

**MINUTES**  
**BOARD OF FINANCE SPECIAL MEETING**  
**MONDAY APRIL 19, 2010**  
**6:30 P.M.**  
**SENIOR / COMMUNITY CENTER**

Present: Deb Tietz, Chairman  
Deb Fuller, Vice Chairman  
Andrew Sherman  
Richard W. Anderson  
Richard Famiglietti  
William Drakeley

Also Present: Gerry Stomski, First Selectman, Tom Arras and later, M. Gomes, Fiscal Officer

**1. Call to Order**

Chairman Deb Tietz called the special meeting of the Board of Finance to order at 6:30 PM in the Senior / Community Center.

**2. Privilege of the Floor**

Tom Arras

Mr. Arras questioned the Board about the Town of Woodbury versus the Pezzo issue. The motion failed at the Town Meeting, what happened? The cost to the Town was \$68,000. The Board of Finance oversees this; money had already been paid out. G. Stomski answered that the matter is under legal review and he could not comment. Mr. Arras then asked if the Town had recourse. G. Stomski stated that the Town is looking to move forward but litigation is pending. Mr. Arras then noted that the budget is \$500,000 over that of last year. D. Tietz told him the Board will listen to what the townspeople have to say tonight.

**3. 2010-2011 Budget Matters**

a. Discussion of Presentation

D. Tietz reviewed the presentation for this evening's public hearing. She wished to generally discuss the proposed budget then open the floor to discussion. This is more of a working draft budget. The estimated surplus, conservatively, is about \$220,000, the pay plan and roads is where most of the money is going. Mr. Monckton will make a presentation to the Board of Finance to show where the money for roads is going.

A new slide is being used this year, "Expense Increase offset by Revenue Increases."

D. Tietz also noted that the Grand List decreased almost \$6 million last year after the mill rate was set due to appeals.

A. Sherman referred to the budget received today from the Treasurer. \$440,000 could be managed better in the 2009-2010 budget. G. Stomski noted that some of the roads would be done in the spring; some may already be under contract. However, A. Sherman pointed out, it is not encumbered. W. Drakeley suggested a hiring freeze, to include new positions and not filling vacancies in non-essential positions both in the current budget year and the new budget year. If possible roll the vacancies into the new budget year to bump up the surplus. A. Sherman agreed, the surplus amount has to be appropriated in time to set the mill rate; savings could therefore be rolled forward. G. Stomski summarized what had been said so far, to freeze now all non-essential personnel, which have already been approved? Yes. R. W. Anderson then asked about closing the Senior Center, Library, and Transfer Station one day a week, are those wages unionized? D. Fuller pointed out that there are many part-time positions. A. Sherman said we need townspeople input, we can only save money in bold strokes, not nickels and dimes. D. Tietz agreed, it may not be enough, but we'll get ideas. R. Famiglietti asked about the fireworks. That is an option, noted D. Tietz; the cost is about \$5,000. These are desperate times, stated D. Fuller, it's a place to look, are there special revenues to offset? W. Drakeley commented that the Board of Education met our request by cutting staff, due to a reduction in students. To get a flat mill rate we should also reduce staff. Do we cut services or increase taxes are what this boils down to, said D. Tietz. All salary increases are in the salary adjustment account, commented D Fuller. It doesn't look like the employees are getting an increase, we appreciate the voluntary hold last year, and we have to honor commitments this year.

G. Stomski said there have been increases in energy costs, an increase in the buildings, the Senior Center, Community House, Three Rivers, and Town Hall Annex. Also maintenance costs for these have to be considered. D. Fuller commented that the Senior Center can only be used for seniors between 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. When does that change? A. Sherman noted that the actuals in the budget document for tonight need some corrections. In the document received today those may have been corrected. W. Drakeley agreed with some of the justifications, 2.44% is doable. \$207,000 off expenditures is funded by taxes. There is a problem with the fund balance side too, A. Sherman pointed out. G. Stomski thought fees and revenues should be looked at as well. The Town gets \$53 per hour for special duty, the State Police charge over \$100 per hour. D. Tietz did not think that could be counted on for this budget, however. The special revenue fund equals the Police cars, commented A. Sherman. But, asked D. Fuller, since when does a department "own money." These are supposed to be general revenues!

Should the collection rate be revisited? It went down to 98% after the Town meeting last year; could we go up a quarter?

#### **4. Recess for Public Hearing**

**MOTION:** D. Fuller moved to recess the special meeting at 7:16 PM. R. W. Anderson seconded. **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

