

Weston Annual Town Budget Meeting
April 24, 2013 8:00pm
Weston High School Auditorium

Present: (*Head Table*) First Selectman Gayle Weinstein, Town Administrator Tom Landry, Finance Director Rick Darling, Vice Chairman Board of Finance, Michael O'Brien, Board of Education Chairman Philip Schaefer, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Colleen Palmer, Finance Director, Dr. Jo-Ann Keating and Sharon Shattuck, Clerk of the Meeting.

Approximately 100 people attended this meeting.

First Selectman Weinstein called the meeting to order at 8:02pm and thanked everyone for attending.

First Selectman Weinstein read the purpose of the meeting:

To consider and act upon the appropriation for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2013. The meeting will make a dispositive vote upon debt interest and debt principal appropriations. Further, the meeting will decide the proposed school operating budget, the town operating budget and the combined capital budget to be presented for final referendum consideration on May 2, 2013. Individual appropriations listed in this Notice and Call may be reduced to an amount less than that recommended by the Board of Finance if, and only if, at least two percent of Qualified Voters are present at the Annual Town Meeting and a majority of those Qualified Voters present and voting vote to make the reduction.

First Selectman Weinstein made a motion to nominate Woody Bliss as Moderator of the meeting: Motion was seconded and was approved unanimously. Mr. Bliss thanked the Board of Selectmen and welcomed the public. Mr. Bliss appointed Susan Moch as Parliamentarian and then went over procedural items.

A: Section 7-6 Eligibility to Vote

“At any town meeting ... any person who is an elector of such town may vote and any citizen of the age 18 years old or more who, jointly or severally, is liable to the town, district or subdivision for taxes assessed against him on any assessment of not less than \$1,000 on the last completed grand list of such town ... or who would be so liable if not entitled to an exemption under subdivision 17, 19, 23, 25 or 26 of section 12-81 may vote ...”

B. Section 9-360 Fraudulent Voting

“Any person not legally qualified who fraudulently votes in any town meeting or in any election in which he/she is not qualified to vote, and any legally qualified person who, at such election, fraudulently votes more than once at the same election, shall be fined not less than \$300 nor more than \$500 and shall be imprisoned not less than 1 year nor more than 2 years and shall be disfranchised. Any person who votes or attempts to vote at any election or town meeting by assuming the name of another who is registered shall be fined \$500 and imprisoned 1 year and shall be disfranchised

Moderator Bliss asked people not eligible to vote to move into the “Non-Voters” section and the “working press” may sit in the front row. He noted that Sharon Shattuck, will be the Clerk of the Meeting.

Motion

Mr. Bliss asked for a motion to waive the reading of the Call. Motion was seconded and unanimously approved. He then asked the Clerk of the Meeting to enter the Call of the Meeting into the minutes. So noted by the Clerk.

The Moderator explained the terms of the meeting:

Tonight, we will vote on the debt service budget, the line items that make up the Town Operating and Capital budgets and the single total number for the School Operating Budget.

We will then move the totals for the Town Operating, the School Operating and the joint Capital budget budgets to a referendum vote.

Machine voting will begin immediately following tonight’s Town Meeting in the High School Library, and will continue on Thursday, May 2nd from 12 pm-8pm in the Middle School gym. Absentee ballots are available in the Town Clerk’s office. We will also vote on a total Town budget, which includes all of the above, pending a favorable referendum vote.

If one or all of the budgets are not approved, the budget or budgets that were not approved are revisited by the Board of Finance and we begin the process over again.

As per Section 9.5 (d) (ii) of the Town Charter, if, and only if, at least two percent of qualified voters are present, any individual appropriation that is listed on the Notice and Call of the meeting may be reduced to an amount less than that recommended by Board of Finance.

Mr. Bliss asked the Registrars, “Do we have a quorum?” Laura Smits, Democratic Registrar, replied, “No”.

Mr. Bliss then explained that we will discuss, but cannot amend the line items that make up the budgets. The Vice Chair of the Board of Finance will make a motion to move each individual line item in the Selectmen's budget, the Board of Education total budget (you do not get to challenge individual items that make up this budget), each item in the Capital Improvement budget, and the debt service budgets.

After each main motion is made it must be seconded, and then discussion may ensue but the item can not be amended. After discussion, the vice Chair will call for a vote.

The other items on the Call (the estimated revenue, the proposed mill rate) are informational only and are not subject to debate or vote

Moderator Bliss explained the rules for addressing the Meeting:

Mr. Bliss stated that every now and then someone will ask to **“call the question”**. Calling the question has the effect of ending debate on a particular question and having it put to a vote immediately. The moderator has the discretion whether or not to accept a motion to call the question. A motion to call the question is **not open to debate** and **requires a 2/3 majority to pass**. If the motion to call the question passes, we will take an immediate vote on the question that was under debate.

Pursuant to the Town Charter, this meeting will end PROMPTLY at 11:30 p.m. If we have not finished our business, we will reconvene tomorrow night at 8:00 and go until 11:30 pm if necessary, and each consecutive night until finished. Under the new rules, you can't reduce the budget numbers. Mr. Bliss asked if there were any questions on procedure.

