

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TOWN OF HAMPTON FALLS**

**NOVEMBER 15, 2022 – 8:00 AM
TOWN HALL**

FINAL

PRESENT: Mark R. Lane, Chairman; Ed B. Beattie, Vice Chairman; Lou Gargiulo, Selectman Karen Anderson, Town Administrator; Rachel D. Webb, Assistant Administrator.

GUESTS: Police Chief Ryan Venio; Russ Hilliard, Road Agent; Jay Lord, Fire Chief; Mark Sikorski, Building Inspector; Tracy Healy-Beattie, President, Historical Society; Stephanie Grant, Town Clerk/Tax Collector; Beth Forgione, Recreation Commission Treasurer and Library Trustee

POLICE DEPARTMENT / ANIMAL CONTROL MONTHLY REPORT – Chief Ryan Venio:

Chief Venio updated the Selectmen that there have been a high number of crimes and other incidents cumulatively this year, that as of the end of October, has surpassed the total number for 2021. Chairman Lane asked to what Chief Venio attributes the statistics, and the response was that the Hampton Falls Inn has generated quite a few calls for the Police Department. Chief Venio reported a successful Trick or Treating this year, with neighborhoods busy. Some residents expressed concerns for the safety of kids and getting darker earlier, with cars parked on the sides of the roads, which he will address in the future.

Chairman Lane asked Chief Venio for an update on the hiring of a new Police Officer. Chief Venio said that he is close to obtaining a decision from one candidate and will receive that answer within the next week. If a negative response is received, then Chief Venio will move along to continue the search.

Chairman Lane said that the School Board is meeting tonight, and they will be discussing a School Resource Officer (SRO) for the school, so Chairman Lane wanted to know what level of Police Officer is required for that position. He further stated that the school is considering deferring the hiring of an SRO for a year, understanding that there is a shortage of Police officers; and they are also considering a shared position with another town in the SAU. He said that he has been asked to attend the School Board meeting specifically to share his opinion, but he said that he would like to understand Chief Venio's opinion.

Chief Venio stated that he and Lieutenant Ranauro have attended two (2) meetings on this subject of an SRO with the Superintendent and with the Assistant Superintendent to give insight into how it is a unique hiring process to ensure specific skill sets, qualifications, and personality to be effective in a school setting. Additionally, the decision needs to be made regarding whether the SRO position would be full-time or part-time. Chairman Lane said that he thought that this issue could be considered a "risk assessment" where an elementary school may be considered a low-risk building, and a good job is done making sure that doors are secure, and people need to get buzzed in to enter. However, if the decision is made to not hire an SRO, and there was a problem at the school, then the decision-makers are second-guessing themselves, knowing that they would feel responsible for the problem.

Chief Venio responded saying that the schools are the ones making the decision about hiring an SRO, and the Police are there to protect people, and they are able to train as much as possible in preparation. Having a SRO at the school would alleviate some stress for people concerned about the lack of a SRO, but there are costs associated with the position, both a monetary cost and the costs of hiring another person.

Chairman Lane asked if the SRO position was hired would there be the potential of any shared use of that position at the Town level. And Chief Venio responded that he researched MOUs of other

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community's SRO positions, and the SRO is typically 100% of their time in the school, except for vacations and time off for trainings, when the town will switch in another officer to provide abbreviated coverage during that SRO's time off. During the approximately eight (8) weeks of summer, when school is not in session, then that SRO would either do trainings, or work as an officer or detective for the town, to be temporarily utilized in another capacity than as an SRO. Chief Veno said that it would be ideal for the position to be, or to become, trained as a Juvenile Detective, to be able to focus on the mentality of dealing with children, and their parents.

Chairman Lane asked how often Chief Veno, and his staff, are in LAS during the year, and the response was that they typically park their Police cruiser along the side of the road (whether manned or not) to slow traffic adjacent to the school. On a periodic basis they greet students upon entry to school, to build a rapport with students and to provide a safety aspect, they also occasionally stop in for lunch breaks, in addition to visiting Heronfield Academy, to make sure that school is getting services as well. He added that he meets with the Principals of both schools periodically to ask their concerns and how the Police Department can be of assistance to the school.

E. Beattie said that he thought this interest in obtaining an SRO was a result of the school shooting in Texas. Hampton Falls is trying to hire a fifth Police officer. He said that Barry Newcomb was a great SRO at the High School. Chief Veno responded that High Schools often have more SROs than elementary schools, and Chairman Lane said that needs vary dependent on the size of the school.

E. Beattie asked if the officer under consideration accepts the offer, how soon could he start work, and Chief Veno responded probably beginning of February. E. Beattie asked what the plan is if the candidate declines the offer, and Chief Veno said that they will continue to use their contacts, they have another person in mind for consideration, but other than that, they will restart their recruiting efforts. One resource is the Great Bay Police test, to look at those numbers and resumes for consideration.

ROAD AGENT MONTHLY REPORT – Russ Hilliard: The Road Agent, R. Hilliard, presented some follow-up information regarding issues raised at the last Selectmen's meeting.

