

Minutes of the Board of Finance Budget Public Hearing
April 29, 2015 – Middle High School – 7 p.m.

Acting Chairman Joseph Sangiovanni called the Public Hearing to order at 7.p.m and welcomed the residents. He asked that all rise and join with him to pledge the allegiance to our flag. Mr. Sangiovanni began the Hearing by reading the Legal Notice of the Public Hearing scheduled for April 29, 2015 and published in the Journal Inquirer.

He introduced himself as Joe Sangiovanni, the Acting Chairman of the Board of Finance and he introduced Jeanne Gee, the Chairman of the Board of Education, Bill Hoff, the School Business Manager and Dr. Mel Chafetz, Interim Superintendent. He will present the overall proposed budget for the Town and the Board of Education will present the Board of Education budget. The first chart compares the Fiscal Year (FY) 2014-15 budget with the FY 2015-16 the proposed budget and notes the difference in dollars and difference in percentage of change. The expenditures of the proposed FY15-16 budget is \$33,704,325, increase of \$1,114,958 or a 3.24% increase for the Board of Education; and notes the expenditures of the General Govt. Operations totals \$14,828,354 or an increase of \$356,519 or 2.46% increase. The Total Expenditures of the FY 2015-16 Budget is \$55,651,658 an increase of \$351,269 over FY 2014-15 or .64%.

Mr. Sangovanni noted the Revenues for FY 2015-16. The revenue shortfall to be funded from taxes is \$37,626,864; this reflects an increase of \$1,578,801, 4.38% increase. This will increase the necessary mill rate from 27.12 to 27.78, and increase of .66 or 2.42%.

The major capital expenditures in this budget are:

1. Pavement Management - \$900,000
2. Remington Street Bridge - \$765,000
3. Spaulding School Roof – East Wing - \$250,000
4. Schools Oil Tank Removals – 3 Schools - \$140,000
5. Schools – 1:1 Technology for grades 3-5 - \$120,000
6. School – Technology Infrastructure Upgrades - \$105,000
7. Farmland Preservation - \$100,000

The budget drivers for the municipal budget are:

1. Employees – union contracts ratified for Town Hall Union, Dispatch union, Highway Union and Fire Union
2. Employee benefits – increase costs of health insurance
3. Other Post Employment Benefits – Annual Required Contribution increase for health insurance benefit for retirees and
4. Plan to review capital needs and possible bonding projects.

BOARD of EDUCATION

Mr. Sangiovanni introduced Ms. Jeanne Gee, Chairman of The Board of Education. She introduced Mr. Bill Hoff, Business Manager and Dr. Mel Chafetz, Interim Superintendent, who is to make the presentation. She thanked everyone for their support.

Dr. Chafetz: He thanked Mr. Ryan Anderson from the Board of Finance and for all the hours of dedicated work by the Board of Education. And he expressed his appreciation to Mr. Bill Hoff and to Ms. Debbie Cerrato for their valuable assistance during the budget process.

Dr. Chafetz reported the following:

- ❖ 2015-2016 Recommended budget, \$33,703,305
- ❖ Dollar Change, \$1,113,938
- ❖ Percentage of increase, 3.4%

Distribution of Budget Total Increase of 3.4%

- ❖ 2.5% Salaries
- ❖ 1.2% Health Insurance
- ❖ -0.3% all other

It should be noted that 91% of the Class 2014 applied to colleges with Rating of “Competitive” or Better. Dr. Chafetz highlighted the FY 2014 2015 Accomplishments:

- 1) Implementation of 1:1 Chromebooks at Suffield High School (SHS)
- 2) Reduction in Special Education (SPED) out of districts placements
- 3) Improved pre-k program to reduce future costs
- 4) Improved 18-21 years old transition program to reduce outplacement costs
- 5) Leadership: New principal and two new assistant principals at SHS and new principal at Suffield Middle School

Dr. Chafetz noted the schools’ commitment to reasonable class sizes:

- ❖ K-2 19, 20, 22 students
- ❖ 3-5 19, 20, 21 students

Chairman Sangiovanni opened the Hearing to questions. He asked that for the record, please give your name and address:

Mr. Larry Edwards, Bridge Street: He asked what the largest pay raise was in the schools?

Answer: 2.3%; no merit pay.

Mr. Bruce Rietburg, 12 Devine Road: When is Thrall Street going to be repaired? It needs drainage. Is there a better way so that we are not just spending repair costs.

Answer: Thrall Street is scheduled for a major rebuild and drainage; We have already begun the preliminary work, and we do have major grant funding.

Ms. Mary Ann Muska, Russell Avenue : Ms. Muska has a real concern about the distribution of the salary increases. Raises are all over the place. The one for the Emergency Management position is at 28%; Human Resources Director, up 5%, 11 % for Assistant Assessor , Are their job evaluations? Are the increases fair? Mr. Sangiovanni noted that the increase for the Emergency Management was due to more requirements by the State. Mr. Sangiovanni also stated that time had gone by since our last HR director, and we had to increase the salary to attract more applicants.

Mr. Tom Frenaye, Warnertown Road: He had questions regarding capital expenditures, such as what year were the projects going to be completed. The Payloader should be the 4th year of a 5 year payoff

He inquired about the project of the portable wash bay for the Highway Department. This was to be funded over 2 years and is portable if the facility is moved.

Mr. Frenaye noted that the late Elaine O'Brien, our former 61st State District Representative had been very instrumental in getting the Town a State grant of approximately \$900,000 to expand the utilities down Route #75 to promote economical development. He had heard that the funding would not be sufficient to complete the project and he sees no additional funding the proposed budget that would allow the expansion of utilities to be completed. He believes that this is a very important project for Suffield and he is concerned that funding might not be available. We should make funds available to complete this expansion project.

Shannon Watson, 333 Griffin Road: asked if there are there other resources, that one can examine the salaries in detail? Yes, this is available, responded the First Selectman. The paperwork is available and will be made available to you after the meeting. It is noted that the 53rd pay week is included in these salaries for the union employees and also the salary increase reflect a two year increase because the increases were not available when the FY 2014-15 budget was adopted.

Mr. Bruce Rietburg, Devine Road asked for an explanation of the changes in the recycling revenue and the increased cost of the trash removal. Mr. Sangiovanni stated we are now getting less money back for the recycling and the fee for hauling the trash has increased.

Hearing no further questions, Mr. Sangiovanni thanked the residents for their attendance.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Bobbie C. Kling BoF. Public.Hearing.April 29.2015