

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

BUDGET MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, March 7, 2019
7:00 PM

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

Members Present:

Mike Makuch, Vice Chairman
Bill Rankin – Alternate
Peter Tanaka
Barry Wallett
Fred Schoen
Laurie Semprebon
Randy Belair

Members Absent:

Jim Bulick, Chairman

Also Present:

Erika Wiecenski, First Selectwoman
Donna Latincsics, Business Manager
Tish Ignatowicz, Treasurer

Vice Chairman Mike Makuch called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

SEATING OF ALTERNATES:

Peter Tanaka moved to seat Fred Schoen in place of Jim Bulick. Randy Belair seconded the motion. Vote: Yes (P. Tanaka, R. Belair, B. Wallett, L. Semprabon, F. Schoen, M.

Makuch, B. Rankin) 0 No.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Peter Tanaka moved to accept the BOF Meeting Minutes of February 14 as amended (for grammar corrections). Barry Wallett seconded the motion. Vote: Yes (P. Tanaka, B. Wallett, L. Semprebon, F. Schoen, M. Makuch) R. Belair abstained.

Peter Tanaka moved to accept the BOF Meeting Minutes of February 21 as amended (for spelling corrections). Barry Wallett seconded the motion. Vote: Yes (P. Tanaka, L. Semprebon, F. Schoen) B. Wallet and M. Makuch abstained.

PRESENT TO SPEAK:

Richard Maloney presents an idea on behalf of the Economic Development Commission to the board about providing economic development to the town. The Economic Development Commission encourages the board to approve this proposal of a 1 year contract where a professional economic developer will work for a minimum of 4 hours a week to help the town develop. He says that it can start at the minimal as a test and see if they are helping the town and if it is then maybe look into giving them more hours. The commission is not looking for a direct motion at this moment, they intend to bring in some examples of how this has helped other towns and they intend to bring in the professional a few months from now before any final decisions are made.

Richard Maloney says that volunteers are needed to join the commission.

The Board thanked Richard Maloney,.

Bob John of Luchon Drive “In regards to Rick’s presentation is his commission’s request on the website?” Mike Makuch responds saying he doesn't know if the budget requests are on the website yet, they have been coming in as presentations and none of them have been approved yet.

Bob John then says “I believe regarding what Rick said about 4 hours. In my estimation, 4 hours is too little. That could easily be taken up by any administrative work that would have to be done in the office, but any outrage in the office is going to certainly entail more hours.”

The Board thanked Bob John.

NEW BUSINESS:

Selectmen’s Budget

Erika Wicewski presented the Selectmen’s budget. Their budget is the same as last year for the most part, their is a 1.6% increase in the budget (budget total: \$3,459,021. Increase total:

\$55,522).

Heating fuel has gone up from \$2.07 per gallon to \$2.29 per gallon. This price will be maintained for 1 year.

There is a large increase for IT service. This increase took into account a new service that represents the same service from a different company. The new company offers the same service the previous company did but this new company will potentially have better quality.

People have been concerned with people speeding on the roads so the Board of Selectmen have held a few meetings including some with the local police to try to solve this problem. They budgeted \$10,000 to fix this issue.

At the Town Office Building there is no annual maintenance and because of this, last summer there were a lot of unbudgeted expenses such as repairs on the AC units. So they've added HVAC maintenance to their budget.

Accounting software is sunsetting. Business Manager Donna Latincsics is looking into it, she says that she doesn't think the \$10,000 they originally budgeted for is going to be nearly enough based on history. Their last upgrade was \$15,000. Randy Belair suggests that she finds a more accurate number.

Mike Makuch says he's noticed in their budget a lot of 2% salary increases and he wants to know if maybe they considered saying that the non-union workers not get the 2% because it is tough times. Erika Wicewski says that no she has not considered this because of some complications and she believes it's something they need to do in order to keep their employees.

The Board thanked Erika Wicewski

CIP Plan

CIP Chairman Stuart Cobb walked the board through the budget plan. He brought attention to certain areas, such as on going leases, what they plan to put back into the capital reserve, and the local funds column.

The fuel tank at the public works is up for replacement. Good news is the original cost of the fuel tank was \$180,000 but it dropped to \$100,000.

The roadside mower has been put off. It was fixed once, it was a \$24,000 repair.

River Road basketball court is \$45,000.

Mike Makuch asked if there were any major highlights in the out-years of the CIP plan that he wanted to point out before they moved on. Erika Wicewski responded there are multiple projects with the school that the school may or may not decide to bring to action, they're also looking at 3 different road projects for year 5.

The Automated External Defibrillator (AEDs) that were brought up in normal budget and presented to the CIP are actually under the CIP's budget of \$10,000. The entire project will cost near \$6,000.

Barry Walleth has a question regarding the logic behind pushing out the bonding for the water drainage problem for 3 different roads. There are serious problems there and have been for years and the CIP pushed it out for 5 years, it was \$80,000. But the CIP kept \$30,000 for open space and \$45,000 for lighting for a rec field. Barry Walleth thinks it's their core responsibility to make sure people don't have water draining in their yards. He wants to know why the committee pushed it off.

