

Minutes  
Board of Finance Public Hearing  
April 19, 2010  
7:30 P.M.  
Senior / Community Center

Deb Tietz, Chairman of the Board of Finance called the public hearing to order at 7:30 PM in the Senior / Community Center. She introduced members of the Board and reviewed the agenda for the public hearing. Discussion would follow the slides. Slides were presented. They included:

- A. Process of the budget, review and approval
- B. Operations Review, Budget 2009-2010
- C. Proposed Budget for 2010-2011
- D. Expense Increase Offset by Revenue Increases
- E. Expenditures
- F. Municipal Increase / Decrease
  - a. Worker's Compensation
  - b. Highway Department
  - c. Public Safety
  - d. Land Use Director
- G. Expenditures by Category
- H. Municipal Use, Pie Chart
- I. Capital Expenditures
- J. Previous Projections
- K. Property Taxes Required
- L. 2010-2011 Mill Rate
- M. Budget Fiscal Year 2006-2007 through 2010-2011
- N. Analysis of Fund Balance
- O. Budget Suggestions

Ms. Tietz explained that the Board had set out to have a flat budget. The budget proposed this evening is a work in progress. Should taxes be increased? Should services be decreased? The Board is suggesting no new non-essential vacancies be filled, a hiring freeze. We're looking into special revenues. We want feedback. It is an unsettled economic climate. There has also been an increase in facilities.

Public comments included the following:

Lou DeLuca noted there were no costs associated with the proposed changes presented.

Neil Yarhouse, Sage Road suggested closing the Library one day a week. Ms. Tietz asked him if he was suggesting a decrease in services. Mr. Yarhouse said the Town could survive with a five day work week for the Library.

Jean Carnese, Middle Road Turnpike, asked about the proposed \$10,000 out of Parks and Recreation. Ms. Tietz said it was a suggestion made by the Director.

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Betty Adams, Old Town Farm Road wished to make a number of comments.

1. She noted an error in the 2009-2010 budget regarding Contingency, \$80,000 was budgeted; it is shown as \$69,000.

Chairman Tietz explained the column headings had changed. This was related to changes in gas and oil.

2. Salary increases, there is a lack of transparency for each department. Did everyone get a raise?

Chairman Tietz answered that the Board of Selectmen did not receive a raise, a decision made by the Board of Finance.

3. In the Board of Finance minutes of 8-12-09, transfers for Heat, Light and Water to individual buildings, there was no actual transfer by motion in the 2009-2010 budget.

4. Where is private duty covered in the expenses and revenues? Those revenues used to be used to reduce the mill rate, there is no line item to offset.

The private duty is in a special revenue fund, explained Ms. Tietz. The revenues are lumped together but could be broken out.

5. There was a budget transfer in August, 2009 to Police and Department of Public Works for about \$174,000.

Ms. Tietz told her in the previous budget year those transfers were made, what fiscal year the transfers were made should be noted. The numbers were moved around, it is done every year, through a Town Meeting, Contingency or within the individual budgets.

Tom Arras, Main Street South, asked what the current Town population was. Ms. Tietz did not have a number. He then asked if there was a spending correlation. He was told there was not a correlation. Mr. Arras then brought up the Pezzo property, we're out in our revenues by \$68,000, it's unaccounted for, it could be used to defray costs. The Community Center was to be sold to help defray the costs of renovations done to the Old Town Hall. Part of the decision was made at a Town Meeting. Utility usage has increased, a higher expense. Is Three Rivers being utilized? These are all significant when added up. He requested answers before the Town Meeting. Ms. Tietz said she hoped to have answers but didn't know if she would have them before the Town Meeting.

Jane Sandulli, Old Town Farm Road, regarding the payroll adjustments, does that cover all non-union employees except the First Selectman? She was told there was a 3% increase across the board but non-union employees will receive the adjustment after the first of the year. The union employees are getting what they were supposed to receive.

Joe Donato, Great Hollow Road, asked why the First Selectman did not get an increase.

Barbara Perkinson, Selectman, stated she wished to denounce her raise. The budget should be amended to reflect this.

George Hale, Selectman, also stated he would stay at his present salary.

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George Kolodziej, Tuttle Road, brought up the salaries the Police officers are making, especially overtime. At least one is making \$100,000 including overtime. This overtime is used to fuel retirement. Are they cutting back? Deb Tietz told him the Board of Finance budgeted \$29,500 for Police overtime. Mr. Kolodziej told her the Police don't want to give this up, it's a form of abuse! On a weekly basis it's being used. In Waterbury the Police and Firemen manipulate overtime and sick time. Ms. Tietz assured him that the Board has identified the problem, the First Selectman is also aware and has a mandate to look into the problem.

Dan Carnese, Middle Road Turnpike, information should be given regarding overtime, we need more information. Mr. Sherman, of the Board of Finance, told him that a rough analysis had been done, information from the State Trooper wasn't given, but the contract was reviewed. Enough information was available to cut overtime down to less than \$30,000. Mr. Carnese then asked if there was overtime in other departments, to which he was told the Department of Public Works.

Mike Cunningham, Tuttle Road, asked what the savings were regarding the Selectmen's increase. Ms. Tietz thought it was a few hundred dollars.

Lou DeLuca, wondered about the mandated requirement for each shift. To this, he was told about the wording of the contract "whenever possible" two on each shift. The State Trooper could offset shortages. Again, the First Selectmen is looking into this.

Pat Lunn, Library Director, pointed out that when the Town went to a four day work week, a lot of money was not saved. When times get tough many more people frequent the Library and the Senior Center. People cannot afford to go away or buy a book. They take advantage of those services.

Neil Yarhouse, Sage Road, still believed services could be cut. Also, why can't those people who use the Senior Bus pay a fee?

Steve Sathre, Woodlake, noted that there were problems due to re-evaluation, problems with taxes. Look at the rate of foreclosures! We're struggling, consider spending constraints.

Sharon Sherman, South Meadows, didn't believe much money would be generated by instituting those fees; there are 2,223 seniors that use services. There are already fees in place. Access statistics show a rise in usage, you would not save that much money.

Deb Fuller, Board of Finance, noted that the four day work week was designed to save energy costs. One day a week would equal cutting staff. We don't want to raise taxes or cut services.

Jean Carnese, Middle Road Turnpike, thought that most agreed that dissention occurred when the Senior Center and Library were closed on Fridays.

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Lou DeLuca said to raise the collection rate to 98.25%, if tax collections were higher than projected it might be the way to go. Mr. Sherman told him that the Board had discussed this, but a ½ point increase will not equal a no tax increase budget.

Carl Braun, Orchard Avenue, asked what would be saved if there was a wage freeze? Ms. Tietz told him \$176,000 would be saved.

George Hale, Selectman, pointed out that regarding the discussion about the Transfer Station, the contract is not with Town employees, where did the \$50,000 savings come from? Deb Tietz explained that when the contract went out to bid again, there would be less hours, that is where the amount of \$50,000 came from. Mr. Hale then thanked the Board of Finance for all their efforts and noted that they get paid less than the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Selectmen.

Chairman Tietz concluded the public hearing by saying the Board of Finance would take the suggestions presented tonight into consideration. The hearing ended at 8:45 P. M.

FILED SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL  
Respectfully submitted,

Linda Leigh  
Clerk