

Minutes of the Board of Finance Budget Review Meeting
Police Station Conference Room – 7 p.m.- April 21, 2008

Members present: Justin Donnelly, Joseph Sangiovanni, Dennis Kreps, David Tagliavini, Sam Fuller, alts. James Lennon, Tom Frenaye Absent: Joanne Sullivan
Also present: Selectmen Lingenfelter, Smith, Treasurer Davidson, Director of Finance Cerrato

Chairman Justin Donnelly called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.
He acknowledged the passing of Joanne Sullivan's mother, Nellie Osowiecki, with sadness.

Voting rights were accorded to James Lennon, by a voted motion, for the absent Joanne Sullivan.

Citizen Comment: Chairman Donnelly reported a telephone call from Selectman John Smith: Mr. Smith is opposed to the reduction in the proposed salary of the Civil Preparedness Director, endorsed the position of the Social Worker, and noted that there is a woeful lack of attention being paid by the Fire Department to the recruitment of volunteers.

Mr. Kreps stated he too had received a phone call from John Smith, Mr. Kreps suggested that the Board of Selectmen should be dealing with the Fire Commission rather than just the Fire Chief. The correct policy maker of the fire department should be the Fire Commission.

Dave Beltramello, who is a member of the Board of Education, stated he was making his comment as a private citizen. He is suggesting that it would save the Town money if the payloader was paid for by the undesignated fund balance. It would save paying interest over a five year period. The Treasurer reported the overall cost over the five year pay period would add approximately 10% to the purchase price of \$140,000.

Director of Finance Deborah Cerrato noted that she received information today from OPM (Office of Policy and Management) that the Town of Suffield would receive \$9000 less from the PILOT program; and \$110,400 more from the Pequot/Mohegan program for a net of \$101,343.00. The Director of Finance distributed up to date budget figures as well as a memo from Assessor Frances Keenan. She had reported an error in the Grand List resulting in a minimal reduction in the Grand List.

Ms. Cerrato reviewed the summary of the meeting action as discussed at the April 17 meeting. It is different from the previous report sent to BF members by email. She has now included the reduction of the half year of the Youth Services social worker, salary and benefits. The total of reductions and additions to the proposed budget totaled \$488,860. She then used this figure to rework the mill rate and percentage of mill rate increase. The mill rate change would be .99, an increase of 3.73%.

The Chairman noted that Sam Fuller had sent him a memo dated April 18 discussing the Board of Education Budget Request. Copies of this memo were distributed to the board members. Mr. Fuller felt that the BOE request was too high, at an increase of 6.9%. He noted that if the BOE budget was reduced to a 6% increase, there would be a cost savings to the Town of \$248,315. If this reduction were in place, we could add back the Youth Services request for a full time social worker.

Mr. Lennon would like to see \$144,000 from the Board of Education. Mr. Kreps is not happy about funding half year positions.

The Chairman noted that already the residents will be hit with a \$58 increase in the sewer use fee, and there will probably be a similar increase in the curbside pickup fee.

The Board discussed various funding options for the payloader.

Motions:

Mr. Lennon moved that we fund the payloader over a five year period; Mr. Sangiovanni seconded. The motion was approved. Mr. Kreps voted against the motion.

Mr. Kreps moved that proposed budget fund the positions of Youth Services and Fire Fighter for the full year. Mr. Sangiovanni seconded. The motion carried; four in favor, Mr. Lennon and Mr. Tagliavini voted against the motion.

Mr. Kreps moved approve the reduction of \$100,000 Open Space, the reduction of \$150,000 OPEB; Mr. Sangiovanni. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Tagliavini moved to approve the reduction of \$2,500 in Director Salary and \$191 Benefits, Civil Preparedness; Mr. Lennon seconded. The motion was approved. Mr. Sangiovanni voted against the motion. The Board commented that a job description of the Director's duties would be appropriate.

Mr. Tagliavini moved to approve the reduction of \$114,000, Board of Education budget; Mr. Kreps seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Kreps moved to approve the reduction in non union wage increases,\$12,009, and the reduction in non union employee benefits \$919; Mr. Tagliavini seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Total of Reductions: \$444,924; Revenue increase: \$101,000.

This would now reflect a 3.53% increase and a .93 change in the mill rate.

The total budget would be \$48,488,070.

Mr. Lennon commented that budgets in the three successive years have had increases in the mill rate greater than the rate of inflation. If we continue to sustain this, the Town is going to have dire problems. People will move from Suffield because of high taxes.

Chairman Donnelly reminded members of the Public Hearing of the 2008-09 Budget, held Wednesday, April 30, 2008 in the High School Auditorium, at 7:30 p.m.

☛ Mr. Kreps moved that the Board of Finance recommend a budget of \$48,488,070 to the Public Hearing. Mr. Sangiovanni seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Bobbie C. Kling, Sec. to the Board of Finance bf.m.APRIL.21.08