There were questions about proposed painted lines to add to Nason Road as either double-yellow lines in the center, or fog lines at the road edges. He reached out to NH DOT and found that their recommendations are:

- 1) Road width of eighteen-feet (18') should only have a double-yellow line, and then the traffic has a tendency to speed up, because drivers can follow the double-yellow line. That road width is not wide enough to install the fog lines at the edges.
- 2) Road widths of nineteen to twenty-feet (19-20') can accommodate both the double-yellow lines and the fog lines, and the fog lines have a tendency to slow the traffic down to stay within the yellow lines.
Traffic lines are not required, they are optional for towns.
- 3) A single center line is not legal and is not recommended to do.
- 4) Fog lines only are not recommended on a narrow width road because they could indicate a one-way-only traffic direction, so those are only recommended on wider roads
- 5) Another option is to install delineator posts with reflectors at the road edges. These are helpful in blizzard conditions for plowing on State roads and can be seen on Route 88.

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The road that was discussed at the last Selectmen's meeting was Nason Road, that is twenty-one-feet (21') wide, so that road width could receive both double-yellow center lines and fog lines at the edges, as per NHDOT recommendations, if decided by the Selectmen.

L. Gargiulo stated that painting lines on roads changes the whole character of the particular location, and if those changes are made in a variety of locations, then the Town's character will change from the way it has been represented for generations. R. Hilliard said that it is not something that has to be done or that is required, it would only be a courtesy. Chairman Lane said he agreed, and that the lines could give the impression that it is a bigger road than it probably is, and the Town already has a speeding issue that they've been working to address in the past year, so he concluded that installing painted lines on Nason Road would probably lead to people driving faster.

R. Hilliard reported a record number of leaves coming into the Brush Dump. Chairman Lane said he had a resident ask if there is less area to deposit leaves at the Brush Dump this year, and R. Hilliard responded that he could widen the area to accommodate three (3) cars simultaneously, as there was a line to get into the Brush Dump last weekend.

R. Hilliard stated that the Salt shed is full, and that the Winter Sand is ordered and should arrive either this afternoon or tomorrow morning.

R. Hilliard thanked Fire Chief Lord and the Hampton Falls Fire Department for filling up the water tank at the Brush Dump. He said that it is very helpful, and it is nice to have water there.

R. Hilliard said that there is a resident at the corner of King St and Frying Pan Lane with some issues regarding trees in that location. Specifically, the trees are affected by the Ash Borer that are killing the trees next to the road. The resident told R. Hilliard that there are approximately four or five (4-5) trees that they would like the town to take down, so R. Hilliard told the resident that he would ask the Selectmen for permission because the trees are located on a Scenic Road. Chairman Lane asked if the trees are the ones that are marked, and R. Hilliard said yes, that he had marked the trees for the Selectmen to view. E. Beattie said that Unitil proposed and received approval for their annual tree trimming and removal of trees along Scenic Roads last summer, and the Planning Board walked that site and looked at those specific trees. E. Beattie suggested that the property owner may want to contact Unitil themselves to follow-up to determine Unitil's timeframe for removal, or to have them return to reassess current conditions. R. Hilliard stated that the trees are in rough shape.

Proposed work order for 5 Curtis Road, in front of the Bassett residence, where there has been an on-going drainage trouble spot where (in the Winter) an ice-dam covers the road. R. Hilliard said that he has received permission from the homeowner to work to correct the drainage problem. R. Hilliard said that it was his opinion that it would be in the Town's best interest to correct the problem, by getting the drainage to go into the catch basin, would save the Town money in Salt and Sand applied to the ice-dam. The proposal is to reconstruct and lower the catch basin inlet and to create a new drainage swale.

MOTION: To approve the proposed Non-Emergency Highway Department Project at 5 Curtis Road, to reconstruct and lower the catch basin inlet and create a new drainage swale, in the

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amount of \$1,285, to be funded from the Highway Budget Account # 573 that has an available balance of \$4,749.15.

MOTION: L. GARGIULO

SECOND: E. BEATTIE

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MOTION: To approve the Road Agent's monthly October 2022 Core Services bill in the amount of \$5,857.83

MOTION: E. BEATTIE

SECOND: L. GARGIULO

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FIRE / AMBULANCE/EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT MONTHLY REPORT –Chief Jay Lord:

Fire Chief Lord presented his monthly report for Oct/Nov 2022 saying that it was a busy month with emergency calls and many transports to the hospital and a few car crashes. There was a fire over at Avesta Housing on Brown Road where someone put an electric teapot on the stove, and it filled the building with smoke.

Fire Chief Lord stated that it is recertification time of the year; the Firefighters who need to be recertified in CPR or National Registry recertification are working on those. The Ambulance got inspected yesterday so that is good for another two (2) years.

Fire Chief Lord said that he has been working with K. Anderson and Comstar, the Ambulance billing company, to work through issues associated with the insurance company and the transfer of banks and account numbers, which generated lots of paperwork. He said that the issues are very close to being resolved as he wraps up with Medicare and Medicaid.

The Fire Chief said that he has had many permit inquiries regarding woodstoves and fireplaces, as the temperatures drop. The Fire Department tells people to make sure their appliance is UL listed and approved, and make sure there is enough space around electric heaters.

There are four (4) new appointments to the Hampton Falls Fire Department.

Appointments to Fire Department as member, for six-month probation until April 1, 2023:

- Christopher Nesbitt, of Hampton, NH
- John Mounsey, of Seabrook, NH
- Matthew Polasek, of Hampton, NH

Appointment to Fire/EMT Department:

- Ralph Martinese, of Hampton, NH

MOTION: To appoint, to the Hampton Falls Fire Department for a six-month probationary period until April 1, 2023: Christopher Nesbitt, of Hampton, NH; John Mounsey, of Seabrook, NH; and Matthew Polasek, of Hampton, NH. To appoint to the Hampton Falls Fire/EMT Department: Ralph Martinese, of Hampton, NH.

