

Minutes of the Board of Finance Budget Review Meeting  
April 17, 2008 – Police Station Conference Room – 7 p.m.

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

Chairman Justin Donnelly called the meeting to order.

First Selectman Lingenfelter stated that the Board of Selectmen (BOS) had met Wednesday, April 16 and continued the meeting to Thursday, April 17 at 5 p.m. and had approved a list of recommended reductions. Mr. Lingenfelter presented their recommendations:

- \*Youth Services position – funding second half of the year – reduction of \$21,500 payroll and \$1,645 in benefits.
- \*Fire Fighter position – add funding for second half of the year - \$19,563 payroll, \$1,497 in benefits and \$575 uniforms.
- \*Open Space – reduction of \$100,000
- Pavement Management program – reduction of \$100,000
- \*Payloader – reduction of \$108,000- pay over a five year period
- \*OPEB (Other Post Employment Benefits) – keep at \$450,000 – reduction of \$200,000
- \*Library - \$5,000 reduced Books line item of \$55,000, to \$50,000
- \*Contingency – reduce by \$50,000 to \$200,000
- \*Non union salaries – reduce payroll by \$12,009, reduce benefits by \$919
- \*This totals \$577, 419 of proposed reductions
- \*An additional \$50,000 from Fund Balance was also recommended.

It was noted that the current economy affects this budget. Mr. Lingenfelter stated that there will be an anticipated increase for curbside pickup fees for residents. The contract is out to bid and will be opened on April 25, 2008, which will be before the Public Hearing on the budget. There is also increased fees from CRRA for the Town Burning fees.

The Finance Director Deborah Cerrato distributed updated Revenue Summary, Expenditure Summary, and proposed mill rate figures. The Chairman reported that he had been informed by the Assessor that an error has been found in the Grand List; the Director of Finance will investigate and see what impact this would have on the budget. She noted a new figure, Tuition Other, \$45,000(+); School Roof Project Reimbursement figure included, \$359,375; Trash fees, \$171,440; this figure is subject to change due to bids. Changes in the expenditures: correct figure for debt service, \$3,005,874. Mill Rate Estimate now is figured on the 98.4% Collection Rate, based on soft economy. Figures on the Mill Rate estimate now reflect a mill rate increase of 5.3%; mill rate change, 1.40.

Chairman Donnelly asked Mr. Eccles of the Board of Education if the BOE has a reduction to make. Mr. Eccles stated that that we have shared goals. He supported the areas discussed by the Selectmen for adjustments to the budget. He thinks we can do without reducing the BOE operating expenditures. He still supports the full BOE budget as submitted, with no changes.

**Deliberations:**

Chairman Donnelly noted that the taxpayers are already going to be hit with increases, the BOF cannot control. The Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) is raising its user fees from \$200 to \$258. The trash fee will also be increased.

The Chairman's recommendations:

\*Youth Services Position – not to support the full position;

\*Fire Fighter Position – half time position

\*Reduction of \$2,500 from the Civil Preparedness Director Salary line item; it was requested at \$20,000; the BOS reduced it to \$15,000. Salary jump was not justified.

\*Election – reduced by \$7,545; he feels a need for more disciplined management. Also a lot of the items noted have been accomplished and is now ongoing maintenance.

\*OPEB – \$100,000, He agrees with the BOS.

\*Open Space \$100,000, He agrees with the BOS.

Board of Education budget: He has been confronted with feedback before and after the April 7th meeting, that there is opposition from residents for the new proposed Assistant Superintendent. He has not heard anything positive about the new position. There is a stagnant, flat population, therefore, as far as he is concerned, he recommends that the BOE budget be reduced by \$114,000- \$70,000 salary, \$10,000 for the benefits, and reduction of new secretary \$34,000. There was no job description for the Assistant Superintendent.

Mr. Lennon: I think the target should be a 3% mill rate increase. If we do a 3% increase, we need a \$869,000 reduction; \$629,000 from the BOS'. He has done research; Suffield is the 14<sup>th</sup> highest paid of FTE teachers in all districts in the State. I think we can reduce the Board of Education by \$244,000 by eliminating the proposed positions of Assistant Superintendent, new language teacher, 5 clerks, and athletic trainer.

BOF will try to reduce by \$500,000 to get to 3.5% increase, mill rate change, .90 mill

Mr. Fuller noted that some of the cuts might be mortgaging our future. I had much rather see, a higher reduction of the BOE. He does not like the ½ year salaries.

Ms. Sullivan: would like 1 mill increase, under 4%.

Mr. Sangiovanni: like to be close to 3.5%

Mr. Frenaye: like to be close to 3.5%

After much discussion, by Consensus, the Board of Finance agreed to these reductions:

\*OPEB \$150,000

\*OPEN SPACE \$100,000

\*Payloader \$108,000

\*Civil Preparedness Director salary - \$2,500

\*Civil Preparedness benefits - \$191

\*Change in Non Union wage increases \$12,009

\*Change in Non Union benefits \$919

\*Board of Education \$114,000

\*Youth Services – Social Worker salary – ½ year -\$21,250

\*Youth Services – Social Worker benefits – ½ year - \$1,626

Additions: Fire Fighters ½ position \$19,563

Fire Fighter benefits \$1,497

Fire Fighter uniforms 575

Net Change \$488,860.00

The Director of Finance will verify numbers.

The Board of Finance will meet Monday, April 21 to finalize the proposed budget.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m. Bobbie C. Kling, Respectfully submitted, Sec. bf.m.April 17.08