Harvey Bellin, Maple Street, asked if we can't reduce the budget because we don't have a quorum? If you vote "No" on an item, doesn't that reduce the budget? It was explained that no, without a quorum the budget cannot be reduced, but the Charter also allows discussion of each line item.

Ruth Glazer, Nimrod Farm, asked about when the quorum would be determined. It was explained that the quorum count is taken prior to the voting.

Laura Smits, Democratic Registrar of Voters, reported that we were only 35 people short of a quorum and if more people arrived, would that constitute a quorum? First Selectman Weinstein responded that Town Attorney had looked at this this issue and there had to be a quorum at the time the meeting was called to order.

Margaret Wirtenberg, Wilton Road, stated that the Town Attorney's ruling seems unfair that people can come in and comment but can't change the numbers. The Chair reiterated that with no quorum there could be no changes.

Chairman Bliss explained that the Board of Finance Vice Chairman would present each line item as a Motion which would be seconded and then there would be time for discussion.

Finance Board Vice Chair Mike O'Brien proceeded to read each item:

Administration & Finance	\$619,818
General Administration	4,194,000
Information Systems	217,591
Probate Court	4,000
Elections/Registrars	38,010
Board of Finance	51,400
Assessor	123,520
Tax Collection	100,534
Legal Counsel	259,400
Town Clerk	128,362
Land Use Department	343,189
Volunteer Fire Department	222,150
Fire Marshal	55,338
Animal Control	70,614
Communications Center	234,496
SW Conn. Emerg. Med. Serv.	1,300
Emerg. Med. Commun. Serv.	12,515
Regional Paramedic	143,250
Police Services	1,761,816
Public Works- Highway	1,777,135
Solid Waste Disposal	87,005
Westport/Weston Health Dist.	189,265
Weston Water Utility	16,080
School/Town Water Supply	34,700
Human Services	78,969

On each of these motions there was a second and no discussion.

Youth Services	41,834
----------------	--------

Motion made and seconded, then discussion followed: Richard Ross, Patchen Road asked how the Town knew exactly how much money would come in from courses and services. First Selectman Weinstein stated that revenue from courses was put into a fund and then some of the funds were used to offset the budget.

Senior Services	114,556
Public Library	401,973
Recreation Department	162,731
Parks & Fields	141,939
Middle School Pool	<u>85,951</u>

TOTAL BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S BUDGET

\$11,713,441

Finance Board Vice Chairman O'Brien made a motion to refer Town Operating Budget of \$11,713,441 to a referendum vote. Motion seconded no discussion. Unanimously approved.

Mr. O'Brien made a motion to refer a Board of Education Operating Budget of \$45,575,418 for a referendum vote. Motion seconded no discussion. Unanimously approved.

Mr. O'Brien made a motion to approve the items in the Capital Improvement Budget

01. Library Roof Replacement	50,000
02. Town Hall Copier/Printers	16,000
03. GIS System	75,000
10. Town Vehicle Sinking Fund	275,000
21. Town Bridge Repair	100,000
23. Assessor-Revaluation	14,000
24. Fire Dept SCBA Equipment	90,000
34. Police Technology	26,228
43. Town Bldg Repairs	50,000
55. BOE Instruct Space Renovation	50,000
58. BOE MS/HS Design	35,000
59. BOE MS PA System Replacement	48,000
60. BOE MS ACM Floor Abatement	60,000

Motion made, seconded and no discussion

61. BOE MS Classroom Door	62,000
62. BOE HS Upgrade of Bathrooms	75,000

Motion made, seconded and discussion followed: Arnie DeKeiser, Salem Road, asked about the costs, project descriptions and why the Door Project and the Bathroom Upgrades were in the Capital Budget and not in School Budget? Dr. Palmer explained that all the doors from the classrooms into the hallways of the Middle School were being replaced and would be upgraded to add security. The High School bathrooms are old and in need of renovations. Most of the work will be done "in house" but the funds will be used to purchase the fixtures.

64. MS Demolish Portables	40,000
65. BOE MS Renovate Gym	25,000
84. BOE/P&R Turf Replace Fund	25,000
89. P&R Infield Morehouse	12,500
88. Special Funds Offset	(12,500)

Motion made and seconded.

Mr. O'Brien made a motion to refer the Capital Improvement Budget of \$1,116,228 for a referendum vote. Motion seconded with no discussion. Unanimously approved.

DEBT SERVICE BUDGET:

Debt Interest	2,294,632
Debt Principal	4,260,000
Less Debt Service Proceeds	
TOTAL DEBT SERVICE BUDGET	6,554,632

Motion was made, seconded with no discussion. Unanimously approved.

Vice Chairman O'Brien moved a Total Town Budget of \$64,959,719 pending a favorable referendum vote of the proposed Town Operating, School Operating and Capital Budgets. Motion seconded with no discussion. Unanimously approved.

There being no further business, Mr. Bliss made a motion to adjourn. Motion seconded with no discussion. Unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.