

Board of Finance
 Board of Finance Reviews Selectmen’s Budget
 March 7th, 2011 8:00 PM Town Hall Meeting Room

Present: Board of Finance members Patty Kopas, Bob Atkinson, Melissa Koller, Michael Carter, Vice Chair Jerry Sargent, Board of Finance Chairman Mike O’Brien; First Selectman Gayle Weinstein, Selectman Dan Gilbert, Town Administrator Tom Landry, Finance Director Rick Darling, IT Manager Sharon Shattuck, Highway Director Joe Lametta, Ken Whitman Tax Assessor, Fire Marshal John Pokorny, John Ojarovsky Communication Center Director, Dave Ungar Director of Parks & Recreation, Eric Albert Parks & Recreation Commission Chair; Library Director Karen Tatarka; Chief Troxell and Police Commission member Hal Shupack; Donna M. Anastasia Secretary of the meeting. Approximately five others were in attendance. *Not attending Steve Ezzes.*

Chairman O’Brien called the meeting to order at 8:08 PM.

First Selectman Weinstein gave an overview of the 2011-2012 budget. Outlined were the budget process; factors driving the increases such as pension and health care costs; recent social services statistics and foreclosure/short sale figures. Ms. Weinstein was in Hartford to testify today in favor of making the conveyance tax permanent which is currently .25 of the total sale price of the property. Each year the State revisits the conveyance tax rates and determines the percentage towns and cities will receive. Ms. Weinstein mentioned that she feels very strongly about keeping the tax permanent as the funds go directly to the Town thus not impacting the taxpayer.

Section	Account Number	Department
1	100	Administration and Finance The board asked for clarification on the part time salaries. Lisa Montgomery is a part time employee (Accts payable) and the Treasurer position (Rick Darling) is paid a stipend. Contractual services have been reduced by eliminating ADP and using Munis for payroll resulting in \$11,000 savings per year.
2	110	General Administration There have been some reductions in Community grants and Commission for the Arts. Some insurance costs were pre-paid for a total cost reduction. Workers Compensation and health insurance continues to climb. Mr. Landry added that while we have decreased the OPEB contribution we have added two more cycles.
3	115	Information Systems Ms. Shattuck said the back up system is in place and during April break we will be on the school server.
4	120	Probate Court No discussion

5	130	Elections/Registrars No discussion
6	141	Board of Finance There was some discussion regarding the auditors which have been used for about 6 years. Mr. O'Brien suggested that it is the board's obligation to check out other firms when the time comes.
7	143	Assessor This department has reduced training and development.
8	144	Tax Collector There was some discussion regarding the work load of the Tax Collector's office during months other than peak collection times. Ms. Weinstein explained the office needs the part time help to cover vacation time.
9	145	Board of Assessment Appeals No discussion
10	150	Legal Counsel This item was increased for litigation expense. Ms. Weinstein noted it is quite difficult to estimate and/or anticipate legal costs. There was discussion regarding under budgeting the costs versus overstating. The scheduled hours for legal counsel each week has been reduced. Mr. Landry pointed out that all costs outside of the retainer, i.e. litigation is what the funds are budgeted for. The issues driving this item are more labor related issues rather than land use issues.
11	160	Town Clerk No discussion
12	165	Historic District Commission No discussion
13	170	Planning & Zoning Code enforcement has been reduced to a four day work week. Land Use Director's hours were clarified.
14	180	Zoning Board of Appeals No discussion
15	185	Conservation Commission Conservation Planner Fred Anderson's hours have been reduced. Training in all areas has been reduced.
16	191	Building Inspector – This department has been impacted the most by a four day reduction. With all permits being so low it was decided to cut the hours in this department. Should we see an increase we would like to restore this department back to its original five day work week.
17	195	Building Committee Tom Landry prepares the agendas and minutes for this committee.

18	220	Volunteer Fire Department There was some discussion regarding how the Fire Department budget is prepared because the department is quite different from other Town Hall departments.
19	240	Fire Marshal John Pokorny Fire Marshal had asked to be full time but he will remain part time.
20	250	Animal Control No discussion
21	260	Communications Center There was discussion regarding cell tower revenue. (Gross revenue of 165K less 58K in expenses leaving a net revenue of approximately 107K) There was discussion regarding an additional tower possibly at the Morehouse location.
22	263	Southwest Ct. Emergency Medical Services No discussion
23	264	Emergency Medical Communications Services No discussion
24	266	Regional Paramedic No discussion
25	260	Police Services There was discussion regarding police officer staffing (currently the department is down 3 officers) and the impact on overtime. Currently one officer is filling the position of Administrative Assistant.
26	300	Public Works/Highway There was discussion regarding the number of storms exceeding the “budgeted” storms which resulted in a 25K deficit. Mr. Lametta mentioned that while there were many storms to deal with most storms occurred during the day saving overtime dollars. However the storms have caused a lot of damage to many roads and he would like to be able to pave the same number of miles as the previous year.
27	410	Solid Waste Disposal No discussion
28	510	Westport Weston Health District No discussion
29	530	Weston Water Utility No discussion
30	550	School/Town Water Supply No discussion

31	600	Human Services Meals on wheels requests have actually dropped but families in need have increased.
32	700	Youth Services There were also some staffing changes for this department; Kristin will now work two days a week for Human Services and for the Social worker at the school. There is 113K in this account which is used to cover programs/materials. This account had accumulated funds due to the absence of a Director over time.
33	750	Senior Services No discussion
34	810	Library The board (Finance) would like some numbers regarding circulation and possible “people” count.
35	910	Parks and Recreation Some discussion regarding summer camps, programs and pool usage pricing. Mr. Ungar stated that the pool is the biggest revenue producer because it is a year round activity. Mr. Ungar also said he will be setting up a meeting soon for Revson field.
36	912	Parks & Fields- BOE has approached P&R with a field proposal.
37	913	Middle School Pool No discussion
	930	Municipal Debt (Interest) No discussion
	950	Municipal Debt (Principal) No discussion
	970	Town/School Capital Budget There was a lengthy discussion regarding the purchase of tractors. Parks and Rec has requested a tractor for 25K and the school has requested one for 55K. Mr. Sargent suggested a sharing arrangement between the two, possibly for a one year trial. Ms. Weinstein went over the vehicle sinking fund hoping to stretch out vehicle purchases avoiding a fixed purchasing schedule. This year there are no requests it would be a good time to establish a sinking fund. The fund would not have to go through the capital process but would need Board of Finance approval. Again there is the topic of capital versus budget expenditures. Future discussions are needed regarding where funds should be paid from.

Mitigation: Bids have come in and the cost has nearly doubled from what was initially anticipated. Unfortunately there is a timeline to have the work done.

DPW has requested a pick up truck.

With no further business to be discussed the meeting adjourned at 11:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted

Donna M. Anastasia, Town Clerk