

MINUTES
BOARD OF FINANCE SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 28, 2010 – 5:30 P.M.
TOWN ANNEX CONFERENCE ROOM

Present:

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

Also Present: Gerald Stomski; First Selectman, Muffy Gomes; Fiscal Officer, David Monckton; Director, Public Works, about 12 townspeople, Rick Harrison; WATERBURY REPUBLICAN AMERICAN and Jamie Cura; VOICES.

1. Call to Order

Chairman Tietz called the special meeting of the Board of Finance to order at 5:30 PM in the Town Annex Conference Room.

2. Privilege of the Floor

Neil Yarhouse stated the collection rate used in the 2009-2010 budget was 98%; is 98.5% a reasonable number for 2010-2011? D. Tietz answered in conversations with the Tax Collector it could be done.

Tom Arras read from a letter he composed, also attached to these minutes. It referenced a few real properties, specifically the Pezzo property and the Community House. D. Tietz noted the Pezzo property is with legal counsel. W. Drakeley suggested an executive session to discuss the progress on this matter with the attorneys. Regarding the Community Center, D. Tietz said money has to be invested in the property before it can be sold, it must be separated off from the Old Town Hall parcel. Mr. Arras thought even if the property were sold for less the sale would be done in good faith.

Sharon Sherman cautioned the Board of Finance in making decisions about Mr. Monckton's projects; consideration should be made about cost increases down the road and road deterioration.

3. 2010-2011 Budget Matters

a. Department of Public Works

Mr. Monckton came forward. D. Tietz asked him how a \$100,000 reduction would affect

his Capital Roads budget. He briefly reviewed his Five Year Capital Plan from the present budget to 2014-2015. He noted that the budgeted amount for 2009-2010 did not agree with his original proposal. This money was necessary to perform the work for the Town. A. Sherman asked him how the Capital Plan related to road maintenance, as to Unimproved and Improved Roads. Mr. Monckton answered that Road Maintenance is preparation for Capital Improvements, it includes things like crack sealing. It precedes the actual work done on Capital Roads; it is part of the maintenance of the highway. \$484,000 was the original budget. R. W. Anderson asked him what would happen if \$100,000 was taken out. We don't want taxes to go up! Revaluation hurt us too, he realized things should not be postponed; the costs will be more later. Yes, we'd like to have these things done, but what would, realistically, happen? Mr. Monckton said \$376,000 was the original proposal; there was a net reduction of \$200,000. He would do what he needed to keep the citizens of Woodbury safe.

Mr. Monckton then reviewed the costs that have increased, i.e. the cost of bituminous, concrete. He wants to prevent major repairs. D. Fuller noted that in the current year conditions and priorities have changed. Some projects were not completed or done and have to be added to the next budget year. She used Brushy Hill Road and Old Sherman Hill Road as examples. Mr. Monckton explained that some projects are done over a period of years, like Peter Road. Some roads are done in sections. A. Sherman asked Mr. Monckton what the average life span of a road done with hot mix paving was. He was told they lasted about ten years, before routine maintenance, before crack sealing, etc. The time frame is also based on the inspection of the road and the economy. Chip sealing lasts about five years. D. Tietz suggested deducting \$85,000 from his budget. He said that would take out routine maintenance, incidental drainage, patch materials and catch basin cleaning. W. Drakeley asked about the problem with Old Town Farm Road. Mr. Monckton said the estimate is about \$25,000, which covers the cost of materials at that time. That \$25,000 is being used for Tuttle Road, in this year's budget. There was an overage of costs for sand and salt, noted M. Gomes, that is covered by the \$25,000, it's a wash. The Board then asked Mr. Monckton about back-up information and wanted to be certain that projects were not covered in two places. W. Drakeley pointed out that some projects are listed and are not done. He would like to see a summary provided, as to cost of the projects. He stated he had a lack of confidence in the numbers. He would like to see a prioritized list. Mr. Monckton stated there was documentation, either through the State or through the projects that go out to bid. W. Drakeley then asked if the new computer system could account for these Capital Projects. M. Gomes told him it would depend on how specific the information needed to be. Input is important. A. Sherman then asked what happens if the project comes in under budget. Are projects moved around? Mr. Monckton answered he presents the information to the Board of Selectmen when a project comes in under budget. M. Gomes reminded Board members that at a previous meeting the Board of Finance realized that Mr. Monckton should determine what projects have to be out if the budget is cut. D. Tietz said the Board would have a picture, a sense of where the \$594,000 is needed. The budget is already short \$40,000. Mr. Monckton pointed out that there are identified roads that have to be taken care of. Then prioritize, highest to least, stated W. Drakeley. Mr. Monckton said he would refer back to the statement he already made, he'll do what he has to do for the Town of Woodbury, for the safety of the Town, he would do his best. D. Fuller told him the Board did not doubt Mr. Monckton's dedication to the Town. It is troubling, in this day of computers and tracking, it's difficult to see how we're investing in the roads and seeing how they are maintained. Let's use this information

