

Board of Finance
Budget Deliberations for FY 2009-2010
Town Hall Meeting Room April 1st, 2009 8:12 PM

Present: Chairman Michael O'Brien, Vice Chairman Jerry Sargent, Board of Finance members Melissa Koller, Michael Carter, Patty Kopas, David Muller and Bob Atkinson. Also present: First Selectmen Woody Bliss, Town Administrator Tom Landry, Finance Director Rick Darling, Selectman Gayle Weinstein and Secretary Donna M. Anastasia.

Also Present: Weston residents Barbara Plesko, Walter Erikson, Hal Matthews, Martha Diamant, Marnie Parrett, Eileen Buckley and several others.

BOE and School Administration: Phil Schafer, Ellen Uzenoff, Les Wolf, Superintendent Jerry Belair and Dr. Jo-Ann Keating and several others.

Chairman O'Brien suggested to strike the minutes for approval item from the agenda and move it to the next meeting. He opened the meeting with any questions from the Board of Finance.

Mr. Carter presented five items for further discussion; 1. pre-paying leases without a penalty. 2. status of new boiler 3. rubbish removal cost 4. consultant fee 5. Misc. fund Dr. Keating will follow up on the leases. Regarding the boiler we did not build in any cost savings. Rubbish removal is expected to cost 90K and is going out to bid. The health insurance consultant fee paid is average for these services. The Misc fund was set up a few years ago to consolidate several accounts; consolidated donations and building use fees are not expended until summer.

Chairman O'Brien noted that an update will be coming in from Lindberg on the health insurance and Cigna review with final numbers. Chairman O'Brien briefly went over the comparisons and research efforts to select the best programs for both the Town and the BOE.

Mr. Muller and Mr. Sargent both mentioned the benefit of user fees and keeping the charges fair across the board.

Mr. Carter discussed the benefits of wellness programs even if the Town had to budget 30K for this purpose. Chairman O'Brien noted that Cigna would fund 19K towards a wellness provider.

Mr. Carter thanked the BOS and the BOE for their very hard work and cooperation during this budget season over any other year previously.

There was discussion regarding the wellness program and funding over a 12-14 month period and the ability to fund from the ISF up to 1M. There is also 400K in the IBNR accrual account.

Ms. Kopas expressed concern regarding the GASBE reduction and felt that there are areas of reducing costs such as stipends, activity coordinators, travel and conference costs and multiple theater productions. The production of one musical for example instead of two and utilizing volunteers whenever possible. Ms. Kopas agrees with a \$193,876. further reduction.

Ms. Koller stated that she has received many emails requesting no increases in the budget however she feels that cuts will hurt Weston education. She would prefer to see teachers added instead of cutting tax dollars.

Mr. Muller who works in the investment industry feels that people are indeed struggling and in addition to public policy the board is also representing voters, employees of the Town and the children. He views education as the core value. He is concerned about 262 students currently in private school. He also feels to re-open union negotiations is not a good idea. Mr. Muller would like to see the budget come in at -0-.

Mr. Sargent commented on this year being truly extraordinary as compared to previous years with lack of experience and collaboration of all involved. Transparency is appreciated and encourages a much better process. Mr. Sargent said that foresight and prudent decisions in the past has enabled the Town to be in a better position right now during a poor economic climate. . His concern is about the future and planning ahead with emphasis on a collaborative approach. Mr. Sargent feels not to go with a -0- budget would put the Town at greater risk down the road. He feels there are opportunities to budget downward without impacting the classroom.

Mr. Atkinson commended all members on the collaborative effort of the budget process. His concern is affordability and significant decreases in revenue specifically Conveyance tax and would like to see the BOE eliminate any excess. Mr. Atkinson would personally like to see a -0- based budget.

Chairman O'Brien mentioned discussions last year about difficult decisions which may need to be made to stem the upward rise in increases. There have been many discussions with the BOE through the summer and fall which yielded a very well thought out budget. Looking forward we will be facing even a tougher year next year. He mentioned some very good ideas at the Public Hearing and that he is very confident that the BOE staff will find additional opportunities in the budget without effecting the classroom and supports a -0- budget.

