

Minutes of the Board of Finance Special Meeting and  
A Budget Review Meeting, Monday, March 21, 2016  
Town Hall Lower Level Meeting Room - 7 p.m.

Members present:

Justin Donnelly, Ryan Anderson, Dr. Ann Huntington Mickelson, Chris Childs,  
Eric Harrington, J. Michael Stevens, Tracy Eccles, John Sullivan

Absent: Brian Kost

Also present: First Selectman Mack, Treasurer Davidson, Director of Finance Cerrato

Agenda of Special Meeting

Chairman Justin Donnelly called a Special Meeting of the Board of Finance, March 21, 2016, to order to discuss and consider the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant request. This grant application deadline is March 25, 2016.

By unanimous vote, voting rights were accorded to Tracy Eccles for Mr. Kost.

Approximately 25 to 30 members of the Suffield Fire Department were in attendance in to support this request for the FEMA SAFER grant.

Discussion and approval of request for the FEMA SAFER Grant – Chief Flynn

The Suffield Fire Department requests approval to apply for a SAFER grant to cover the salary and benefits for one new career firefighter for a two year period for approximately \$157,581. There is no required amount as a cost share to the town for the salary and benefits during the life of the grant. However, we would be responsible for any overtime. If successful, the grant would allow the department to hire one firefighter to increase minimum staffing of one Engine with two Firefighters in accordance to the recognized consensus standard of the NFPA 1720 Standard for the Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations. Minimum firefighting operations require four members to assemble prior to any interior firefighting operations. The Town is under no obligation to continue funding past the two year period of the grant however; statistical data to sustain or curtail the added career position will be analyzed as requested by the First Selectman. If the funding of this position does not go beyond the grant funding of the two year period, the Town will have to pay six months of unemployment.

If Suffield is awarded the FEMA/SAFER a grant for an entry level Firefighter for one year, the total costs benefits and salary, the cost will be \$75,707; The two year amount requested for the hiring of one full time firefighter amounts to \$157,581. The Town would be responsible for any overtime. The Town is under no obligation to continue

funding past the two year period of the grant. The second FEMA/SAFER grant, which we can submit for, is the recruitment and retention of Volunteer Firefighters. The cost of sending members to advanced classes and conferences cannot be absorbed in our current training budget. Our second grant submission requesting \$12,000 to cover costs associated with the Volunteer Firefighters attending various seminars conference will be at no cost to the Town.

The Board of Selectmen has approved the request for the FEMA/ SAFER Grant application to the Board of Finance.

Chairman Donnelly asked for a motion: Mr. Anderson moved to make a motion to approve the FEMA/SAFER Grant application in accordance with NFPA 1720 and OSHA 1910.156. Dr. Ann Huntington Mickelson seconded. Vote: 5-1 in favor.

Mr. Harrington voted against the motion.

Mr. Donnelly thanked the Chief for the presentation.

The Special Meeting was voted adjourned.

Chairman Justin Donnelly called the Budget Review Meeting to order, Monday, March 21, 2016.

Citizen Comment: Mr. Donnelly noted that all had received email from Mr. Don Miner informing the BoF about his thoughts about the Police Department. That is the only citizen comment Mr. Donnelly has received since his last meeting.

Economic Development Commission – Patrick McMahon, EDC Director, noted that outside any payroll costs, the budget costs remain flat. The EDC uses the Marketing line item of \$8,000 for posting commercial property and advertising in the Suffield Observer, etc. The EDC uses the Business and Infrastructure line item of \$40,000 for funding appraisals, inland/wetland delineations, and environmental studies.

Kent Memorial Library - Jackie Hemond, Director –The budget is down 3% from last year, primarily from payroll; we had one position, that had been vacant since December of 2013 that was frozen by the First Selectman. There are three major service areas; 3 desks, Circulation, Reference, and Children’s Desk. The Children’s Desk has never been fully manned (three shifts). Ms. Hemond thinks this is imperative and she wants to staff all three starting next year. She wants to hire another Library Assistant and perhaps Pages; but even with the additional hires, the budget will still be down 4%. Heat was decreased; telephone is increasing at rapid rate. Tools and Equipment include 6 computers were removed from this budget and included as part of the capital expenditures for computer replacements . One interlibrary position was frozen, but a part time position was added. Ms. Mack said we can hire substitutes on an hourly basis. Revenues were noted, and revenue from Fines was approximately \$20,000. Mr. Donnelly thanked Ms. Hemond for her presentation. The worksheets that Ms. Hemond was using did not agree with the ones in the budget book. Ms. Cerrato will research this.

Ms. Mack wants the staff be returned to the library and the staffing can be evaluated after this occurs.