to better track how the money is spent. Mr. Monckton answered that short of computers the information was available through other documents and purchase orders, for all the projects that have been done. The records are there. M. Gomes said once a number is granted we can create a purchase order and run it out of the special fund, to the individual road. We're not going to get into encumbering. In discussing the \$40,000 shortage, Mr. Monckton also explained to the Board that some things are mandated by DEP, the Town has to contract out for some of these things as it does not have the equipment needed. Can parts of some of the roads be done instead of the whole road? Are there start up and shut down costs involved? Are there savings if the road is done all at once? Mr. Monckton answered there are no start up costs involved, much depends on the costs of the materials. D. Tietz then asked what the savings were to the Town with the new compactor. Mr. Monckton said there were savings with the back hoe not needed, some fewer trips, and savings to hauling fees, added G. Stomski.

Mr. Monckton was thanked for addressing these issues.

R. Famiglietti left the meeting.

D. Tietz said she spoke with the Tax Collector about the Elderly Circuit breaker number. That number needs to be backed out. Currently there will be an increase in taxes of 2%.

b. Pay Plan

The Pay Plan as it now exists is really \$85,000 less because \$10,000 was taken out twice, related to the Parks and Recreation budget pointed out D. Tietz.

A discussion followed as to Police overtime. Why is the State Trooper not available to cover if a shift is short? G. Stomski stated the State Trooper was not considered a "patrolman" per contract. W. Drakeley commented that something has made the overtime budget jump in recent years. For the last three years this is how it has been, said G. Stomski. We were contracting for two police officers per shift, except for the 26 days per person to cover sick days, personal days, etc. The highest priority officer gets first choice to cover a shift. W. Drakeley did not dispute that, he disputed the fact that the State Trooper should be considered available to cover a shift, even if he/she just stayed in the office. G. Stomski told him the State Trooper is here as a supervisor. Something caused the jump, what is the explanation, continued W. Drakeley, were we aware that the State Trooper could just be a supervisor? D. Fuller thought it could have been buried in the Operations line instead of the Pay Plan. The Police have not been over budget in previous years. Last year it was over \$80,000 noted M. Gomes. D. Fuller continued, in a management problem you look at history, what has changed, new State Trooper? The prior First Selectman gave up the second State Trooper in favor of hiring two new Police officers. G. Stomski clarified that only one full time Police officer was hired, that would have fulfilled the problem with one less State Trooper. A. Sherman observed that the Police budget is over about the same amount as last year. The \$70,000 does not include sick days, noted G. Stomski. The Police union contract is the same since 2001, with two officers per shift, it's a mitigating circumstance. It doesn't make sense, if overtime this year and last year is the same and we're down a person, commented A. Sherman. We should be managing toward \$30,000. Worker's compensation and shift differentials are variables M. Gomes pointed out. Scheduling is done every thirty days, by the Sgt. Personal days, holidays are when the highest paid fills the shifts, explained G. Stomski. All staff is being fully utilized. We have two part timers but one is

deployed. A. Sherman suggested that maybe another part timer should be hired, or cut the overtime and get another full timer. We have got to find a way to manage this, D. Tietz summarized. Get five part timers? W. Drakeley thought the problem is with interpretation of the contract. The State Trooper and Resident could be considered toward the eight minimum amount. The Resident State Trooper is not considering himself as part of the eight. M. Gomes noted that there are two contracts, one for Woodbury officers, one for the State Trooper. Could the contract be re-negotiated? Whoever negotiated this contract gave up a lot of management, commented W. Drakeley. A. Sherman asked about special duty. M. Gomes explained the extra duty hours are run through the payroll, hours to the balance sheet, its outside the budget. The car goes into the special revenue; Other includes social security, which goes from Administrative to miscellaneous income. Is the FICA number realistic then for extra duty, asked D. Tietz? M. Gomes stated the number used is correct. How do the numbers that Woodbury charges compare to surrounding towns asked A. Sherman. Middlebury charges \$58 per hour, Southbury charges \$62. We'll be increasing our rates by \$10 an hour, stated M. Gomes. It's \$65 per hour in Beacon Falls. D. Fuller cautioned about watching the pension numbers. The budget is based on the best estimate. We can't project private duty, G. Stomski pointed out. We can predict "x" amount of roads to be done in this year's budget, though. Then this is a work in progress, the Selectmen are looking into this, stated D. Tietz.

c. Other

W. Drakeley asked to revisit the painting of Hotchkissville, at an estimate of \$27,000. It would be nice to have it painted but...if the Grand List increases.... Was this project combined with other painting projects, asked D. Tietz.

