

The Minutes of the Board of Finance Budget Meeting
Feb. 29, 2016 – Town Hall – 7 p.m.

Members present:

Justin Donnelly, Ryan Anderson, Chris Childs, Brian Kost, Eric Harrington, Dr. Ann Harrington, alts: J. Michal Stevens, Tracy Eccles, absent alt. John Sullivan
Also present: First Selectman Mack, Treasurer Davidson, and Director of Finance Cerrato

Chairman Justin Donnelly called the Budget Meeting to order Feb. 29, 2016.

No Citizen Comments:

Chairman Donnelly welcomed the First Selectman with her budget review.

Ms. Mack stated that she and Ms. Cerrato have been looking at the back years; We have to examine from a conservative viewpoint. It is our goals and healthy budgets; she asked to examine line items for the Health and Social Services and questioned what service the residents of Suffield were receiving. Why are we funding a 501 C(3) account service for \$21,508. We have been paying this amount since before FY 200910. There is a \$3,500 mental health for abuse that our youth services Director is certified to counsel; she does not know why we are paying for or how many we are helping. My recommendation is not to fund this organization any longer. We want to make sure this is the right organization.

This is all under one social services line item. She has called the Probate Court, and we are charged by the total population, and she is negotiating not to have to pay for the prisoner population.

The question was raised what the price was for gasoline in the current year? The new gas is budgeted at \$1.79; current gas was budgeted at \$2.26. We are studying street light rates and determining whether to continue as we are or to purchase them.

There is the issue is of the total amount of around \$1,000,000 we spend on trash. We had been getting paid for recycling but that is no more. There will pick up of the recycling but the Town will not be paid a fee in return.

The Emergency Manager will be paid \$5,000; not a stipend of \$25,000.

The reorganization of the mini bus; Mini Bus service will move to the Senior Center. The Senior Center Director will direct the Mini Bus; there is not a Mini Bus Coordinator. The position has been negotiated with the union. The Highway will maintain the minibus fleet.

We need to go to centralized purchasing so that we are getting the best deals all around. We need to get control of the copiers and telephones; use one contract system for all.

Legal Fees: She will be limiting legal service. Calls to the attorneys will need to be routed through the First Selectman. Currently calls are being made directly to the attorneys.

The Director of Finance is requesting an Assistant Director of Finance position. This position is scheduled to begin as of January. Ms. Cerrato explained some of the duties that the position will do. It will give more time for the director to do analysis of accounts..

The First Selectman described the proposed new staffing for the Police Department. There will be one new Sergeant, one narcotics investigator , and one new full time Offices/Records Clerk. Additional hours will be assigned for more efficiency.

Staffing for the Fire Department is not finalized. The Fire Department will submit the grant for a new firefighter. The position is currently in the budget. Information Technology (IT) would like to have its part time employee become full time.

The new Technology Committee will lead the IT department in the Town & BOE and will work to meld programs and funding for joint ventures together. Michael Stevens has agreed to be the chairman of this group.

We (BOS and BOE) would seek to have one strong human resources director for both the Town and the Schools. The current vacancy will allow this to be explored.

Our Town Engineer will be hiring more contractors to expedite the many town projects and to work on a succession plan.

KML: We are looking at a more efficient energy building; some of the regulated maintenance will transfer into Public Works. The Highway Department will manage the yearly \$10,000 inspection fee for the environmental concerns and operational cost will transfer to the Public Works.

Our goal is to open Babbs Beach for residents; for the expansion at the beach.

Mr. Kost asked about new staff: Ms. Mack noted ½ Finance Assistant, 3 persons in the Police Office, and additional hours for 1 new MiniBus Driver, additional 5 hours for the Administrative Secretary in the P.D. It was requested that a report be prepared that outlines the total cost of the new employees. This includes the payroll, FICA and Medicare and all of the benefits accorded the employees for a true cost of the employees.

Ms. Mack stated the Town has six unions to negotiate this year.

Ms. Mack noted that a lot of state grants will be o.k., but preliminarily will be flat.

Mr. Donnelly asked what percentage of increase are we anticipating? Are we looking at 2.%, 2.5%, or even 3%.increase?

2% or lower?

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Bobbie C. Kling, Secretary
BoF. Feb.29.16.budget meeting