

Approved May 7, 2024

Select Board
Meeting Minutes
April 10, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.
59 Main Street, Hatfield, MA

Present: Select Board: Members Edmund Jaworski and Greg Gagnon

Also in attendance: Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator; Darryl Williams, Chair and Members Kim Baker; Diane Brzozowski; Sean Barry and John Wilkes, Jr.

CALL TO ORDER Selectman Jaworski called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

POSTED BUSINESS

TOPIC 1 FY2025 Budget Review with Finance Committee: Selectman Jaworski stated since the last meeting the Select Board met with the Police Chief, Fire Chief and Building Inspector and Town Administrator to review their contracts. Each would receive a portion of what they were requesting, they would forgo the 2.6% COLA and the pay raises would have to be found within their budgets. Mr. Williams and Mr. Barry questioned the budget from last week to this week. Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator stated that she met at length with Mr. Genovese who stated the numbers from last week's meeting for his budgets were incorrect, so they corrected them which leaves approximately \$8,000.00 over the levy limit.

FY2025 Town Operating Budget: After reviewing the figures to be sure nothing has been missed, Kim Baker made a motion to approve this balanced budget as presented; Diane Brzozowski seconded; no further discussion; all in favor – aye; motion carries.

Proposed Overrides and Debt Exclusion Questions for May Annual Elections: Ms. Michonski presented the Select Board and Finance Committee with the three proposed override questions. Ms. Michonski spoke with the Treasurer, and he told her that because water and sewer are outside the debt limit, he feels we don't need to make a debt exclusion for the \$1,400,000.00 30 year loan. Referring to borrowing, the Treasurer informed her the Town's debt has \$25,000,000.00 in excess capacity. It was agreed by both the Select Board and Finance Committee that override question #1 would be eliminated.

Regarding questions 2a and 2b, there was discussion between the Select Board and Finance Committee. Mr. Barry stated he didn't feel comfortable negotiating salaries on Town floor. Question 2b as presented would keep coverage at 16-hour but all fire/ambulance personnel would receive rate increases. Question 2a is to fund a 24/7 fire and ambulance department. Mr. Barry went line-by-line through all three budget proposals. After some time of Mr. Barry working through the three proposed budgets of fire/ambulance, the Finance Committee recommended the override question would be presented at Town meeting for \$66,000.00 only. Mr. Barry said he did not feel comfortable putting the 24/7 budget on an override question because there are too many unknowns which the Select Board agreed with. The Select Board and Finance agreed they did not feel it necessary to put the 24/7 on an override until there was more information. Mr. Barry is also concerned that at the next Town meeting other Department heads would want to present override questions to fund their budgets as well. Mr. Williams stated the Select Board needs to make the Fire Chief aware that if the override passes, he is not to hire full-time personnel.

Override Question 1: Shall the Town of Hatfield be allowed to exempt from the provisions of proposition two and one-half, so called, the amount required to pay for the bond issued in order to supplement the Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrades Project? Selectman Jaworski made a motion that we remove question 1 and pay for that under sewer funds; Selectman Gagnon seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

Override Question 2a: Shall the Town of Hatfield be allowed to assess an additional \$343,533.00 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purpose of funding personnel in the Fire/Ambulance Department, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024? Selectman Jaworski made a motion that question 2a gets removed due to the fact that we have insufficient evidence and data and too many unanswered questions; Selectman Gagnon seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

Override Question 2b: Shall the Town of Hatfield be allowed to assess an additional \$84,924.00 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purpose of funding personnel in the Fire/Ambulance Department, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024? Selectman Gagnon made a motion that we put the question on the ballot: Shall the Town of Hatfield be allowed to assess an additional \$66,000.00 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purpose of funding personnel in the Fire/Ambulance Department, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024; Selectman Jaworski seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

Chair Williams made a motion that Finance Committee accept the override budget; Member Wilkes seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; motion approved.

FY2025 Capital Projects: This topic was tabled to the next meeting.

May Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles Draft: This topic was tabled to the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

UNANTICIPATED NEW BUSINESS

ADJOURN

Selectman Gagnon made a motion to adjourn; Selectman Jaworski seconded; no discussion; all in favor – aye; meeting adjourned at 9:18 pm.

Respectfully,
Karen Brodeur
Executive Assistant