Peter Tanaka says he believes that the reason is because it will take a bond to complete these projects. Those numbers are high enough where they can't fit it in with the number they had and because of the bonding that they already have, those are pushed out so they don't break the town. They're hoping that the library bond expires before they get another bond for several million dollars for road maintenance.

Barry Walleth wants to know where the \$4 million came from, he thought that the \$80,000 was the cost.

Peter Tanaka says that the \$4 million was the estimate that they were given for those 3 projects.

Donna Latinsics says that it also includes the fire station addition.

Barry Walleth says that they aren't looking at the fire station, they are looking at the core infrastructure.

Peter Tanaka says that he believes the committee considered the fire station as core infrastructure.

Barry Walleth says that they aren't looking at fire stations, he says this is about water draining in people's yards. He believes the CIP made a mistake. "I think this is a mistake and that this shouldn't have been done. Thank you."

Peter Tanaka clarifies that he was trying to explain the reasoning, not his own personal opinion.

Barry Walleth says that this group is entertaining thoughts of building a new school for millions of dollars, we already have 2 schools, but there's water draining in people's yards and it can be put off for 5 years. Where's the logic?

Peter Tanaka says he understands what Barry Walleth is saying and he thinks that where funding sources come from come into this and that there are a lot of other issues.

Barry Walleth thinks it's wrong for this group to think it's ok to push these projects off year after year.

The conservation commission is surrounded by UCONN state forest, also they've had 1 or 2 houses built last year. For every development 20% of the land gets set aside for open space, and

if it's not land that's given, it's money given to the commission to buy land. He says that they're sentiment that they're not doing anything for open space but that's because things are already in place for that. He says that the whole town is open space, there is no development, that's why it's been 0.

Bob John of Luchon RD "With regard to what Barry brought up and to what Peter remarked. Those of us including Randy, formerly Laurie, myself and the others who live on Village Hill and who Travel on Village Hill and Schoefield, there are 2 major, I would say close to a foot deep potholes on the roads having come back from Stafford Springs today. Alright now the justification for what Barry referred to, for waiting on the CIP until after the bond issue for the library expires in what I believe is 2027 (Mike Makuch nodded to confirm that 2027 is accurate), we're going to wait until 2027 to repair those 2 roads and to fix the problem on more Village Hill as you come down from where I live down to the bridge from Roaring Brook? I've been in this town for 43 years and those roads have been freezing years and years. I realize what Peter said and that the logic behind the board doing that was to wait until the library bond issue is paid off."

Peter Tanaka says that the problem is that bonds have to be started years before they happen. He says that the town made a decision long before he became involved in any kind of finances to build a library and it's taking a lot of money out of the budget.

Bob John says he understands that.

A small dispute occurred over this subject, what exactly was said at this point is unclear.

Mike Makuch brought the meeting back to order and said that they need to get back on topic and to follow their agenda. He said "thank you" to Bob John and assured him his point was understood. He asked the board if they had anything else they wanted to ask of the presenters.

Stuart Cobb commented that the plan is only a suggestion and that nothing has been set in stone.

Barry Wallett wanted to thank Stuart Cobb for being Chairman of the CIP, he said that Stuart Cobb did an excellent job and was very productive.

Revenue Discussion

Treasurer Tish Ignatowicz went over the revenue. She says that \$15,073,398 is what was budgeted and that through February 28, 90% of that has been brought in. Taxes are always collected very well in this town. The conveyance fee is high this year because they don't expect anything big to come in because house sales are running really low. Investment money is doing really well, however they're not getting any new money and they are now going to be spending it, so there won't be a lot more investment money coming in. Based on what they're got in and based on what's traditionally what still is to come in, they are looking at \$438,112 more than what they budgeted. That of course can change. She proposes revenue of \$17,182,600 for next year supposing the expenses remain the same next year as they are this year. That would be

\$109,202 more than what it is this year, not looking at anything that's proposed for next year.

Treasurer Discussion

They are still looking for a replacement and the job will be up for election. Laurie Semprebon suggests that the job be an appointed position rather than an elected position because Treasurer is an important job and they need someone who's qualified to do it.

CT Budget News

No new news.

OLD BUSINESS:

Contract Negotiations for School Classified Staff

First meeting is April 1st

CORRESPONDENCE:

None

GOOD AND WELFARE:

Laurie Semprebon thanked Tish Ignatowicz, she says Tish has done a great job and she thanked Tish for her work and for her willingness to be flexible.

Peter Tanaka moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:44 p.m. Barry Wallet seconded the motion. Vote: Yes (P. Tanaka, R. Belair, B. Walleth, L. Semprebon, F. Schoen, M. Makuch, B. Rankin) 0 No.

Respectfully submitted,

Guinnevere Almquist, Recording Secretary