

Minutes of the Board of Finance Budget Review Meeting
March 26, 2012
Police Station Conference Room – 7 p.m.

Members present: Justin Donnelly, Joseph Sangiovanni, Ryan Anderson, Brian Kost, Chris Childs, Scott Lingenfelter, alts. Tracy Eccles, Eric Harrington, Peter Boyd
Also present: First Selectman Ed McAnaney, Selectman Brian Fitzgerald, Treasurer Christine Davidson, Director of Finance Deborah Cerrato, Secretary Bobbie C. Kling

Chairman Justin Donnelly called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

Citizen Comment: Dr. Mel Chaftez asked the Board of Finance (BoF) to consider increasing the Bond for the repair of roads. There are 80 miles of road in Town and the repair will cost more than the approved bond. The BoF might consider going back to the Town for approval of an increased bond or a new bond.

Correspondence: The Chairman noted a letter from Kevin Lembo, State Comptroller, announcing the CT Partnership Plan – a health plan option that could potentially save towns significant dollars by joining the CT. Employee Health Benefits Plan.

Detailed information will be sent to the members for their review.

Budget Review:

Chairman of the Advisory Commission on Capital Expenditures (ACCE) Craig Horrigan distributed the recommendations of ACCE. He reviewed funding for Recurring Expenditures, Previous Commitments, and then reviewed with explanation the new funding for projects as recommended by Priority. The total figure is \$2,983,056, net of grants and other funding. He also noted the recommended projects when funding becomes available and these projects are listed by priority. It was noted by the Board that the total was one million more than last year's. The total figure would need a 3% tax increase to fund. The Board noted that the cost of the CL&P Energy Conservation Program in the schools needs to be funded either in the Capital Expenditures or the Board of Education's budget. Chairman Donnelly thanked Mr. Horrigan for his presentation.

Tax Collector & Rebates – Tax Collector Jill Schechtman was present and reported a collection rate of 98.8%. Her budget is a "bare bones" budget, and also noted she is in the process of converting to on line payment of taxes procedure. She plans this service to be available by Jan. 2013.

Emergency Medical Service – Chief Art Groux was present and noted a small reduction in his budget. The cost to the Town is salaries only in this budget. He reported 27,000 of volunteer hours to the Town and that the call volume was down just a little. Mr. Kost asked that the BoF be sent a copy of the Suffield Volunteer Ambulance Association's (SVAA's) audit report. The Chief agreed.

Fire Department – Acting Chief Mike Thibedeau and Chairman of the Fire Commission Phil Barrett were present. Mr. Barrett noted that the Commission was in the process of selecting a new fire chief; a full time chief, and one who had experience with volunteer fire fighters. The new chief would not be hired at the same rate as the retired chief. The budget was up 1.7% due to contracted pay steps.

Police Department -- Chief Mike Manzi, Captain Craig Huntley, and Chairman of the Police Commission Don Miner were present. Mr. McAnaney stated that he is not counting the Off Duty fund, the budget is

within \$2,000 of last year's number. Mr. Donnelly noted that this proposed budget includes the School Resource Officer as a full officer. The First Selectman stated that with the BoE paying $\frac{3}{4}$ of this position, we are over budgeting if this position is fully funded within the P.D. budget and he reduced this budget by $\frac{3}{4}$ of a position. The budget includes a revenue amount from the BOE for the School Resource Officer so the net is budgeting for this position once. Mr. Miner pointed out that this budget reflects the reduction of one police officer from previous staffing based on the Board of Selectmen's decision, 19 officers authorized. The question was raised is the Town well served by the proposed staffing level; the answer is yes.

Chairman Donnelly asked the BoF members to watch for a new meeting location for the next meeting as it is anticipated that a many persons may attend. The Board of Education budget will be reviewed at this time. The Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) budget will also be reviewed and will be first on the agenda. Copies of the WPCA and the Board of Education budgets were distributed. Mr. Donnelly thinks Mr. Hawkins mentioned that with a relatively nominal addition, \$50,000, to what has not been spent in the farm land preservation fund, we can make an additional purchase. If that is so, what is the amount? A subcommittee of Chris Childs, Brian Kost should meet with Dick Thiverge and discuss if the Town could add to the Bond, if so, how and what the cost would be.

Budget update :

Revenue Summary 2012 -13 - The Director of Finance distributed updated pages, Tab 3. It is noted that we are approximately \$15,759,456 outside of tax raised money. Changes were noted; VoAg Tuition has increased by \$183,816. The BoF discussed this, and asked if it was real. Mr. Donnelly noted if we had current school population census counts as reported in the same format as past years, we could see the number of VoAg students and other vital information. We have not received a current report. This increase would be in fees paid by sending schools. Ms. Cerrato noted that the Municipal Revenue Sharing is noted at \$143,374. (Our share of the increase the State received by increasing the State Conveyance tax on real estate last year). The cell tower rent, as revised by the renegotiated lease is included. It does not include the \$150,000 signing fee to be paid over 5 additional terms of 4 years each. The Town is expected to receive this \$150,000 in the next six months. Interest earned is projected at \$30,000, a reduction of \$70,000. Mr. Donnelly noted that our revenues are down, how much of ACCE can we fund, and the BoE is coming in at 1.6% increase. Now the real work begins. We have to address where to place the CL&P program cost for the schools. It is not in ACCE. Note a possible change of meeting location for the meeting of April 2.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Bobbie C. Kling