MOTION: E. BEATTIE

SECOND: L. GARGIULO

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Mark R. Lane, Chairman – Edward B. Beattie, Vice Chairman – Lou Gargiulo, Selectman

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HISTORICAL SOCIETY, Tracy Healey-Beattie, Presentation to Fire Chief:

Tracy Healey-Beattie presented, on behalf of the Trustees of the Historical Society, to Fire Chief Lord, in recognition and gratitude for his efforts and energies during the Tricentennial Celebration an enlarged framed photograph of the Clydesdale horses in front of the Fire Station. Tracy Healey-Beattie said that they are most grateful for Chief Lord's efforts. Fire Chief Lord expressed his thanks and said that he would hang the photo in the Fire Station.

BUILDING INSPECTOR, CODE COMPLIANCE, HEALTH OFFICER MONTHLY REPORT –

Mark Sikorski: The Building Inspector, M. Sikorski, presented his monthly report for October 12th through November 10th, 2022, and asked if there were any questions.

E. Beattie said that he had an inquiry from a resident regarding the animated sign at 19 Lafayette Rd, Power Sports, that the sign was rotating, so he went there himself and noticed it was moving every 15-20 seconds. M. Sikorski said that he would go on site and use a timer to see what the measurement is between message changes and then speak with the owner, but 15-20 seconds was what they had agreed as the average time someone could pass by without seeing the sign change.

Chairman Lane asked about what was happening across from Applecrest on Brown Road, as he has had numerous inquiries. M. Sikorski responded that he spoke with the owner of the property who said that the apple trees had stopped producing because Applecrest was not maintaining the trees, so the new owner has removed the apple trees and is going to plant Rye Grass as feed for horses. Chairman Lane asked for confirmation that there is no proposed building on that lot, and M. Sikorski confirmed that he spoke with the owner and that this was the owner told him.

OLD BUSINESS

FINANCIAL REPORTS: General Fund Balance: \$852,079.69

Chairman Lane reported the General Fund balance of \$852,079.69. K. Anderson presented Payroll Warrant #587 dated November 9, 2023 in the amount of \$27,522.69, and Accounts Payable Warrant #826 dated November 9, 2023, in the amount of \$86,694.88.

EXECUTIVE: Payroll Warrant:

MOTION: To approve Payroll Warrant #587 dated November 9, 2023 in the amount of \$27,522.69; and Accounts Payable Warrant #826 dated November 9, 2023, in the amount of \$86,694.88.

MOTION: E. BEATTIE

SECOND: L. GARGIULO

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OTHER SELECTMEN'S OLD BUSINESS: There was no Other Selectmen's Old Business.

OLD BUSINESS PUBLIC COMMENT: There was no Old Business Public Comment.

NEW BUSINESS

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EXECUTIVE: 2022 Tax Rate: K. Anderson stated that the Town still has not yet received the phone call from NH DRA to set the tax rate, but she is expecting the call anytime, as the LAS school confirmed revenues yesterday, Winnacunnet revenue review was completed last week; if the call comes during the meeting, the Board can recess and participate in the process.

ELECTIONS: J.P. Pontbriand, Moderator: J.P. Pontbriand reported that the election went smoothly. He said that he is still getting feedback from the community getting used to having the elections at the LAS school. He said the parking and space available was great, the handicapped parking in the back is a good location and a handful of people used it, but a lot of people are just not aware that it is an option. He proposed for next year to potentially have election workers greet people driving into the LAS school, to make them aware of the two access points.

J.P. Pontbriand discussed the set-up for the election the day before, and that it is always good to have a Selectmen there to help. He said that 3:00 PM is the time to schedule ahead and asked if Selectmen needed a reminder prior to each election, and the response was yes.

J.P. Pontbriand revisited the subject of Poll Books, that he had discussed with the Selectmen a month-and-a-half ago. Poll Books are an electronic system to check people into the polling place. He wanted to address a couple of questions previously raised by the Selectmen, one of which was questions about security. He provided to the Selectmen additional information regarding the security features of the Poll Books, that touched on all the points of vulnerability. The second question previously raised by the Selectmen was what other seacoast towns were using Poll Books. J.P. Pontbriand said that the Town Clerk, Stephanie Grant, had communicated with other towns either by verbal phone calls or through the online forum for Town Clerks. He said that in a couple of the communities that are using the Poll Books had very positive feedback, and of course there is a learning curve in the beginning, as with anything. He continued that the Supervisors of the Checklist were at the demo and they are very much looking forward to using the Poll Books, as it would really help the close-out process for election etaff, and provide a better way to complete the tallies. In terms of timing, J.P. Pontbriand said that he would prefer to have the Poll Books in place for the March 2023 Town election, to become familiar with them before the four-election cycle in 2024 with the Presidential election. Pricing is \$1,525 each, and they would need four (4) devices, for a total of \$6,100.

There was a brief recess declared at 8:50 AM, to allow the Selectmen to participate in the long-awaited phone call that K. Anderson received, from NH DRA, to set the Town's tax rate. The meeting reconvened at 9:15 AM.