Motion: Mr. Muller made a motion to approve the BOE budget for \$43,975,601. Mr. Sargent seconded the motion. With none opposed motion carries unanimously.

Chairman O'Brien adjourned the meeting for a 15 minutes recess.

BOE Capital Budget

Motion: Vice Chair Sargent made a motion to approve **\$396,800.** for the BOE Capital budget, Mr. Muller seconded and motion carries unanimously.

Town of Weston Capital Budget

There was discussion regarding police vehicles; in previous years the Town budgeted for 1.5 vehicles per year. Mr. O'Brien noted that 2 vehicles were purchased last year and the Town could buy one each year. Mr. Landry felt this item was not managed properly in the past and that the current formula does work without getting behind. There was also discussion regarding the 2 mowers for Public Works and Mr. Sargent disagrees with a sole source vendor and several members agree to outside bids for heavy machinery.

Motion: Mr. Sargent made a motion to approve mowers at 175K during the procurement process; Mr. Muller seconded, motion carries.

Motion: Mr. Muller made a motion to approve **\$807,333.** for the Town Capital Budget, Mr. Sargent seconded and motion carries unanimously.

BOARD OF SELECTMENS' BUDGET

100 Administration and Finance

Mr. Muller made a motion to approve 636,520. for Administration and Finance, Mr. Sargent seconded; motion carries.

110 General Administration

Mr. Muller made a motion to approve 3,363,475. for General Administration, Ms. Koller seconded; motion carries.

115 Information Systems

Mr. Muller made a motion to approve 245,056. for Information Systems, Ms Kopas seconded; motion carries.

120 Probate Court

Ms Koller made a motion to approve 5,050. for Probate Court, Mr. Muller seconded; motion carries.

130 Elections/Registrars

Mr. Sargent made a motion to approve 34,268. for Elections and Registrars, Mr. Carter seconded; motion carries.

141 Board of Finance

Ms. Kopas made a motion to approve 50,000. for Board of Finance, Mr. Muller seconded; motion carries.

142 Treasurer

. No appropriation.

143 Assessor

Ms. Koller made a motion to approve 117,002. for Town Assessor, Mr. Carter seconded; motion carries.

144 Tax Collector

Mr. Muller made a motion to approve 111,813. for the Tax Collector, Ms. Koller seconded; motion carries.

145 Board of Assessment Appeals

Mr. Carter made a motion to approve 295. for the Board of Assessment Appeals, Mr. Muller seconded; motion carries.

150 Legal Counsel

There was some discussion regarding legal counsel expenses. Ms. Kopas made a motion to approve 199,400. for Legal Counsel; Mr. Carter made a motion to amend Legal Counsel expenses and increase the amount to 225,000. Ms Koller seconded.

Vote: Three opposed to increase and four in favor of increase. **225,000.** approved for Legal Counsel as amended.

160 Town Clerk

Mr. Muller made a motion to approve 123,857. for the Town Clerk, Mr. O'Brien seconded; motion carries.

165 Historic District Commission

Mr. Carter made a motion to approve 450. for the Historic District Commission, Mr. Koller seconded; motion carries.

170 Planning & Zoning Commission

Mr. Carter made a motion to approve 102,155. for the Planning & Zoning Commission, Ms. Atkinson seconded; motion carries.

180 Zoning Board of Appeals

Mr. Carter made a motion to approve 2,600. for the Zoning Board of Appeals, Ms. Kopas seconded; motion carries.

185 Conservation Commission

Mr. Muller made a motion to approve 58,405. for Conservation Commission, Mr. Sargent seconded; motion carries.

191 Building Inspector

Mr. Carter made a motion to approve 116,616. for Building Inspector, Mr. Sargent seconded; motion carries.

195 Building Committee

Mr. Atkinson made a motion to approve 1,200. for Building Committee, Mr. Carter seconded; motion carries.

220 Volunteer Fire Department

Ms. Sargent made a motion to approve 212,174. for the Volunteer Fire Department. Selectman Weinstein stated a supplemental was discussed should the WVFD need additional equipment. Mr. Sargent supports a supplemental. Ms. Koller made a motion to approve 212,174 for the WVFD, Mr. Sargent seconded, motion carries.

