

Minutes of the Board of Finance Public Hearing – April 28, 2010  
Suffield High School – 7 p.m.

Members of the Board of Finance present:

Justin Donnelly, Joseph Sangiovanni, Dennis Kreps, Sam Fuller, Brian Kost, Ryan Anderson, alts. Peter Boyd, Eric Harrington Absent: J. Lennon

Chairman Justin Donnelly called the Public Hearing on the Proposed FY (Fiscal Year) 2010 – 2011 Budget to order at 7 p.m. He read the Legal Notice as published in the Journal Inquirer April 14, 2010.

The Chairman reviewed the budget process, from department request to the proposed budget as presented tonight. Using a power point presentation, Mr. Donnelly reviewed the total expenditures and revenues. He noted that the net collectible grand list of \$1,359,825,000 reflects an increase of 1.15%. The proposed budget would result in a mill rate of **23.15**, the **same mill rate of 23.15, as in FY 2009-10**. 5 Major capital expenditures were noted, they are the Suffield Street Bridge Project - \$1,200,000 with funding from State and Federal Grants. The Pavement Management Program of \$750,000 - the study recommended \$950,000 and LoCIP (Local Capital Improvements Projects funding of \$91,837). The Police and Fire Radio system upgrade (phase 2 of 3) - \$635,000, which is a mandated upgrade. The Library Roof - \$250,000 pending a structural analysis. Open Space Funding of \$200,000. Mr. Donnelly noted that budget drivers for the Selectmen's budget were: No salary increases included 53 pay weeks instead of 52, health insurance and pension increases of over 14% and 24% respectively, and a transfer to 1999 School Building Project Fund of \$1,385,677 funded from the Undesignated Fund Balance. The estimated Undesignated Fund Balance of \$5,875,522 (based upon anticipated uses) would result in a percentage of 2010-2011 Budget of \$51,768,031 is 11.35%.

Questions from residents:

1. Bruce Millick – Do the one time revenue increases in this proposed budget carry over to the next year? The response was that we would have to deal with it next year.
2. Scott Guilmartin – He questioned the increase in the Social Worker budget. It was explained that this is where our contract with the Emergency Aid Association is to handle the programs that handle the social worker formerly did. There had not been an increase in a couple of years and EAA realized they were subsidizing the Town with their other programs.
3. Vin Barnes – He questioned the reduction of \$109,000 in non certified staffing and the proposed efficiency study of \$175,000 in the Board of Education budget. It was explained that it was an opportunity for the BOE to review the practices in place and to become more efficient. There will be some reductions in the FTE's (full time equivalency) positions within the Board of Education.
4. Warren Packard – He noted that the expenditures continue to rise, why do the transfer to the 1999 School Building and Renovation Project now, and what is the status of the reimbursement from the State for the School Building Project. The Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen wanted to finalize the transfer that has been discussed for some time now. He also questioned the high percentage increase in the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) administration. The Board of Finance or the Board of Selectmen do not have input into the WPCA budget.

5. Scott Guilmartin – Commented on the good work of the Board of Finance to prepare the budget. He also questioned the landfill town wide hauling line item. It was discussed that it was the curbside pickup. There is a separate fee of \$206 per household for trash fees.
6. Ann Borg – She questioned why the Library budget was continually cut every year. It was noted the only reductions by the Selectmen was to remove the 3.5% salary increase that was included in the budget submission.
7. Tim Reynolds – Indicated that recycling is saving the town some money. We are recycling more since we went to the larger containers. He is also concerned that we are using up too much fund balance this year.
8. Mel Chafetz – Concerned about the money that is being spent for the study by the Board of Education. The Board of Education feels strongly that this study be done.
9. Lauren Life – Concerned that the amount of \$250,000 included for the Library Roof project was not enough and what would happen then. A structural engineer has been retained to study the roof and determine what is needed. The project will not go forward until the results have been received.
10. Gordon Stagg – He wondered about what we are spending on Economic Development so that the town can expand its tax base. There is currently legislation in process to establish and Economic Zone around Bradley International Airport that would benefit the 4 surrounding towns of Windsor, Windsor Locks, East Granby and Suffield. This was defeated last year.
11. Warren Packard – He questioned what was being done for Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB). The town has increased the contribution this year in line with the actuary and is also working to control the costs in the future during contract negotiations.
12. Dave Leishman – He asked why the Board of Education could not act like a business and questioned the health benefits. He also questioned why the town was using grant funds for an energy audit when most energy companies will do them for free. Why do some of the departments reflect a higher increase in payroll. The grant expenditures have not been finalized and may change as long as they are in conformance with the grant requirements. In addition to the 53<sup>rd</sup> pay week, there were some departments that were not fully funded in the current budget.
13. Dr. Mel Chafetz – He noted that if the debt service is low, as it is now, why not plan a bonding program. The Selectmen will be working towards a plan that would include projects that could be funded from debt service. If there is debt service then the annual amount for Capital Projects will decrease.
14. Scott Lingenfelter – Noted that spending has increase by \$4,000,000. Also why if the study done from the roads indicated we should be spending \$950,000 are we budgeting \$750,000. Why weren't cuts made in the General Operating Budget..

The First Selectman Tom Frenaye, Chairman of the BoF Justin Donnelly , BoF members Dennis Kreps, Brian Kost responded to the questions. Bob Eccles of the Board of Education responded to questions relating to the BoE. It is noted for the record, that residents complimented the Board of Education, Board of Finance, and Board of Selectmen in compiling a budget that did not increase taxes. **The mill rate of 23.15 is the same as in 2009-2010. There will be no tax increase in 2010-2011 fiscal year.**

The Public Hearing adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

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