J.P. Pontbriand continued with his proposal for the Poll Books, for four (4) devices the bottom line is \$6,100, with an annual licensing fee of \$1,200. Additionally, every six (6) years there will be a fee of \$300-\$500 per unit for upgrades, so that would be a cost of \$2,000 every six years for the four units. J.P. Pontbriand said that he did not know of the lead time required from ordering to receiving the devices, but "the sooner the better" to allow time for training ahead of the March election.

K. Anderson said that she spoke with the Town Clerk, Stephanie Grant yesterday about her budget, and that she could absorb the one-time cost of \$6,100 in 2022, but not the additional \$1,200 annually.

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L. Gargiulo asked what other seacoast towns use the Poll Books, and J.P. Pontbriand responded that S. Grant looked into it, and she was the one who had those conversations. He said that she relayed to him that the experience was generally favorable and that the towns were of similar (or slightly larger) size to Hampton Falls. L. Gargiulo reiterated that he wanted to know which specific towns use the Poll Books, so J.P. Pontbriand said that he would speak with S. Grant and then send an email to the Selectmen with the response.

Trailer update: J.P. Pontbriand suggested that when the Town obtains the trailer, that some shelving be installed inside the trailer to prevent goods from shifting around during movement. He said that he would be happy to build the shelving but would need some material costs, so he requested that a couple hundred dollars be included in the trailer acquisition cost for that purpose.

Another discussion point about the trailer is the parking location in the future. Right now, the trailer is parked at the Fire Chief's home, and that may not be the best permanent location. Is there a spot for it to be parked here at Town Hall, or at the Highway Department area between elections. Chairman Lane asked if the question has been asked if there is storage space at the LAS school, and J.P. Pontbriand responded yes, that question was asked with a response of no space available, but if the Town wanted to create some space at the school, that was a possibility. After considering the alternatives, it seemed that storing the election materials in a trailer made the most sense because the trailer can be positioned close to the gym/cafeteria door for unloading and loading, with the fewest number of steps.

Chairman Lane asked about the trailer currently being used, and J.P. Pontbriand clarified that it is a temporary trailer on loan to the Town until the Town finds one to purchase. Chairman Lane asked if the question should be asked again of LAS regarding any available interior storage space. There was a discussion about the perception of the amount of space needed formerly with larger voting booths, as compared with now, that the actual amount of space needed should be communicated. Chairman Lane said he knew that specific parts of the newer part of the building were designed for storage. J.P. Pontbriand offered to explore that further and to convey how well it all packs up.

The last item that J.P. Pontbriand raised was the topic of a potential Joint Deliberative Session between the Town and the School. Chairman Lane reported that he had a meeting with Jason Farias on this subject, and he was quick to respond that he had concern about doing it for this coming year, but Chairman Lane encouraged him to re-think about it. He said that J. Farias had concerns about the size of the crowd and how late the meeting would go, but Chairman Lane said that that would be a good thing if the size of the crowd was large because we are trying to get out in front of the public, and to be as transparent as possible. At the end of the conversation Chairman Lane thought that J. Farias understood what Chairman Lane's point was, and it was encouraging that he wanted to discuss it further with the School Board. Chairman Lane said that he would be seeing the School Board tonight and that he hoped he would have an answer soon.

J.P. Pontbriand said that he would follow-up to: 1) identify the towns that use the Poll Books, and 2) revisit the question of space availability at the LAS school. Chairman Lane said that he could also ask, at the School Board meeting tonight, the question about space availability at the LAS school for storage of election materials.

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L. Gargiulo asked what is the value of the election materials being stored in the trailer, and J.P. Pontbriand estimated approximately \$5,000. L. Gargiulo said that he thought that the best location to store the trailer would be behind the Police Station as the parking lot is equipped with cameras. He continued that he did not think that the Brush Dump would be a secure location for storage of the election materials trailer.

E. Beattie said that his two (2) recommendations are to try to find storage space at the LAS school, that would be dry and accessible, and to also try to get the Joint Deliberative Session scheduled with the LAS school and the Town on the same day. He encouraged Chairman Lane to try to get both of those challenges accomplished, and L. Gargiulo agreed.

ASSESSING: DRA Assessment Ratio:

K. Anderson explained that the NH DRA Assessment Ratio is the study that is done by the Town's Assessing contractor annually that reviews all the qualified sales in town compared to their assessment. The Town submits the report to the Department of Revenue for the determination of the Town's equalization rate. The preliminary rate, based on 40 qualified sales between October 1, 2021, and September 30, 2022, is 65.4%. That is down from 75.8% last year. So, properties are currently selling for approximately 35% higher than their assessment.

The COD, or Co-efficient of Dispersion is 11.8 which is in the perfect range between 5-20. The COD measures the equity of assessments between different types of property. The COD indicates that while the values of property are being assessed at only 65.4% of the fair market value, that percentage is equitable among different types of properties. The revaluation is in 2023, so as assessments go up, then the tax rate goes down, and tax bills do not automatically go up because of a revaluation. The tax rate is based on what is approved at Town Meeting, not based on the value of residential properties. The town is required to bring property values up to 90-110% of fair market value. It is a real benefit to the Town to be at an assessment as close to 100% as possible because the higher the Town's valuation, the more state revenues (based on the valuation of the Town) will be received by the Town, such as the Rooms and Meals taxes, and the Highway Block Grant appropriation.

