

**BOARD OF FINANCE
TOWN OFFICE BUILDING
40 OLD FARMS ROAD
WILLINGTON, CT 06279**

BUDGET MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, March 15, 2018

**Minutes are not official until approved at the next regular meeting*

Members Present:

Jim Bulick, Chairman
Mike Makuch, Vice-Chair
Randy Belair, Secretary
Barry Wallett
Peter Tanaka
Laurie Semprebon
Fred Schoen – Alternate
Bill Rankin – Alternate

Also Present: Donna Latinsics, Business Manager; Tish Ignatowicz, Treasurer; Erika Wiecenski, First Selectwoman; Registrars, Christine Psathas & Suzanne Chapman; Michelle Doucette Cunningham, Chairman BOE; Jacqueline Jacoby, Interim Superintendent; members of the BOE; members of the public.

Chairman Jim Bulick called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

SEATING OF ALTERNATES – not needed

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3/08/2018 Budget Meeting Minutes

Barry Wallett **motioned** to approve the March 08, 2018 Budget Meeting Minutes, Mike Makuch seconded. Discussion followed regarding the accuracy of some of the information published. Barry Wallett withdrew his **motion**. Peter Tanaka **motioned** to table the minutes, Mike Makuch seconded. All were in favor, **motion carried**.

PRESENT TO SPEAK

Katherine Johansen, 16 Mason Road, chose to stay in Willington because of the schools. She is in support of the Board of Education budget.

Chiara Bambara, 49 Clover Springs Dr, would like more transparency in the minutes. Can intermediate information be published as it becomes available?

Judie Threatt, 19 Birch Meadow Lane, says it seems that it's the Board of Finance verses the Board of Education. She doesn't want teachers or services cut and doesn't want taxes raised.

Sarah Smith, would like when people are speaking that they not be talked over. She would like everyone to work together.

Mike Foster, 56 Fisher Hill Road, would like both boards to work together, not productive.

NEW BUSINESS

BOE Budget Review

Peter Tanaka asked the uncomfortable question about personnel. He asked if the position in question was at the top step currently. He summarized that the cost for the position is about \$500 per year, per student. He stated that “at what point there is a diminishing return? “

Barry Wallett asked for a list of requirements or mandates to be able to merge the two schools. Dr. Jacoby said that she is working on it. She mentioned it might be a good idea to have a workshop on this with the architect who can best answer the questions.

Mike Makuch asked if combining the schools could happen in the next year. The longer we wait the more it will cost. Dr. Jacoby said that this was not possible.

Bill Rankin asked if the Board of Education considered the options and ways to combine some of the non-teaching positions. Michelle Doucette Cunningham stated that because there are two buildings requiring us to have coverage.

Peter Tanaka thanked the public for their letters. The children are important. This comes down to tax payer’s verses tax spenders.

Chairman Jim Bulick stated that we had to raise the taxes 8.5% last year with the intent to look at things over the year to trim costs. He would have liked to have seen a BOE budget closer to a 2% increase since much of the education budget is labor.

Laurie Semprebon mentioned that she pays higher taxes because she lives on water. There is a higher overhead with 2 schools. We need to get a superintendent to get things going forward to save going down the line.

Randy Belair asked about the 2 options of upgrading the schools. Center school would cost the town \$14 million and Hall school would be \$15.7 million (assuming the usual state of CT reimbursement rates).

Laurie Semprebon **motioned** to adjust the BOE budget to an increase of 2.5%. Mike Makuch seconded. Vote was taken – Yes vote - Laurie Semprebon, Mike Makuch, Randy Belair, No vote – Barry Wallett, Peter Tanaka, Jim Bulick. **Motion failed.**

Peter Tanaka **motioned** to adjust the BOE Budget increase to 2%, Barry Wallett seconded. Yes vote: Barry Wallett, Peter Tanaka, Jim Bulick, No vote: Laurie Semprebon, Mike Makuch, Randy Belair. **Motion failed.**

Peter Tanaka **motioned** to adjust BOE Budget increase to 1.5%. There was no second. **Motion failed.**

Selectman's Budget Discussion

Barry Wallett informed everyone that last year this board voted for an 8.5% increase in taxes with the plan to look at all the budgets this year to see where cuts can be made. Everyone loves the schools, we don't want to cut education, but it may be forced upon us.

Chairman Bulick mentioned the Accounts Payable position. He would like to meet with the stakeholders (Selectmen, Board of Education, and Board of Finance) to make sure that everyone agrees with our needs and requirements of the department. The Board of Finance is a stakeholder and needs to be included in the discussion.

Other Budget Discussions

Chairman Bulick spoke about the Registrars salary increase. He asked if they got numbers from CCM. The towns they have do not compare to Willington. Randy Belair said he talked to CCM. They have a report that has 133 towns salary information. It's only available to the First Selectman. Suzanne Chapman circulated a memo showing compensation figures for towns of similar registered voter sizes for review.

Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR) - Dr. Jacoby spoke with the State Education CFO and is planning to speak to her contact in the OPM. There are other communities with the similar problem Willington has (TRB money set aside for a requirement that never materialized and do not want an MBR penalty as a result). She doesn't think she will have an answer by next Thursday 22-March.

OLD BUSINESS

Annual Report – Board of still reviewing – motion to approve at next meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter from John Patton regarding Account Associate position
Email from Bob Shabot and Christine Psathas in support of BOE Budget
Email from Sarah Smith in support of BOE Budget
Email from Sarah Peck in support of the BOE Budget
Email from Stephanie Summers in support of the BOE Budget

GOOD & WELFARE

ADJOURMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Debra L. Lewis

Debra L. Lewis
BOF Recording Secretary