

Minutes of the Board of Finance
March 29, 2010 Budget Review Meeting
Police Station Conference Room – 7 p.m.

Members present: Joseph Sangiovanni, Dennis Kreps, Sam Fuller, Brian Kost, Ryan Anderson, alts. Peter Boyd, Eric Harrington Absent: J. Donnelly, J. Lennon
Also present: First Selectman Tom Frenaye, Selectman Fitzgerald, Treasurer Christine Davidson, Director of Finance Deborah Cerrato

Vice Chairman Sangiovanni called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

He called for any Citizen Comment:

Don Miner, Chairman of the Police Commission, stated that the Chief of Police did not get new vehicles to “break in”. He wished to correct this misunderstanding.

Director of Finance Deborah Cerrato distributed to the Board of Finance, copies of the 2010-2011 Board of Education Budget Request. This budget will be reviewed at the next BoF meeting, April 5.

Budget Review

*Information Technology – Deborah Howe and Dan Beaudoin were present and Ms. Howe reviewed her budget by line item. She said they had reduced contracted services by \$2,700. One of our Town’s Technology Committee members, Steve McKeen, has been volunteering additional hours to help Dan Beaudoin; and his additional help has been invaluable. There is an increase in Service Maintenance Contracts because of the full year for Munis. We needed to correct this line for next year because this year it was budgeted at a prorated amount and should not have been.. Detail was provided for the Service Maintenance Contracts. Contracted Services was reduced to keep the budget as level as possible. Overall the total budget reflects an increase of 1.1%.

*Ambulance SVAA – Chief Art Groux and members of the Board of Directors, SVAA were present. The Chief reviewed the budget, noting that the Town of Suffield funds the salary and benefits for the Chief and 1 paid full time paramedic, and 6 part time paramedics and 2 part time EMTs, plus the abatement for volunteers, etc. This budget has increased by 5.1% percent. The largest increase was due to an increase in the volunteer abatements. The SVAA has a program to assist volunteers to get training and based upon the training received request a certain number of years in exchange. If they leave before they fulfill that obligation the SVAA requests reimbursement of the costs. The Board asked questions pertaining to the operation of the SVAA. Mr. Kost requested a copy of the SVAA fiscal report. The Town pays approximately 20% of the total operating budget.

*Tax Collector and Rebates – Tax Collector Jill Schechtman was present and reviewed her budget. She noted a 97% rate collection at this point in the fiscal year. She stated she had requested extra new hours, which was not included in the budget submitted by the Selectmen. It was noted that the First Selectman had reduced the Legal Fee \$1,000 line item to 0; and this was incorporated into the Town Counsel budget. She reviewed for the BoF the activities of her Office and the process of tax collection, and she noted her philosophy of working with each resident who was finding it difficult to pay their taxes; this would allow some partial payments over time, etc. and would get the tax bill plus interest paid. The heaviest collection periods are July and January but the department still receives payments throughout the fiscal year. A lockbox service is utilized during July, which deposits funds directly into the bank.

Deposits are made timely to maximize the interest the town can earn. Late payments are charged at an 18% interest rate which is set by State Statute.

*Finance – Deborah Cerrato reviewed her budget. The two major line items, other than payroll, are Contracted Services and Audit. The contracted services pays for the actuarial evaluation for Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) (required every other year). The annual audit will remain level in the next fiscal year in accordance with the agreement with the auditor. It was noted that the Board of Education (BoE) pays part of the Audit costs. We do not have an OPEB Trust Fund yet, the OPEB Ordinance was approved by Town Meeting. The BoF will be requested to appoint an investment manager as recommended by the Committee at the April Board of Finance meeting.

*Town Counsel – Mr. Frenaye noted that some legal services are contracted out; and he has included the legal fee from the Tax Collector's budget in this budget. The former Town Attorney received a monthly retainer which is not done with the current Town Attorney. Payment is for actual services provided. Mr. Frenaye stated he has added \$10,000 because of more needed services. He noted that this budget has decreased over the past three years.

*Town Hall – Mr. Frenaye – There is not much difference in the budget; but this is where we have the expenses for leasing office space at 230 Mountain Road, this was increased by \$12,000 that we pulled out of the Public Works budget to cover the grounds and common area maintenance. We expect to see some savings when the Town Hall is converted to gas heat. These line items have been revised to show the expected change.

*Review of projected non-property tax revenues and state aid – Deborah Cerrato reviewed Tab 3 for the BoF. Ms. Cerrato noted the figure of \$135,000 in the Assessment Fund; she is not sure of what that number will be from the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA). The Pilot Manufacturing Equipment line item of \$235,000 has not been finalized yet. She is waiting to get some numbers from the Assessor's Office. The Supplemental Motor Vehicle, in the current year, we have budgeted \$275,000; bills were sent out for \$210,000. She used the figure of \$40,000 in the Off Duty Fund to fund a portion of the cruisers. Mr. Kost asked her to investigate the Dog Fund; it has \$137,000. If it is not being used, we can use this in the operating budget.

The April 5 Board of Finance meeting will probably be moved to the Town Hall conference room.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

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

Bf.MINUTES.MARCH.29.2010.Final