

Minutes of the Board of Finance Regular Meeting and of the Budget Review Meeting
April 14, 2008 – Police Conference Room – 7 p.m.

Members present: Justin Donnelly, Joseph Sangiovanni, Joanne Sullivan, Dennis Kreps, David Tagliavini, alts. Jim Lennon, Tom Frenaye Absent: Sam Fuller
Also present: Selectmen S. Lingenfelter, B. Fitzgerald, Treasurer C. Davidson, Director of Finance D. Cerrato

Chairman Justin Donnelly called the meeting to order.

Citizen Comment: None

Voting rights were accorded to Mr. Frenaye for the absent Mr. Fuller.

Minutes: Mr. Kreps moved to approve the Minutes of regular meetings, Feb. 11 and March 10, 2008, and minutes of the Budget Meetings, Feb. 25, March 3, March 17, March 24, and March 31 as presented; Mr. Sangiovanni seconded. All minutes were accepted and approved by unanimous vote. The Secretary was commended for her well written minutes.

Old Business: Mr. Donnelly noted that the Finance Task Force had met; on track.

Treasurer's Report: Christine Davidson distributed her written report, General Fund Investment Income Analysis 7/1/07 to 6/30/08 noting investment income from Short Term Investment Fund (STIF), TD Banknorth, Citizens. etc.

Budget Transfers:

Election Dept. – Registrars Darlene Burrell and Lynn Joyal were present. The Board of Selectmen approved of the funding request to the Board of Finance. The Registrars stated that additional funds are needed in the payroll and benefits line items. The funds are needed to order for the Elections Dept. to continue in accordance with State Statute. After a brief discussion, Mr. Kreps moved to transfer to Election Dept. – Payroll 01 4110 01 50100, \$7,186; to Election Dept. – Employee Benefits 01 4110 01 50208, \$550, from Contingency line item, a total of \$7,736. Ms. Sullivan seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Zoning & Planning Commission – Town Planner Bill Hawkins was present and reviewed in detail his memo to the Board of Selectmen, dated March 31, 2008. He noted that the Board of Selectmen had approved of his request for additional funds to cover the additional costs associated with the CT Biodiesel application (a total of \$29,800). After a brief discussion, Mr. Kreps moved to transform from Contingency, 01 8190 01 50391, to Zoning & Planning – Contracted Services 01 4501 01 50105, \$20,000; to Zoning & Planning – Office Supplies 01 4501 01 50300, \$500; to Zoning & Planning – Postage 01 4501 01 50325, \$300; to Zoning and Planning – Legal Fees 01 4501 01 50405, \$9,000. Mr. Sangiovanni seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Grant Application – FEMA HLS Fire Grant – Fire Chief Tom Bellmore was present and reviewed his memo to the Board of Selectmen, dated March 24, 2008. The Board of Selectmen has approved his request. He is requesting approval from the Board of Finance to apply for the Federal Assistance to Fire Fighters grant program and for approval to expend funds if the Grant is approved. If the award is approved, the Town will be responsible for 5% of the amount approved in the grant award. The project cost to be submitted is \$35,466.00; the Town's 5% share would be \$1,773 and would be taken from the Fire Commission's approved FY 2008/09 budget. The funding would purchase interaction training software and the required computers and related equipment. Mr. Kreps moved to approve the grant application as requested and documented by the Fire Commission, for \$33,636 and the Town's share would be 5% \$1,773, and would be funded by the Fire Commission's approved budget. Mr. Sangiovanni seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Budget Highlights – Director of Finance Deborah Cerrato reviewed briefly her report. She noted that after the transfers approved by the Board of Finance (BOF) at this meeting, the balance of the Contingency line item would be \$84,833.00.

First Selectman’s Report – Mr. Lingenfelter reported that the Relay for Life would be held June 7 – 8. The Public Hearing for the CT Biodiesel application is closed, and the Zoning and Planning have 65 days to act upon a decision.

The regular meeting was adjourned.

Budget Review Meeting –

Chairman Justin Donnelly called the meeting to order at 7:23 p.m.

Citizen Comment: Kris Karam, Apple Lane, spoke in support of the Board of Education budget. She does not want to see this budget cut.

Budget Review of the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) - Don Leis, member of the WPCA, Bernie Gooch, Chief Operator, and Julie Nigro, Business Administrator were present. Mr. Gooch noted that the 2008-09 expense budget had increased by 3%, a total administration budget of \$1,946,060. The Assessment Fund is down from \$315,409 to \$212,060; lack of development agreements. He noted that the Reserve Capacity Maintenance account had been reduced to \$170,000. He reported that the Town of Suffield sewer user fee had been increased from \$200 to \$258. Increases are necessary as revenues from the largest customer, Hood, have dropped significantly. Earlier it was reported that WPCA had voted to reduce staff by one person; this action has been reversed. No layoffs are planned. WPCA anticipates returning to the Town, \$142,207 from the Assessment Fund. The WPCA will transfer \$70,763 from the Assessment Fund to the Reserve Capacity Maintenance Fund budget. It was noted that the WPCA is working with CT. DEP and MASS. DEP. WPCA has set aside \$50,000 for a study regarding possible sewer service around the Congamond Lakes/Suffield.

Old Business –

Review of Proposed Changes – The Director of Finance reviewed the proposed Revenue Summary for the budget year 2008-09. After a discussion with the Tax Collector, a collection figure of 98.4% was advised. The Grand List was up 1.4%. A preliminary review was begun of the Expenditure Summary for 2008-09. At this point in time; the figures suggest that the proposed 2008-09 budget would come in at a 7.2% increase, with a mill rate change of 1.90.

The BOF discussed the monthly school enrollment figures supplied by the Board of Education. The BOF also discussed what figures Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) should be. Mr. Donnelly feels that the proposed budget at 7.2% is too high. Mr. Kreps noted that we have not addressed the Board of Education budget. It was noted by the Chairman that the Board of Finance does not have a final approved budget from the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Lingenfelter stated that the Board of Selectmen would meet on April 16 and take up this action. Mr. Tagliavini moved that the BOF not meet Tuesday, April 15, but meet Thursday April 17 so that the BOF can continue the budget review and have the approved Board of Selectmen budget figures. The motion was approved. The Chairman noted that this April 17 meeting would be a meeting of deliberation by the Board of Finance. People are welcome to come; but there would be no public comment. Mr. Donnelly noted that disagreement did not mean confrontation.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Bobbie C. Kling, Secretary to the Board of Finance

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