E. Beattie said that when he joined the Selectmen five years ago the assessment rate was 89-90% and that the same year as a revaluation, and he could not understand how the numbers could be so far off of 100% in the same year as the revaluation. K. Anderson said that after a revaluation, the assessment should be as close to 100% as possible. E. Beattie lamented the loss of state revenues in the intervening years, based on low assessments. E. Beattie said that the public should view the revaluation as a positive thing for the town because even though it costs the town money to complete, it will ultimately result in the town receiving more state revenues, and lowering the tax rate. Chairman Lane clarified that tax bills only typically increase for those whose assessment increased more than the average.

MOTION: To approve and sign the 2022 Sales Ratio Study for submission to the Department of Revenue.

MOTION: E. BEATTIE

SECOND: L. GARGIULO

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PUBLIC COMMENT: There was no Public Comment.

OTHER SELECTMEN'S NEW BUSINESS: Budget Review:

All the Department's budgets have been reviewed at this point. Chairman Lane stated that he wants to go through the proposed budget line by line because the Selectmen are looking at a potential increase of over nine-percent (+9%). He stated that he understands that many of the increases are beyond the control of the Selectmen. K. Anderson detailed the three (3) biggest increases in the proposed budget as follows: 1) the plowing contract is \$156,000, 2) health and dental insurance is \$85,000, and 3) the Assessing Revaluation contract is \$41,700, which together total \$282,700 and represent a large proportion of the 9% proposed increase.

Executive: K. Anderson stated that the printing of the Town Report can be reduced by \$500, as the RFP came back with a savings. Chairman Lane said that it is important to look at unspent items. He also suggested that the smaller amount line items could be combined into a larger miscellaneous category, such as the current Miscellaneous line item at \$50, and the Books and Periodicals at \$35. K. Anderson said that she tried to keep the categories as similar to last year's budget as possible, but those could definitely be combined.

Tuition reimbursement at \$250 can be reduced to zero, as K. Anderson said that she does not anticipate anyone taking a class.

Auto reimbursement was a category that Chairman Lane noticed was not utilized very much throughout the budget, there were several instances where the amount was not used for several years. In the Executive section it is partially used, and K. Anderson said that the remaining balance will most likely be used traveling to the NHMA conference in Manchester, NH later this week.

Elections: E. Beattie pointed out the difference between the budget for 2022 and 2023, with three (3) elections versus one (1) election, and asked why the numbers were not more different with fewer elections next year. K. Anderson responded that there are increases in other places. Under the Election Services line there is a reduction from 2022 of \$5,630 to \$1,056 for a difference of \$4,574 in that single line item. E. Beattie followed up asking how much does it cost to run an election, as he was just trying to get a general handle on the cost per election, especially looking ahead to 2024 when there will be multiple elections?

Chairman Lane inquired about Other Professional Services, and K. Anderson said that there is still a \$4,600 bill to come out of that account for the Avitar Town Clerk program. The reduction in Elections to \$8,800 was due to the cost to pay for the programming of the voting machines. K. Anderson requested S. Grant to join the meeting to respond to questions by the Selectmen.

E. Beattie stated that he was trying to understand why the costs were higher this year for multiple elections, and then with only one election next year the costs as proposed are nearly the same. S. Grant responded saying that the bulk of the increase comes from the employee step increases. Additionally, S. Grant said that last year's numbers in the budget were incorrect, as she was not aware that the Supervisors of the Checklist were on a pay scale. They had previously been paid at the lowest level of pay scale, and two of those people should have been paid at the highest step, so that amount increased dramatically in the proposed budget. Everything was reduced in the Election budget to running one election next year. The costs of things, in general, increased for items like dog tags, and the coding for

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the software for the election increased by close to \$2,000. S. Grant said that she did not increase any hours in her office.

Chairman Lane asked about the Other Miscellaneous line item of \$200 where \$1 has been spent, and S. Grant explained that those are for refunds, and there was only one refund this year, so she agreed that some of that amount could be reduced, and it was decided to leave \$50 in the budget, for a reduction of \$150. Another inquiry of Chairman Lane were the Meetings and Conferences and Auto Reimbursement lines which were unspent this year, and S. Grant responded that she was unable to attend the annual conferences in 2022 due to being short staffed, she is hoping to be able to go next year.

Financial Administration: K. Anderson stated that this is where the increase of \$42,132 is for the Assessing Revaluation. K. Anderson explained that Postage line items have been consolidated due to the postage meter. Chairman Lane reiterated that it could be possible to combine the smaller line-item amounts into a broader miscellaneous category, and K. Anderson said that she could do that without changing the total amounts. E. Beattie said that he would be in favor of that approach as long as the state does not require the specific line-items for auditing purposes. K. Anderson responded that the line-items are part of a standard chart of accounts for the state, but the town does not have to report on those line-items. The Town reports based on the larger category of the 4150. E. Beattie commented to reflect the budget as close to actual spending as possible. If a line item is not being used it does not make sense to keep listing it. E. Beattie asked what was represented by the line-item Other Professional Services, and K. Anderson responded that it is the phone system and the postage meter.

Legal: Chairman Lane expressed interest in reducing the Legal budget amount, where there is \$15,000 budgeted and the Town has expended \$5,100. There was a significant legal expense in 2021, and it is impossible to anticipate what legal expenses are going to occur, but there may be an opportunity to reduce this budget. L. Gargiulo suggested a total of \$9,500 for legal expenses. K. Anderson said that she would reduce the General Legal line item by \$5,500 to \$1,500 and leave both the Planning and Zoning Board Legal line-items as is because that is where the Town is most likely to have legal expenses.