240 Fire Marshal

Mr. Carter made a motion to approve 39,873. for the Fire Marshal, Mr. Muller seconded; motion carries.

250 Animal Control

Mr. Carter made a motion to approve 69,386. for Animal Control, Mr. Sargent seconded; motion carries.

260 Communications Center

Mr. Carter noted the revenue from the tower leases are approximately 80K. There was some discussion regarding the 300K currently in the fund, upgrades that will be required and various equipment items. There was some discussion regarding digital switch over in approximately 18 months. (2010-2011 budget)

Ms. Carter made a motion to approve 312,069. for the Communications Center, Ms. Kopas seconded; motion carries.

263 SW Conn Emergency Med. Services

Mr. Sargent made a motion to approve 1,340. for the SW Conn. Emergency Medical Services, Mr. Kopas seconded; motion carries.

264 Emergency Med. Community Services

Mr. Sargent made a motion to approve 12,017. for Emergency Medical Communications Services, Ms. Kopas seconded; motion carries.

266 Regional Paramedic

Mr. Sargent made a motion to approve 127,207. for Regional Paramedic, Mr. Muller seconded; motion carries.

280 Police Services

There was some discussion regarding COLA raises and efforts being made to keep these raises similar among the various groups.

Mr. Sargent made a motion to reduce the overtime budget by 25K; Ms. Kopas seconded motion carries unanimously.

Mr. Sargent made a motion to approve 1,671,908. for Police Services, Ms. Kopas seconded; motion carries.

300 Public Works-Highway

Mr. Muller made a motion to approve 1,774,129. for Public Works-Highway, Mr. Sargent seconded; motion carries.

410 Solid Waste Disposal

Ms. Kopas made a motion to approve 142,060. for Solid Waste Disposal, Mr. Sargent seconded; motion carries.

510 Westport/Weston Health District

Mr. Muller made a motion to approve 178,396. for the Westport/Weston Health District, Mr. Sargent seconded; motion carries.

530 Weston Water Utility

Mr. Sargent made a motion to approve 20,450. for the Weston Water Utility, Ms. Kopas seconded; motion carries.

550 School/Town Water Supply

Ms. Atkinson made a motion to approve 38,700. for School/Town Water Supply, Mr. Muller seconded; motion carries.

600 Human Services

Mr. Sargent made a motion to approve 78,776 for Human Services, Mr. Muller seconded; motion carries.

700 Youth Services

Mr. Muller made a motion to approve 38,815. for Youth Services, Mr. Sargent seconded; motion carries.

750 Commission in Aging

Mr. Sargent made a motion to approve 85,084. for the Commission on Aging, Mr. Muller seconded; motion carries.

810 Public Library

Mr. Atkinson recused himself.

Mr. Muller made a motion to approve 391,689. for the Public Library, Mr. Carter seconded; motion carries.

910 Recreation Department

Mr. Muller made a motion to approve 183,024. for the Recreation Department, Mr. Carter seconded; motion carries.

912 Park and Fields

There was some discussion regarding contractual services. Mr. Muller made a motion to approve 125,144. for Parks and Fields, Mr. Carter seconded; motion carries.

913 Middle School Pool

Mr. Muller made a motion to approve 97,487. for the Middle School Pool, Mr. Carter seconded; motion carries.

930 Municipal Debt (Interest)

Mr. Muller made a motion to approve 2,658,799. for Municipal Debt Interest, Ms. Koller seconded; motion carries.

950 Municipal Debt (Principal)

Mr. Sargent made a motion to approve 4,295,000. for Municipal Debt Principal, Mr. Muller seconded; motion carries.

970 Town/School Capital Budget

Mr. O'Brien made a motion to approve **1,204,133.** for the Town/School Capital Budget, Mr. Carter seconded; Ms. Kopas opposed. Motion carries.

Mr. Muller made a motion to approve **\$10,793,490. for the FY 2008-2009 Town Budget,** Mr. Sargent seconded. Ms. Kopas opposed. Motion carries.

Respectfully submitted
Donna M. Anastasia, Secretary