Town Clerk - Kathy Dunai - She is projecting an increase of 10% in recording fees, due to the big housing developments. The payroll is within the contract of 1% increase. The budget is up 3%. She has kept the expenses to the same narrow line. The State has new rules, new mandates, some on line regulations, and of course, and to update and to revise the ordinances. This update will cost perhaps between \$10--\$12,000 and can be done over a time frame of three years. This update includes, auditing, updating, upgrading and making recommendations. This will cost approximately to \$10-\$12,000. The Board discussed how to fund this vital necessary cost. The Town Clerk and the Chairman stated that \$6,000 may be used in one year. Perhaps we should use money that we could put in capital expenditures now for use later. The Chairman thanked the Town Clerk. It was noted that the employees in this department are members of the Town Hall union and the agreement is up on June 30, 2016. In fact all of the town controlled unions except the Highway union contracts are up as of June 30, 2016. This includes Library, Town Hall, Dispatchers and Firefighters. The Police union contract ended as of June 30, 2014.

Senior Center and MiniBus Director Paula Pascoe – She noted her pay increase of 2%. We came in with the same hourly rate for the union employees. The Senior Center Director is now overseeing the Minibus drivers. Operating expenses are maintained separately for the Senior Center and Minibus.. The Senior Center currently serves approximately 60 lunches on Wednesdays and 30-40 on Thursdays. The request is to increase the hours of the Assistant to the Director approximately 60 hours for the year to add coverage for the time the Director is on vacation. All other line items except for Repairs and Maintenance and increase of \$150 and Mileage of \$100 remain the same. The 2 changes show a high percentage but the dollar amounts are small.

The Mini Bus coordinator is now a driver 1; The Minibus Coordinator was in the same union as the Minibus Drivers. With the retirement of Denise Winiarski we were able to correct this and shifted the supervision to someone outside of the union. The Coordinator in the past could not supervise members of the same union. The new position will have the same hours but the rate of pay was negotiated at a lower rate. We have 5 drivers. She has applied for the municipal matching grant for the operations and the indications are that it will remain funded at approximately \$32,000. She has also submitted the request to ACCE for the purchase of a new Minibus. The Town's local share of \$12,800 will be funded by the Minibus Reserve Fund. This fund received a large bequest a few years ago and has sufficient funds to cover this share. Mr. Donnelly thanked Ms. Pascoe.

Health & Social Services – First Selectman Mack noted that these changes were discussed in the overall budget review on February 29<sup>th</sup>. We are not funding Network of Domestic Abuse (NADA) and New Directions; these agencies provide no specific service to Suffield residents, but have been a source of funding from the Town.

ACCE- Advisory Commission on Capital Expenditures – J. Michael Stevens

Mr. Stevens reported totals on the formula in the spreadsheet did not include the Remington Street Bridge Replacement. The corrected totals as follows are: Planned total Cost is \$5,282,856, Total cost for 2016-17 subtoal is \$5,282,856 and the total including the Debt Service is \$7,867,31, the total for Grants/Offset is \$1,992,400 and the Net Cost is \$3,290,456.

This report does not include the LoCIP dollars. Total grant/offset money \$1,992,400 on hand.

Mr. Donnelly asked, Do we want to add \$12,000 for the Codification for the Town Clerk. Yes. What about the school bleachers; it was not a high priority. But maybe we should consider; if not the bleachers, some other project that the schools requested. Mr. Stevens reviewed other items that were not chosen; items that were a want not required, i.e. bathroom at Spaulding. Mr. Stevens stated we might be able to hold off the fund for the Remington Bridge. The Board discussed various ways to spend capital money. The Board discussed the bonding and time frame of the acquisition of new fire trucks. Mr. Donnelly noted the next Tri- Board meeting scheduled for April 5, for the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, and Permanent Building Commission (PBC), and an update of numbers will be distributed.

The First Selectman stated PBC reported that the State has estimated the environmental remediation cost for Bridge Street School to be approximately \$2,000,000. The public approved a bond of \$8,400,000 including a 10% contingency, but have not put a shovel yet in the ground, and we already have a contingency of 26% I am sure that no Bond Counsel would issue an opinion to go to Bond with the contingency in excess of the amount included in the approved project. . We may have to go back to the Town and say we need more money or we need to reduce the scope of the project. The PBC is going to look at different strategies and report to the Tri-Board Meeting by April 5. The other item on the agenda will be “lessons we have learned from the KML Library” in view of two more projects yet to do. This time we do not want to miss any inspection or remediation.

Mr. David Gauthier asked about public comment. Mr. Donnelly said, go ahead. His comment was his suggestion that the Board of Finance consider having public comment at the beginning of the meeting and a public comment at the end of the meeting. He also noted that the BoS has not yet voted on the Town Budget. Ms. Mack responded to Mr. Gauthier . It was noted that the ultimate budget decision is made by the Board of Finance.

Dr. Ann Huntington Mickelson moved to adjourn; the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Bobbie C. Kling, Secretary

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