Employee Benefits: Chairman Lane stated that there is probably no room to consider any reductions in this area. He asked how the increase of \$83,456 came to be in addition to the increase of one family joining the Town's health and dental insurance. K. Anderson explained that the Health Trust reduced rates last year by 8.1% plus issued a rebate and this year increased the rate by 11.7%. This year's rate is not significantly different from what it was two years ago. Chairman Lane asked how many town employees are on the insurance plans, and K. Anderson responded seven total plus one buy-out. The Family Plan is now approximately \$36,000 annually.

L. Gargiulo asked if Health Trust is the only option, and K. Anderson said that the Town could go look on the open market. There is another risk pool also. She added that she knows that some towns are on the Cigna Plan through NH Interlocal. E. Beattie predicted that if the Town went looking to change health and dental insurance providers that the first year's rate would be good, and then the second year's rate would be not as attractive, and he added that to self-insure is tough. K. Anderson said that the Town is in the category of under fifty (50) employees. Chairman Lane said that the difference between the

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family rate and the single rate is expensive, and K. Anderson said that most of the seven employees currently participating are on the family rate.

Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment: Chairman Lane asked about the Full and Part-Time positions, and K. Anderson explained that R. Webb's position was formerly split up between three different accounts (Planning, Zoning and Executive), but now is consolidated all into Executive for greater transparency. The same comments were made regarding consolidating some of the smaller accounts, and perhaps reducing the Auto Reimbursement line-items. It was decided to reduce Planning Board Auto Reimbursement by \$130 to \$100, and to reduce Zoning Board Auto Reimbursement by \$115 to \$0.

Heritage Commission: Budget presented is 33% less than prior year at \$1,000.

Government Buildings: K. Anderson said that this is the category with a 9.5% increase due to electricity and fuel oil / propane and groundskeeping costs totaling \$5,500.

Cemeteries: Chairman Lane said that supplies budgeted were \$3,000 and only \$450 were spent. K. Anderson said that the Cemetery Trustees reduced their budget by \$1,120 and further explained that unspent funds from this line-item go into the undesignated fund balance. Chairman Lane said that he wants to Cemeteries to look good, and asked what the supplies were for, and K. Anderson said it is to clean the headstones. It was decided that since the budgeted funds are not being used to reduce the Supplies line-item by \$2,000.

Insurance: Numbers are set and not negotiable.

Building Inspection: K. Anderson pointed out that the increase showing in the part-time position is taken from the Health Department line-item that was consolidated for transparency. Chairman Lane asked about the Books & Periodicals line-item, and M. Sikorski explained that the code books are published on an erratic schedule of every two or three years. It was agreed to reduce the Building Inspection Books and Periodicals line-item by \$300 to \$300 total.

Police Department: Chairman Lane asked Police Chief Veno if this current budget included recent updates as discussed, and he replied that it does not. L. Gargiulo asked if the Police Department is going to use \$16,000 worth of gasoline, and Chief Veno explained the two systems of purchasing gasoline through the WEX program to go to a local gas station or through the state. He explained that they alternate using the two systems and have determined that the state is the cheaper route. The state estimated \$4.25 per gallon for next year; it used to be a set system and that contract ran out so now it is a fluctuating system which is why he needs to keep checking it. Chief Veno estimated the cost at \$3.33 per gallon at 400 gallons per month, and this year looks like the Police Department may utilize \$13,000. Last year they budgeted \$9,500, but next year they will have an additional full-time officer to increase the use of the cruiser. Chairman Lane asked if the proposed budget included the additional full-time officer next year, and the response was yes. Chief Veno said that he wants to update the step program for officers in the future. Chairman Lane was appreciative of Chief Veno proposing a reduced budget of \$22,090 and commented that it may be the first time he has seen proposed reductions by the Police Department since he has been a Selectman. Chief Veno said that he shifted amounts to reflect actual

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spending more accurately for greater transparency. E. Beattie said that the Selectmen can always look at it again in the future as the need arises, and Chairman Lane said that once the fifth officer is hired that may be a good time to revisit it, and Chief Veno agreed to update his budget for the Selectmen, regarding the most recent details.

Ambulance / Public Safety: L. Gargiulo asked about the Part-Time Positions budgeted compared with actual spent, and the response was that those positions are paid the first week of December. He also asked about the gasoline line-item and why it was not increased. K. Anderson pointed out that both Ambulance and Fire were both already overspent in gasoline this year. Chief Lord said that diesel is \$5.60 per gallon, and now that they have the Utility Truck to chase the ambulance, rather than a truck, they will be using less (more expensive) diesel fuel.

Emergency Management: Fire Chief Lord was able to reduce the Emergency Management budget by \$3,575 due to reduced drills and repairs and maintenance. He further explained that for any activity at the Nuclear Power Plant, those expenses are reimbursable; however, there has to be money in the accounts in order to be reimbursed. Chairman Lane asked about the Other Professional Services line-item of \$5,000, and Chief Lord responded that he is required to develop a COOP (Continuity of Operations Plan) with an EMPG grant, in addition to a Hazardous Mitigation Update (reimbursable grant) that will make the Town eligible for FEMA reimbursements. Chairman Lane followed up asking why there were no expenditures in 2022, and Chief Lord said that he is supposed to be doing it and will be starting it after the first of the year.