**5. Public Hearing Findings**

D. Tietz reconvened the special meeting at 8:50 P.M.

D. Fuller commended D. Tietz on her first public hearing.

During the public hearing there were a few comments about the budget document and how information was presented. A. Sherman thought it would have been helpful if a copy of the pay plan had been provided as well. It would have eliminated the “no transparency” comment. The pay plan should be filed with the Town Clerk by the Selectmen, according to the Charter. M. Gomes said in the past, the practice has been that the pay plan was filed after the Board of Finance gave the First Selectman an amount. We’ll go back to more confusion. A. Sherman continued to say that when we look at the budget we could show the approved pay plan. The Board of Selectmen should have a Table of Organization and filed it with the Town Clerk, D. Fuller said. With amendments it should then be re-filed. M. Gomes wanted this to work; the Board of Finance knows what employees make. It is confusing, noted D. Fuller as there are several documents with different headings. W. Drakeley said there is \$211,000 is the salary adjustment line plus the salaries, going into the Town Meeting. A. Sherman stated when the Town Meeting goes to referendum, there should be language showing the amount deemed appropriate by the First Selectman. We should start with the amount as of June 30<sup>th</sup> of the current fiscal year, and then show the changes as of July 1<sup>st</sup> of the next fiscal year. How it gets distributed is up to the First Selectman. M. Gomes requested a clear directive, with the amount of money, it seems to keep changing. The dollar amount comes from the First Selectman, pointed out A. Sherman, if we make changes after that, any line item, we can, but not change the pay plan as a whole. D. Tietz believed the Board was OK for this year, if someone wanted more information they could check with the Town Clerk. R. W. Anderson then asked about the collection rate, should it be increased by ¼ or ½ of a percent? There would be a significant tax increase, a .45 mill increase. D. Fuller did not like the idea of closing services for a day; it appears that those attending the hearing were not in favor of it either. There is an extra person in the Senior Center, two new Police officers, government is too big! These are unnecessary increases. Then we should lower the payroll adjustment, D. Tietz suggested. We should prepare to take \$75,000 out of the pay plan; we’ve funded everything the last two First Selectmen wanted D. Fuller continued. W. Drakeley thought the Board should formalize this, non-essential expenditures, new positions and vacancies should be frozen, no more creep. Is it the feeling of the Board that Mr. Monckton should come before the Board of Finance to review further road cuts, asked D. Tietz? M. Gomes suggested giving him a number, and come back to the Board with a roads list, but be specific. Let him argue what is essential, added W. Drakeley. A. Sherman suggested letting him work with “x” for the next few months, roll over the surplus.

**6. Continuation of Budget Matters if necessary**

**MOTION:** R. W. Anderson moved to recommend to the First Selectman to look at non-essentials and put a spending freeze in Fiscal Year 2009-2010 to close the revenue gap. D. Fuller seconded. **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

**MOTION:** R. W. Anderson moved to recommend to the First Selectman a hiring and reclassification, pay grade changes, freeze for all non-essential personnel in Fiscal Year 2009-2010. The intent is to limit total wages to be paid.  
A. Sherman seconded. **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

**MOTION:** A. Sherman moved to recommend to the First Selectman to reduce overtime to every extent possible in Fiscal Year 2009-2010.  
R. W. Anderson seconded. **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

We need to look at all this, what will it save the Town, asked R. Famiglietti. We also need cost information, added A. Sherman, how much will be saved if the Library goes on a five day week, or the Transfer Station is closed more. D. Tietz said she was on the fence about that, we won't save much because unemployment will offset savings. But if we postpone cuts, it will show up in the following year, added A. Sherman. Do part-timers get unemployment?

**MOTION:** R. W. Anderson moved to revisit the pay plan. W. Drakeley seconded.  
**UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

D. Tietz identified a possible savings at Hollow Pond, if the pond were closed there would be a savings of \$22,000 from the life guards. Also, a \$2,800 position for a part-time maintainer is not being filled.

**MOTION:** W. Drakeley moved to cut the salary adjustment line by \$75,000. R. W. Anderson seconded.

Discussion: A. Sherman noted the previous adjustment of \$211,000 did not totally fund the increase in the pay plan. The new total for the salary adjustment line will be \$136,083.

**UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

**MOTION:** R. W. Anderson moved to increase the collection rate from the current 98% to 98.5%. R. Famiglietti seconded. **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

It is noted that the conveyance tax has increased.

Mr. Monckton will give a presentation on Highways, the Board will give him parameters to cut \$100,000. What would be the effect?

**MOTION:** D. Fuller moved to invite Mr. Monckton to the next Board of Finance meeting to come in with the effects on the Capital Roads project with a \$100,000 reduction. R. W. Anderson seconded.  
**UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

The Board scheduled another special meeting for Wednesday, April 28, 2010 at 5:30 PM.

D. Fuller said even with these cuts we're still looking at a tax increase. D. Tietz suggested looking at the Land Use office, revisit projected revenues. M. Gomes said he would discuss this with Ms. Adsitt. D. Fuller then asked if special revenues should be revisited. It would be good to get an accounting of where they are, A. Sherman agreed. What are the special revenues being used for? M. Gomes said he would speak with Jennifer Mills as well, to get an explanation. A. Sherman cited the Charter regarding Town funds and appropriated amounts. M. Gomes believed that interpretation was that of A. Sherman's, other towns run those programs the same way Woodbury does. D. Fuller commented that the Charter needs to be revisited then, to be cleaned up. How Parks and Recreation spends its revenues, stated A. Sherman. W. Drakeley pointed out that Ms. Mills needs flexibility to run her programs in the summer, she does not know how many people will show up for the programs.

At the next regular meeting the Parks and Recreation sweep should be discussed.

**7. Adjournment**

**MOTION:** D. Fuller moved to adjourn the special meeting at 9:43 PM. R. Famiglietti seconded. **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

FILED SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL  
Respectfully submitted,

Linda Leigh  
Clerk