

APPROVED BOARD OF FINANCE MINUTES – BUDGET DELIBERATIONS
TUESSDAY, APRIL 5, 2016

A budget deliberations meeting of the Board of Finance was held on Tuesday, April 5, 2016 in the large conference room in Town Hall at 7:30 p.m.

Members Present: David Ulmer, Chairman; Paul Sutherland, Vice Chairman; Marty Heiser, Jessica Mancini; and Michael Raduazzo (arrived 8:40 p.m.)

Town Officials: Rudy Marconi, First Selectman; Maureen Kozlark, Selectman; Kevin Redmond, Controller; Paul Hendrickson, BOE Business Director; Dr. Robert Miller, BOE Technology Director

BOE: Fran Walton, Chairman; Karen Sulzinsky; Michael Taylor; David Cordisco
Sharon D'Orso;

A G E N D A

Board of Education Open Items
General Budget Discussions

Mr. Ulmer called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

BOARD OF EDUCATION OPEN ITEMS

As promised at the March 30, 2016 meeting, Dr. Baldwin provided the BOF with a breakdown of the 1,033 students included in the “special education” designation by “exceptionality” as: 46 ell (English language learners); 463 “504”; and 524 special education. Dr. Baldwin reported that “nearly one in five” students is included.

Dr. Baldwin pressed her case for the budget increase citing:

- higher expectations for all students– you need more people because it’s harder
- the need to maintain smaller class size – “smaller classes will help all kids be successful
- meet all children where they are

Mr. Ulmer asked about ECR re-imbursement which the BOE is forecasting at 70%. Mr. Hendrickson responded saying that is the re-imbursement percentage for fiscal 2016/2017 that the State has hinted at. Dr. Baldwin concurred, noting that the State budget is in crisis and CASBO (Connecticut Association of School Business Officials) is forecasting that percentage.

Mr. Ulmer asked about the need for textbooks. Dr. Baldwin said there is no declining enrollment at the high school yet and we continue to offer more courses. She added that the trend is away from textbooks, but we’re not there yet.

Mr. Heiser asked what percentage of employees is in a health savings plan and Mr. Hendrickson responded: “virtually everyone”.

Mr. Ulmer asked about capital budget priorities. He noted that the anticipated \$128k annual savings on the Energy Conservation Measures was not built into the budget.

Dr. Baldwin noted that, as of now, the schools do not have the capacity to interact with emergency services. They would have to place a call to 911. She added: "The 'All Hazards Connection Plan' is critical from a school safety perspective."

Mr. Sutherland asked Dr. Miller about the Wireless Network Reliability Project (\$67k) and the Technology Infrastructure Replacement (\$224k) capital projects that the BOE had requested and the BOS deferred, trying to ascertain which was more critical or whether they were so interconnected that one was no good without the other. Mr. Miller's response was not entirely clear, but seemed to imply that an infrastructure failure could be catastrophic.

Mr. Taylor tried to make a case for implementing additional capital projects now rather than deferring them in by citing current favorable interest rates, and the probability that they won't last.

Ms. Mancini again asked about the function/responsibilities of the elementary school supervisors. Dr. Baldwin responded: "We are not able to do the work without them... these positions are critical." She cited:

- Teacher evaluations;
- Teaching and learning;
- Positive outcomes;
- Building team capacity

Mr. Heiser brought up the subject of a school closing, asking what happened to the BOE's resolution to close a school when elementary school enrollment went under 2,000. Karen Sulzinsky: "We are saying it's not possible to do it (close a school) and deliver the conditions that are needed. ALL the conditions (of the BOE's resolution) have to be there. Mr. Sutherland said he heard the BOE is going to conduct a facility study next year to determine its space needs.

Karen Sulzinsky: "As you are considering the budget, try to keep in mind not to be stuck in the past. We are in a new era here, with new leadership... creating a platform for improvement within our education system, to be competitive with our DRG. This budget represents an investment in setting the stage for us to reach to excellence and build to where we should be."

Mr. Cordisco: "There is a lot of hard work in this budget. I agree with Marty (Mr. Heiser) on the school closing, that we take a look at the memo (BOE resolution) and have a discussion to be sure we are doing the right thing.

GENERAL BUDGET DISCUSSION

Mr. Heiser suggested an increase in the golf revenue budget line of \$25k (\$1,300,000.00 to \$1,325,000.00) which would bring the total revenue budget to \$13,771,294.00.

General Property Taxes	
Prior Year	\$ 925,000.00
Supplemental Taxes	\$ 825,000.00
Interest & Lien Fees	\$ 450,000.00
Intergovernmental	\$ 2,785,635.00

Licenses & Permits	\$	667,000.00
Charges for Services	\$	7,463,159.00
Revenue from Investments	\$	66,000.00
Fines-Forfeitures-Penalties	\$	67,500.00
Operating Transfers	\$	267,000.00
Other Revenues	\$	255,000.00
Fund Balance Use (Source)		
TOTAL	\$	13,771,294.00

Mr. Heiser made and Mr. Sutherland seconded a motion to accept the Revenues, without General Tax Revenues or Fund Balance Use in the total amount of \$13,771,294.00 as detailed above.

Vote: 5-0 Motion **APPROVED**

Mr. Sutherland made and Mr. Heiser seconded a motion to accept the tax collection rate of 98.7%.

Vote: 5-0 Motion **APPROVED**

The BOF discussed fund balance, noting that \$13.27MM is available now, to which an anticipated surplus of \$1.1MM will be added, bringing the total to \$14.37MM or 10.34%. If the BOF were to use \$1,850,000.00 of fund balance in the 2016/2017 budget it would bring the percentage down to 9%, still on the high end of the BOF's policy of 8%/9%.

Mr. Heiser: "Generally speaking, we should look aggressively to get that down to a smaller number... population is leaving the state, houses are not selling. I am not optimistic."

Mr. Raduazzo: "That is why we have to be more cautious as to how we use the fund balance."

Mr. Ulmer: Echoed Mr. Raduazzo's caution.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Mancini made and Mr. Sutherland seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 p.m.

Vote: 5-0. Motion **APPROVED**.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Rodgers, Recording Secretary