MOTION: W. Drakeley moved to take out \$22,500 for the painting of the Hotchkissville Fire House and \$5,200 for the stacking chairs in Fiscal Year 2010-2011.

R. W. Anderson seconded.

Discussion: D. Fuller pointed out that clearly, even with this deduction the Board cannot achieve its goal, do we still want to delete? W. Drakeley answered that we're looking for additional money.

VOTE: 5-0 FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

Discussion about the Pezzo property will be included in the next regular meeting of the Board of Finance, under Executive Session. Town Counsel will be asked to be present. A. Sherman asked that any public documents relating to this be forwarded to Board members, including Counsel opinion and relevant papers.

Public Works

Discussion came around to Capital Roads again. W. Drakeley again voiced his wish to see a list of priorities and consequences, cold hard facts. D. Tietz noted that with a reduction here fewer roads would get done. D. Fuller agreed she would have a hard time taking more money. A. Sherman suggested taking additional funds from Improved Roads because it's easier to cover through transfers within the Department. D. Tietz suggested doing 50/50. W. Drakeley

suggested taking a total of \$100,000 out of the budget with the reduction in Hotchkissville and one project from Public Works. A. Sherman updated the Board on the tax increase, now 1.88%. He pointed out the Town was covering buildings that we didn't have before, a pay increase, this increase is explainable. He also would rather have 0, but cutting more out of the roads budget is indiscriminate. We should not jeopardize safety. We should expect that the First Selectman and Public Works could make up the \$40,000, we want more tracking and more detail. And, added W. Drakeley, we're not out of the woods with the economy yet. We should be safe and conservative until the economy turns around. Pay increases have to be dealt with. D. Tietz asked if the STEAP grants were included in the numbers. M. Gomes told her the STEAP money hasn't come in yet; he does not know what the Town will get.

MOTION: W. Drakeley moved to take \$73,000 from Capital Roads in the Highways budget line. R. W. Anderson seconded.

Discussion: D. Tietz said she had faith that Mr. Monckton will manage our roads.

VOTE: FAVOR- D. Tietz, D. Fuller, W. Drakeley, R. W. Anderson.

OPPOSED- A. Sherman, it was a clear statement from the First Selectman and Mr. Monckton that these roads need to get done.

MOTION CARRIED.

Pay Plan

D. Tietz wished to clarify the salary of the First Selectman, there has been some confusion. His salary is \$69,016. A final figure for the pay plan is needed. \$85,000 below the 100% funding level was approved. Currently the amount is \$2,991,000. Overtime for the Police is \$30,000. A. Sherman pointed out that one Police officer is deployed so the Town is currently not paying his salary. W. Drakeley pointed out that that insures a potential deficit if nothing changes. If the State Trooper contract is challenged there could be a grievance. We're not trying to diminish the fact that he is a sergeant; we're looking for a compromise. Should we get a legal opinion, asked D. Tietz. G. Stomski asked if the Board wanted to challenge the contract and get a grievance? There is a contract in place. A. Sherman did not think the Board wanted to challenge the contract, but ask the State Trooper to manage to a different number. If money was transferred from Operations to overtime the Board would not have a problem. What if overtime could be decreased by another part time officer? W. Drakeley pointed out that the contract has worked for seven years.

MOTION: A. Sherman moved to increase Police overtime to \$50,000. R. W. Anderson seconded. **VOTE: 5-0 FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.**

D. Fuller and W. Drakeley commented that the Board does so reluctantly.

MOTION: W. Drakeley moved to increase funding by \$10,000 to the Parks and Recreation payroll line, as that amount was inadvertently cut, for a total of \$146,083. D. Fuller seconded.

It is duly noted that the total pay plan amount is now \$3,001,000.

VOTE: 5-0 FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

With all of the changes made at this meeting the total budget, to be sent to the Town Meeting will be \$28,632,111, showing a mill rate of 21.49, or a 1.71% increase. If some more money is found in Fiscal Year 2009-2010 that money could be used as surplus and rolled over to the next fiscal year. The Town Meeting is May 17th, referendum date is May 25th.

4. Adjournment

MOTION: R. W. Anderson moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 PM. A. Sherman seconded.

VOTE: 5-0 FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

FILED SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL
Respectfully submitted,

Linda Leigh
Clerk