Highways: Chairman Lane said that the big increase is the Winter Road Maintenance agreement that is a contracted increase of \$139,015. Additionally, he asked about the Maintenance and Repair line-item, and K. Anderson responded that it was the increase in the price of salt from \$65 per ton last year, to \$72.07 per ton this year. E. Beattie asked what the anticipated balance may be at the end of the year in the Highway budget, and K. Anderson responded approximately \$40,000 to \$46,000 from snow plowing because that was what was negotiated with the current vendor at \$25,000 per month payments in 2022.

Street Lights: There are eight (8) street lights in Hampton Falls.

Solid Waste Collection: K. Anderson said that the Solid Waste budget was reduced by \$130 in Printing and Food (for White Goods Day Volunteers) costs, Due to the potential change of offering monthly waste days starting in the Spring, the food line-item will no longer be needed, and it was agreed to reduce the Food line-item by \$100 to \$0.

Solid Waste Disposal: Chairman Lane asked about the Cardboard Recycling line-item. K. Anderson explained that the increase over last year is due to an increased fee of \$300 monthly, but the Town has off-setting revenues from the sale of that cardboard. E. Beattie said that he spoke with Jim Ziolkowski who said that the size of the new baler allows him to store the baled cardboard to sell when prices are higher.

Health: There is not much there, because the part-time position was moved into the Building Inspector wages line-item. K. Anderson described the Test Pits Inspection line-item for which the Town had been

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previously budgeting and then billing RCCD, so the Town has established an “in and out” account and do not need to budget for this expense.

Animal Control: the proposed budget for Animal Control is decreased by \$2,390. E. Beattie asked if the three (3) agents are going to be handling the Animal Control positions, as the Selectmen had not heard an update on those positions recently. Police Chief Veno responded that one of the officers went to a Firearms Safety class and there was a Firearms qualification for all staff and will have another one next week. Chief Veno anticipates having a training class for the Animal Control Officers so that the expectations are clear on how to handle calls for Animal Control issues. E. Beattie asked about the unspent money in that account and Police Chief Veno explained that the police have been handling the job in the interim and the line-item may have been overbudgeted last year in anticipation of a potential shared position with Seabrook. E. Beattie asked about the proposed \$6,080 and Police Chief Veno said that some of that was to send the three new ACOs to a week-long seminar at UNH, and that may be a recurring annual cost to keep current.

Health Agencies: K. Anderson reported that there have been fewer requests from Health Agencies for funding from the Town, due to organizations merging, and ARPA funds have taken some of the burden off of the towns. She added that in the past there has been considerable effort toward procuring requests for funds from Health Agencies.

Welfare Direct Assistance: K. Anderson reported that the Town does not see many local requests, and she has been able to work with Southern NH Services regarding the many people they have placed at the Hampton Falls Inn.

Parks and Recreation: K. Anderson said that the variance for these two line-items is only \$170 because of the restructuring of accounts to separate the two categories into Parks and Recreation. Chairman Lane asked how the funds are being used in the Revolving Fund, considering the division between Parks and Recreation, and K. Anderson responded that the Revolving Funds will be used for Recreation programming, and that funds will revolve in and out to cover expenses for the Home Run Derby or the Summer Camp for example. Additionally, there are many new ideas for programming initiatives that when implemented will also be funded with the Revolving funds. There was significant discussion about the purpose of revolving funds and if there should be a cap on how much money should stay in the Revolving Fund, suggesting that even \$30,000 might be too much. E. Beattie said that the revolving fund has not been used the way it was set up. E. Beattie asked who was holding the Revolving Fund account, and K. Anderson responded that it is held by the Town Treasurer and paid out through orders of the Recreation Commission. L. Gargiulo asked what were the Activities included in the proposed line-item for \$1,250, and K. Anderson explained the activities the Recreation Commission has and is putting on at no charge to residents such as: the Home Run Derby, Ice Rink, Halloween event, Scarecrow contest, Holiday House Lighting contest, Farmers’ Market, etc. E. Beattie said that the growth and success of the Castleberry Fair has funded the Revolving Fund recently, with no fees being charged for the use of the Town Common. K. Anderson said that it costs approximately \$25,000 to maintain both the Governor Weare Field and the Town Common annually.

Beth Forgione, the Treasurer for the Recreation Commission said that the proposed activities for next year are three (3) times what they have been previously, with new Commission members initiating some

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new ideas. She commented that property maintenance is included in the Town budget. There is still need for a replacement sign at the Governor Weare Park (GWP), and the Recreation Commission can utilize the revolving fund for that purpose, since a warrant article failed. E. Beattie said that it is not his position to tell the Recreation Commission how to spend their Revolving Fund. Chairman Lane agreed that the sign at GWP needs to be replaced. B. Forgione asked how the drainage problem at GWP would be funded, and whether that would be a use of the Revolving Funds. Chairman Lane said that “intent” of the revolving fund is to revolve, with funds going in and out, and yet maintaining a relatively static balance. K. Anderson said that the Castleberry Fair fees will go to offset the costs of maintaining the parks. Chairman Lane asked why does the Town need an Activity fee line-item when there are funds in the Revolving Fund to fund activities, so he proposed to reduce the Recreation budget Activities line-item by \$1,250 to \$0.

