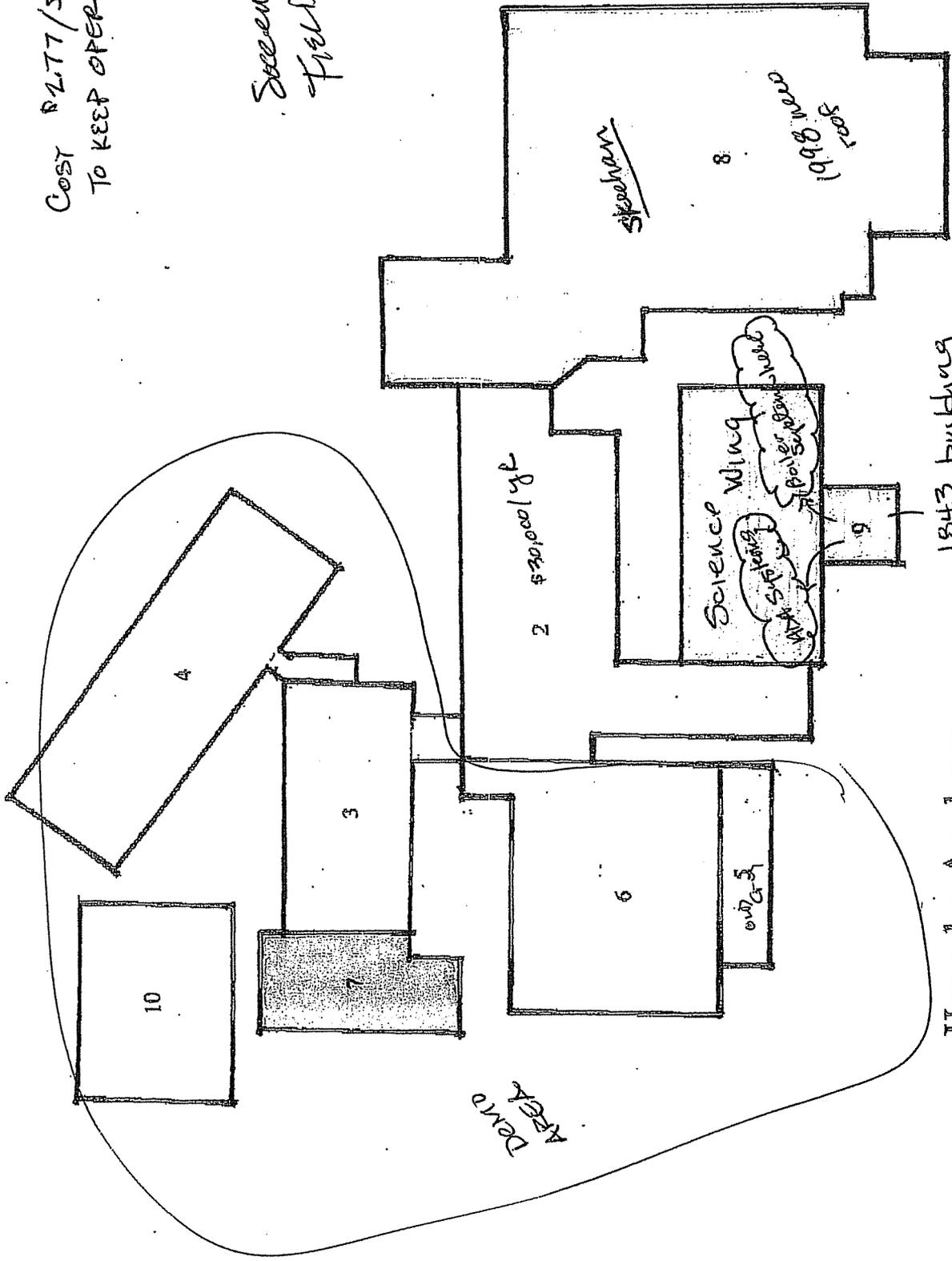
The Planning & Development Committee would need to have a decision in the next two months, so that the residents would not be burdened by maintenance and operational costs of a vacant facility, and coincide with moving of the SAD22 operations to the new facility in summer of 2012.

This Special Council Meeting was called so the full Council could consider how to best proceed. First, I ask you to consider:

- 1) Potential acceptance of the old Hampden Academy
- 2) Potential use of the Skeeahan Center if SAD22 chooses to lease the facility to other educational facilities.

COST \$2.77/SP  
TO KEEP OPER-

Soccer  
Field



1843 building

Hampden Academy