Library: Chairman Lane stated that the biggest increase in the Library budget was the addition of health insurance for the new Library Director. B. Forgione, Library Trustee said that the former Library Director did not have health insurance through the Town, but the new Library Director has the family coverage for health insurance. Another increase was in Heat and Oil. The Library is going to absorb all of the other increases in pricing for supplies and services that everyone else is experiencing.

Patriotic Purposes: Same request as prior year, nothing to discuss.

Conservation Commission: E. Beattie asked K. Anderson if these proposed numbers were up to date, and she said that the Chairman of the Conservation Commission submitted approximately \$1,000 of bills yesterday. E. Beattie said that there is approximately \$5,000 unspent at the end of the year, and K. Anderson stated that this account is one of the two accounts that do not lapse unspent funds to the Town’s General Fund, it lapses to their own Conservation Fund. Chairman Lane asked if there was an opportunity to trim the budget at all, given all of the zeros in unspent funds, and the fact that in 2021 the budget was \$3,094 compared with a proposed budget for 2023 of \$12,400. The increases were attributable to the addition of two (2) Summer Interns primarily, and the person taking their minutes. E. Beattie asked the balance of the money in the Conservation Fund, and the response was \$160,000 to acquire conservation lands, and to do conservation projects. One-hundred-percent of Current Use tax goes into that account. E. Beattie proposed to adjust this budget by a couple thousand dollars and he did not believe that a reduction would deter their efforts. Chairman Lane identified the Other Miscellaneous account as unspent, and there was a consensus to reduce the Conservation Commission budget Miscellaneous line-item by \$1,500 to \$290.

Bond Principal and Interest: Chairman Lane stated that the bond for the Conservation Land matures in 2025, which will help the Town in a couple of years to no longer have the expense.

Tax Anticipation Notes: K. Anderson asked the Selectmen about the Tax Anticipation Notes that has always been funded at \$1,000, and E. Beattie said that it has never been used, so K. Anderson suggested and the Selectmen agreed to reduce the line-item of Tax Anticipation Notes by \$900 to \$100.

Highway Warrant article: Chairman Lane discussed the annual \$250,000 warrant article for Highway projects, and had wanted to discuss this with R. Hilliard earlier. He said that maybe there is not as much

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paving needed next year, and that an amount of \$150,000 would be sufficient. There is a grant pending for \$140,000 for the culvert replacement on Drinkwater Road.

K. Anderson presented an analysis that compared the approved and proposed budgets for 2022 and 2023, by reducing the warrant articles for road improvements from \$250,000 to \$150,000, and reducing Government Buildings from \$25,000 to \$15,000, not advancing warrant articles for the master plan nor the revaluation, and keeping mosquito control the same at \$21,000 and the Police cruiser at \$23,000 would total \$209,000 for warrant articles. Factoring in a proposed COLA of four-percent (4%) the compared difference between the approved 2022 budget and the proposed 2023 budget would be \$5,000.

L. Gargiulo said that another impact would be when the new Police Officer starts work either now or in six months. E. Beattie commented about the Police Cruiser and balancing the mileage out among the cruisers and does the Town need to be in the replacement cycle at the same frequency as previously (consider every four years instead of every three years), because the Selectmen are trying to get the budget as reduced as possible without hurting anyone. Police Chief Veno responded that there is a fifteen-month (15 month) delay to get a cruiser from the original time of order. The question was asked what is the balance in the Police Dept Vehicle Reserve Fund, and K. Anderson reported that the current balance is \$81,415, but there will still be another quarter of wages to come out of that before year end.

K. Anderson reported that the current balance of the Recreation Revolving Fund is \$45,863 that has been reduced by costs of the Farmers Market paying for music entertainment at each week.

Chairman Lane asked what the new revenue number was, and K. Anderson responded \$1,305,260 that is down a bit from the proposed budget. The Selectmen decided to meet starting at 5:30 PM on their next regularly meeting December 7th to finalize the COLA number, and the warrant articles. January 4th is the Public Hearing on the proposed Budget, that needs to be posted by December 14th. A previously discussed work session on November 30th with the Recreation Commission needs to be confirmed.

The Selectmen ran a few scenarios to set the Tax Rate, deciding to utilize \$175,000 of undesignated funds to reduce the Town Tax Rate (from \$21.12 for 2021) to \$20.99 for 2022.

MOTION: To set the Tax Rate for the Town of Hampton Falls at \$20.99, by utilizing \$175,000 of Undesignated Funds.

MOTION: E. BEATTIE

SECOND: L. GARGIULO

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NEW BUSINESS PUBLIC COMMENT: There was no New Business Public Comment.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES: November 02nd, 2022:

MOTION: To approve the minutes of November 02, 2022 as written.

MOTION: E. BEATTIE

SECOND: M. LANE

2-YES, 1 ABSTAINED; MOTION PASSED

PUBLIC COMMENT: There was no Public Comment.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TOWN OF HAMPTON FALLS**

**NOVEMBER 15, 2022 – 8:00 AM
TOWN HALL**

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Next Selectmen's Meeting is Wednesday, December 7, 2022, 5:30 PM

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: To adjourn at 11:30 AM.

MOTION: E. BEATTIE

SECOND: L. GARGIULO

UNANIMOUS

Board of Selectmen's Meeting Minutes prepared by Rachel D. Webb, Assistant Administrator.